

**Welcome to Niskayuna Reformed Church
December 31, 2023
First Sunday after Christmas Day
Rev. Dr. Sherri & Rev. Michael Meyer-Veen**

The Approach to God

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

Welcome and announcements

Prelude O Little Town of Bethlehem

Redner/Valadez

Introit

Votum

John Moak

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

The Call to Worship:

Here on the heels of Christmas,

We speak of love.

We speak of joy.

We speak of candlelight and fireside.

We speak of dreams being fulfilled, and dreams for a New Year.

We speak of “glorias” and angel choruses.

We speak the words, “Do not be afraid.”

Here on the heels of Christmas,

We are called to speak, for the world needs a light.

A light shines in the darkness, and the darkness does not overcome it.

Let us worship and listen. Then, let us speak. Amen.

*Hymn of Worship *Congregational Selections*

*The Salutation and People's Amen: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

Call to Confession:

As we look ahead to this New Year,
let us take a moment to be honest with God
about whom we have been
and by God's grace discover and develop
a passion for who we might become.

New Year Prayer of Confession (Responsive) written by Vinita Hampton
Wright:

God of all time,
help us enter the New Year quietly,
thoughtful of who we are to ourselves and to others,
mindful that our steps make an impact
and our words carry power.

May we walk gently.

May we speak only after we have listened well.

Creator of all life,
help us enter the New Year reverently,
aware that you have endowed
every creature and plant, every person and habitat
with beauty and purpose.

May we regard the world with tenderness.

May we honor rather than destroy.

Lover of all souls,
help us enter the New Year joyfully,
willing to laugh and dance and dream,
remembering our many gifts with thanks
and looking forward to blessings yet to come.

May we welcome your lavish love.

May we cast off the small, vindictive god our fears have made.

**May the grace and peace of Christ bless us now and in the days
ahead. Amen.**

Kyrie Eleison:

Lord, have mercy upon us; Christ, have mercy upon us; Lord, have mercy upon us.

Words of Assurance: Galatians 4:4-7

“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent the Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of God’s Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” So, you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.”

*Gloria Patri:

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Special Music Silent Night

Gruber/Smith

The Word of God

Junior Sermon

Prayer for Illumination

Old Testament Reading:

Isaiah 61:10-62:3

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

Gospel Reading

Luke 2:22-40

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

Sermon “Those Who Dream...witness God”

Pastor Mike

A Prayer for Blessing Upon the Word



Announcements

At the December 10, 2023, Congregational Meeting, Steve Avveduti, Rick Mizenko and Tony Pechulis were elected to the office of Deacon. Joyce Anderson and Sue Lichtig were elected to the office of Elder. Sue Lichtig will be ordained and all of them will be installed to these offices at the January 7th worship service.

The January Mission of the month is going to be for the RCA Global Missionary Refugee Services directed to JJ Tenclay as RCA Mission Staff. More info to come as we get into January.

You are cordially invited to an:
Epiphany Party at the Meyer-Veens
3031 Troy Schenectady Road, Niskayuna, NY 12309
Saturday, January 6, 2024
4:00 - 7:00 p.m.

An informal time of sharing with friends & church family
Hors d'oeuvres & punch served, additional beverages welcome.

All are welcome. Come and go as you please.

Questions? Email PastorSherriMV@gmail.com, call or text 231-2151
OR Mikemeyerveen@gmail.com, call or text 231-6185

Scripture

Isaiah 61:10-62:3

I delight greatly in the LORD;
my soul rejoices in my God.
For he has clothed me with garments of salvation
and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness,
as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

¹¹ For as the soil makes the sprout come up
and a garden causes seeds to grow,
so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness
and praise spring up before all nations.

62 For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
for Jerusalem's sake I will not remain quiet,
till her vindication shines out like the dawn,
her salvation like a blazing torch.

² The nations will see your vindication,
and all kings your glory;
you will be called by a new name
that the mouth of the LORD will bestow.

³ You will be a crown of splendor in the LORD's hand,
a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

Luke 2:22-40

When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"^[a]), ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons."^[b]

²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷ Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to

do for him what the custom of the Law required, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

²⁹ “Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,
you may now dismiss^[c] your servant in peace.

³⁰ For my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹ which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:

³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and the glory of your people Israel.”

The child’s father and mother marveled at what was said about him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: “This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, ³⁵ so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

³⁶ There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷ and then was a widow until she was eighty-four.^[c] She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. ³⁸ Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹ When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰ And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.