

12-08-2024 Words of Worship

Welcome –

(light the peace candle)

Good morning! And welcome to this time of worship at AMC.

Like many other traditions, the Service of Lessons and Carols was started by something that was happening outside of The Church that was then adapted and invited into The Church. In England, in the late 18th century, people often went caroling from house to house, sometimes singing Christmas carols but often singing what would have been viewed as more “contemporary pop” songs. There was much jocular, raucousness and consumption of alcohol with the carolers often ending up in the pubs.

So, rather than just scolding people, a certain pastor, a Bishop, actually, named Edward White Benson, wanted to give folks an alternative activity. So, in the hopes of inviting folks into the church for a worship service, he came up with a service of 9 Biblical lessons that told wide arc of the story – from creation, through the prophets and to the Gospels, telling about the coming Messiah, adding hymns and songs to go along with each reading. This service became known as the Service of Lessons and Carols and is still done and offered broadly throughout all denominations. Originally, it was done as a late-night service on Christmas Eve or another late night in the season when people were partying.

Many thanks to Renae for, again, putting this service together – she had the lovely idea of using the Peace Table, Storybook Bible for our readings this year.

May this morning-time service be a thoughtful balm for your soul and a reminder of God’s creative, loving plan of salvation for humans and all of creation.

Opportunities for Celebration and Service

Lighting the Advent Candles – Matt, Laura, Lillian and Greyson Voth

Call to Worship

Invocation – Holy Spirit, you are welcome here. Thank you for your presence with us. Enter each heart as it opens to you. Fill us with your wisdom, your grace and your love. Amen.

Morning Prayer –

O God, we come to you with full hearts. Some of us are busy – it feels like we’re meeting ourselves coming and going, making plans and preparations for gatherings or events. Some of us are burdened – with anxieties, illnesses, things that may be within our control but more likely, things that are not. Some of us are looking forward with eager anticipation to “next steps” in our plans or our lives and some of us spend more time reflecting, looking back at things that have been. God, you meet us where we are. You’re present with us no matter the contents of our hearts. For you have us and we are yours. As we worship you, we’re reminded to open our hearts to you so that we can experience your presence, your love, your comfort, your healing, your faithfulness to us.

We pray for Leona and the Schroeder family as they continue to adjust to life without Norman's physical presence with them. Grant them your comfort and peace. We pray for others who are grieving losses of loved ones in this season. Be especially present with them.

We pray for those who are sick – physically, mentally, spiritually. We ask for your Holy Spirit to bring healing in mind, body and soul.

We pray for students and teachers who are feeling the stress of the end of the semester deadlines and details. Grant them joy even in the midst of late nights and hard work. Grant them a sense of gratitude as they learn and teach and grow. Help us, as their parents, grandparents, friends, mentors and brothers and sisters in Christ, to be supportive and encouraging to them.

Bless us now, God, as we continue to worship, to sing your praises and hear your word. Move in our hearts and minds to make us more faithful disciples and more willing to receive your Love and Light so that we can share it with the world. Amen.

Offering Prayer

Benediction

In the Beginning was Jesus the Word.

The Word was with God.

The Word was God.

All things were made through Jesus the Word.

All of life and light came from him.

Light shines in the darkness and cannot be overcome.

God sent John into the world.

He was to tell others about Jesus, the Light of the World,
so that all people might believe.

Jesus the Word put on flesh and made a home with us.

Many people did not understand who he really was.

But he gave everyone power to become children of God.

The law was given through Moses.

***All: Everlasting love and truth came through Jesus,
The One who made God known to the world.***