

**Welcome to Niskayuna Reformed Church
December 24, 2023
4th Sunday of Advent
Christmas Eve
Rev. Dr. Sherri & Rev. Michael Meyer-Veen**

The Approach to God

The Lord be with you. **And also, with you.**

Welcome and announcements

Prelude Angel's Carol

Rutter

Introit

Votum

Lynne Barnard-Avveduti

Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. Amen

The Call to Worship: (Responsive)

I knew joy, but when I heard you laugh,

Suddenly joy was overflowing.

I knew love, but when you held my hand,

Suddenly love was overflowing.

I knew God, but when you showed me grace,

When you forgave me,

When you loved me,

When you encouraged me,

Suddenly God was overflowing.

So, let us worship Holy God together

As a reminder that God is here and we are never alone.

This is community.

This is the body of Christ.

Welcome home.

*Hymn of Worship

“With Joy I Heard My Friends Exclaim”

(Verses 1-3,5)

Lift Up Your Hearts, 66

*The Salutation and People's Amen

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Lighting of The Advent Wreath

Mirel Family

I dream of music that makes my heart swell.

I dream of trees that take my breath away.

I dream of sunrises that wrap me in light.

I dream of a community where everyone can belong.

I dream of a church who reflects the heart of Jesus.

I dream of love as a disposition.

So today, on this fourth Sunday of Advent, we light the candle of love.

(Light the four Advent candles of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love)

May this light burn bright as a reminder that God is here and God is love.

We are not alone. Thanks be to God for a love like that. Let us pray...

Unison Prayer:

God of Good News,

You say to me, "You are highly favored," but I struggle to see how that could be.

You say to me, "Do not be afraid," but I am afraid all the time.

You say to me, "Even the impossible is possible, just look at Elizabeth!"

But hope slips through my hands like water.

The impossible still feels impossible.

So today I pray,

Today we pray:

Teach us to sing like Mary.

Teach us to laugh like Elizabeth.

Teach us to trust like the angels.

Forgive us and help us,

when we can only do one at a time, or none at all.

Amen.

Junior Sermon

Anthem Christmas Day

Holst

The Word of God

Prayer for Illumination

Old Testament Reading:

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

This is the Word of the Lord. ***Thanks be to God.***

Gospel Reading

Luke 1:26-45

This is the Gospel of the Lord. ***Praise to you, O Christ.***

Sermon "Those Who Dream...are not alone"

Pastor Sherri

A Prayer for Blessing Upon the Word

*Hymn of Worship "O Little Town of Bethlehem" **The Hymnbook, 171**

The Response of God's People

The Offering

Offertory In the Bleak Midwinter

Holst/Bennett

*The Doxology 544 and Prayer of Consecration

The Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

Prayers of the people and The Lord's Prayer

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 of Worship “Angels We Have Heard on High” (Verses 1-3)”
The Hymnbook, 158

*The Benediction

Benediction Response

*The Postlude Sussex Carol

Arr. Hagenberg

*Please stand if you are able.

Guest musicians:

Jackie Wright, flute

Susan Gierthy, oboe

Tom Gerbino, clarinet

Katy Svatek, horn

Joey Van Ullen, bassoon

Cover art & Liturgy from: www.sanctifiedart.com.



Announcements

The hearing assist system in the sanctuary is fully operational. The system works with hearing aids or with regular earphones. You can use one of the receivers available by the windows in the back or use an app on your smartphone. A sheet with step-by-step setup instructions is available in the narthex. Please ask any member of the stream team if you have questions.

Our mission collection will benefit HeartsHerd Animal Sanctuary which is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization located on 21.75 acres of beautiful property in Buskirk, NY. They are dedicated to the care, well-being and love of abused and abandoned animals across New York State. **To learn more, please visit www.heartsherd.com** Your generosity is greatly appreciated. Thank you!

Ellen will be out of the office till January 2nd. If you need assistance, please contact Rick Wallace at 518-951-4596. The office will be closed December 25th for Christmas and January 1st for New Year's Day. There will be someone in the office on December 21st, 26th & December 29th to answer phones. The deadline to turn in your 2023 donations is **Friday, December 29th** at 9am, to count for 2023. **Keep in mind, any donations given at the December 31st Worship Service will be deposited on January 2nd and will not count towards 2023.**



Scripture

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

After the king was settled in his palace and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ² he said to Nathan the prophet, “Here I am, living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent.”

³ Nathan replied to the king, “Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the LORD is with you.” ⁴ But that night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying: ⁵ “Go and tell my servant David, ‘This is what the LORD says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in? ⁶ I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling. ⁷ Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their rulers whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?”’” ⁸ “Now then, tell my servant David, ‘This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, and appointed you ruler over my people Israel. ⁹ I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men on earth. ¹⁰ And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning ¹¹ and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders^[a] over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies. “The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you:

Luke 1:26-45

In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.” ²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰ But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. ³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be

called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end." ³⁴ "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" ³⁵ The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called^[a] the Son of God. ³⁶ Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. ³⁷ For no word from God will ever fail." ³⁸ "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her. ³⁹ At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, ⁴⁰ where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! ⁴³ But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!"