

Westminster Presbyterian Church, Berkeley Heights

December 06, 2020
Second Sunday in Advent

The Greeting

Pastor George

Prelude

*I Heard the Bells
On Christmas Day*

Words and Music by Mark Hall,
Bernie Herms, Dale Oliver and
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Lighting of the Second Advent Candle

Larry Cunningham

The Candle of Peace

Candle Lighting Song

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus
(Verse 1)

#82

Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us;
let us find our rest in thee.

Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.

Call to Worship

Larry Cunningham

On this second Sunday of Advent . . . we gather to
worship the One Who is the Prince of Peace.

The One Who taught us, "*Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.*" (Matthew 5:9)

We affirm, also, that those who have received the Prince of Peace
have been given power to become children of God. (John 1:12)

AS CHILDREN OF GOD . . . LET US GATHER AGAIN TO WORSHIP THE LORD!

Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates;
behold the King of glory waits;
the King of kings is drawing near;
the Savior of the world is here.

Fling wide the portals of your heart;
make it a temple, set apart
from earthly use for heaven's employ, adorned
with prayer and love and joy.

Redeemer, come! I open wide
my heart to thee; here, Lord, abide.
Let me thy inner presence feel;
thy grace and love in me reveal.

Prayer of Invocation

Larry Cunningham

Gracious and loving God:

We gather this second Sunday in Advent with great expectations, great anticipation,
and the strong belief that in Jesus . . . You have entered the world
and entered our lives in a unique and special way.

In Jesus we see and experience *Emmanuel* . . . God with us!

This Advent . . . we need *Emmanuel* in a special way:

We need the hope He brings. We need the peace He brings.

We need the forgiveness He brings. We need the power He brings.

We need a fresh experience of His amazing grace.

And we need . . . a special experience of the joy that only He can give!

Lord . . by a powerful working of Your Spirit . . . make this joy a reality
that not only transforms the season . . . but also transforms us!

In His strong and saving Name we pray. Amen.

Reading of the Word

John 1:1-14;
Philippians 1:21
Colossians 2:6

Larry Cunningham

John 1:1-14

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being 4 in him was life,[a] and the life was the light of all people. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. 8 He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. 9 The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.[b]

10 He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. 11 He came to what was his own,[c] and his own people did not accept him. 12 But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

14 And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son,[d] full of grace and truth.

Philippians 1:21

21 For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain.

Colossians 2:6

6 As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives[a] in him.

....This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Special Music

Jesus Light of the World

Words and Music by
Mac Powell, David Carr,
Tai Anderson, Brad Avery
and Mark D. Lee

The Prayers of the People and the Disciple's Prayer

Pastor George

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory, forever.
Amen.

Hymn

Comfort, Comfort Now My People

#87

“Comfort, comfort now my people;
tell of peace!” So says our God.
“Comfort those who sit in darkness
mourning under sorrow’s load.
To my people now proclaim
that my pardon waits for them!
Tell them that their sins I cover,
and their warfare now is over.”

For the herald’s voice is crying
in the desert far and near,
calling us to true repentance,
since the reign of God is here.
O, that warning cry obey!
Now prepare for God a way.
Let the valleys rise in meeting
and the hills bow down in greeting.

Straight shall be what long was crooked,
and the rougher places plain.
Let your hearts be true and humble,
as befits God's holy reign.
For the glory of the Lord
now on earth is shed abroad,
and all flesh shall see the token
that God's word is never broken.

Proclamation

Christmas, 2020:

Pastor George

Potentially Your Best Christmas Ever! – Part II

Text: Philippians 1:21; Colossians 2:6

Theme: Discovering how to really live in the toughest of times

Closing Hymn

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

#123

It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth,
to touch their harps of gold:
“Peace on the earth, good will to all,
from heaven's all-gracious King”:
the world in solemn stillness lay,
to hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come,
with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heavenly music floats
o'er all the weary world:
Above its sad and lowly plains
they bend on hovering wing,
and ever o'er its Babel sounds
the blessed angels sing.

