

Micah 5:2-5a (NRSV)

The Ruler from Bethlehem

² But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. ³ Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. ⁴ And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; ⁵ and he shall be the one of peace.

Luke 1:39-55

Mary Visits Elizabeth

³⁹ In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰ where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴² and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³ And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴ For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

Mary's Song of Praise

⁴⁶ And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸ for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; ⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. ⁵⁰ His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. ⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. ⁵² He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly; ⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty. ⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, ⁵⁵ according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever." ⁵⁶ And Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.

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FIRST MENNONITE CHURCH

In Christ -
Making Disciples through
Loving Relationships.

Worship 10:30 a.m.

Fourth Sunday of Advent – December 19, 2021 Dare to imagine God's face!

What amazing love is this that the Godhead comes down to us in the little clan of a little people and takes on a human face? With Mary, we rejoice in God, our Savior, by actively participating in God's leveling mercy.

GATHERING

Gathering Music

Shirley Baltzer

Welcome, Announcements, Greeting

Keith Harder

Introit

Poor of the Earth

(VT 213)

Advent Ensemble

*Call to Worship

Keith Harder

Come.

Come as we are.

Come with your needs, your doubts, your dreams, your hopes.

Come, expecting God to meet us—here and in the innermost longing of our souls.

Watch. Wait.

God is present in our worship!

Hymn

With Mary Sing Magnificat

VT 208

Candle Litany

We light a candle of love, and imagine

the lowly lifted, fear met with love.

We light the candle and pray for God's face to shine on us, to save us, restore us.

Imagine that . . . we are God's wonders, blessed wonders.

Hymn

Hope Is a Candle (vs.1, 3, 5)

VT 211

Prayer of Confession

We notice, O God, that when you feed people, everyone has enough.

We notice that in our world, when we feed people, some have more than enough, and many are still hungry.

Teach us to love.

We notice, O God, that in your social, economic, racial, and gender orders, no one is greater, and no one is left behind.

We notice that in our world there are many ladders, and many are climbing.

Reorientate us to your vision of equality.

God of mercy, lower us, raise us, empty us, and fill us. Like an empty manger, we want to be ready to receive Emmanuel.

Words of Assurance (*adapted from Luke 1:46-49*)

Our souls magnify the Lord, our spirits rejoice in God our Savior. God has looked with favor on our lowliness.

The Mighty One has done great things for us, and holy is God's name.

Time for God's Children

Judy Harder

SHARING

Sharing and Prayer

Pastor Tom

Hymn

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

VT 218

LISTENING

Scripture

Micah 5:2-5a

Luke 1:39-55

Message

Mary's Song of Love

Pastor Tom

RESPONDING

Hymn

My Soul Proclaims with Wonder

VT 222

Benediction

Pastor Tom

Postlude

Shirley Baltzer

Our musicians this morning are: Holly Swartzendruber (song leader), Shirley Baltzer (organ); John Harder (violin); Tom Voth (violin); and Tom Harder (5-string violin and guitar).

The church office will be closed the next two Fridays, Dec. 24 and Dec. 31.

THIS WEEK'S FESTIVITIES: Christmas Eve is this Friday! The Christmas Eve service will begin at 6:30 p.m. (with prelude music starting at 6:10). The service will be in the traditional "Lessons and Carols" format, featuring a sequence of seven Scripture readings telling the Christmas story, interspersed with familiar Christmas carols or hymns. Readers will include Koren and Miranda Pawlowski, and Brayson and Connor Amstutz. Accompanying the singing will be Shirley Baltzer, organ; Anna, Hillary, and John Harder, violins; and Tom Harder, string bass and guitar. Holly Swartzendruber will sing the beautiful "Still, Still, Still" as one of the Carols. Next Sunday, December 26, will feature more celebratory singing of Christmas songs from *Voices Together*.

The Albrecht family would like to thank the church family for all the deeds of kindness done for them in this time. They have been overwhelmed with gratitude by the many phone calls, meals, prayers and cards. God is so good!

Poinsettias: You are invited to share poinsettias for Advent! Please place plants in the Fellowship Hall south window area. Plants can be taken home after the December 24 Christmas Eve Service. Thank you!

The advent wreath that we are using at FMC this advent season was made by Roger Ryder. In honor of his wonderful craftsmanship, let us all remember his contributions to the Hillsboro community. Please remember his family in your prayers this Christmas season.

Immerse yourself in the Christmas message with music and song today, Dec. 19 at 4 p.m. Hopeful Blues will host Doxology Ensemble, a 12-voice male ensemble from the Anabaptist community near Hutchinson. The Christmas repertoire includes arrangements of traditional carols, rousing spirituals, and soaring choral settings of scripture. The concert will be held at Hope Mennonite church, 868 N Maize Road, Wichita, KS. Admission is free, and donations are welcomed.

Visit Ebenfeld's Live Nativity today, December 19, 6-8 p.m. Drive through and listen to the story of Jesus on your radio at 1498 Kanza Rd.

Mennonite Disaster Service is monitoring the damage from the string of deadly tornadoes which moved through areas of the Midwest and parts of the South last weekend. We have several MDS teams investigating several of the sites to help determine how and where MDS will respond. Many of our partners are already responding. If you are interested in being added to a volunteer waitlist, please include your name, address and email address and send to: volunteer@mds.org. Donations may be made on the MDS website.