Yet with the woes of sin and strife
the world has suffered long;
beneath the heavenly hymn have rolled
two thousand years of wrong;
And we at war on earth hear not
the tidings that they bring;
O, hush the noise and cease the strife
to hear the angels sing!

And you, beneath life's crushing load,
whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way
with painful steps and slow,
Look now, for glad and golden hours
come swiftly on the wing:
O, rest beside the weary road,
and hear the angels sing.

For lo, the days are hastening on,
by prophets seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years
shall come the time foretold,
When peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendors fling,
and the whole world give back the song
which now the angels sing.

Charge & Benediction

Pastor George

Postlude

Glory

(Let There Be Peace)

Words and Music by Chris Stevens,

Matt Maher and Rachel Popadic

***“Many of our churches are full of committed people ---
who have never been converted.”***

--- Bruce Larson Presbyterian Pastor ---

Thank You For Serving!
Pastor George Betz, Michael Goetjen,
Larry Cunningham, Maggie Gonzales, Corry Minkema,
Dave Christie, and Jim Roselli

If you have been blessed by this Service, tell a friend.
Also, please consider contributing to our Church and its Ministry.

Proclamation Notes
“Christmas, 2020: Potentially Your Best Christmas Ever!”
Part II

Texts: John 1:1-14; Philippians 1:21; Colossians 2:6

Preparation

How does your personal faith make a difference in your life?

How does your faith help you deal with the tough stuff life has a way of hurling at us?

How has your faith been at work for you as you move through COVID-19?

Outline & Notes

Recall and note a time in your life when “God *‘got through’* . . . and you made a significant forward step in your faith journey. Name a person involved in that step.

Three questions:

As yourself: (1) Is Jesus my life and the center of my life?

(2) How does Jesus *become* my life . . . and . . . the source *of* my life?

(3) How does a person become a disciple of Jesus and how does a person experience the rebirth the Bible talks about? (See John 3:7; 1: 12)

First Step: God is the *‘Hound of Heaven’!* (Francis Thompson)

Second Step: The Bottom-line message of Christmas:

Third Step:

A beloved Hymn

*In times like these you need a Savior. IN times like these you need
an anchor. Be sure. Be very sure your anchor holds the Solid Rock.
The Solid Rock . . . is Jesus!*

Fourth Step: The power of surrender!

The prayer you may need to pray . . .

Fifth Step:

Following Jesus is not about *imitation* . . . but rather . . .

INCARNATION!

“Christ in you . . . the hope of all glory!”

Galatians 2:20

Sixth Step:

The power of giving thanks to God for what He has done . . . and is doing!

The power of living a **WOW** life! See & read Anne Lamott

HELP---THANKS---WOW

Three Essential Prayers

It's not about our feelings . . . It is about God's faithfulness!

Seventh Step: Tell someone that you have turned your life over to Jesus

&

That you are turning around (repenting)

The *accountability dynamic!*

Eight Step: *"As you have received Christ Jesus as Lord . . . continue to live your lives in Him . . . rooted and built up in Him."*

--- Colossians 2:6 ---

Concrete Actions to take:

1. Get into the Bible . . . God's Word. Let the Word of God get into you!
2. Ask Jesus to show you someone to love and share your faith with.
3. Become and grow as a person of prayer.
"When you find your knees shaking . . . kneel on them!"
--- Billy Graham ---
4. Get into a Small (*koinonia*) Group. In the *valley of the virus* --- this is a huge challenge! How might we do this as a church?
5. Discover your unique talents, abilities and gifts to be used for God's purposes and God's mission. "God's gifts (charismata) are given to us not so much for our *enjoyment* . . . but . . . for God's *deployment!*"
--- Lloyd Ogilvie Former Chaplain of the U.S. Senate ---
6. Celebrate the **"WOW"** of it all! Worship. Praise. Adore. Exalt. And sing!

Next Steps I need to take: