

OSLER MENNONITE CHURCH

SUNDAY WORSHIP

December 27, 2020

Worship Leader: Patty Friesen

Children's Time: Patty Friesen

Pianist: Lynette Janzen

Sound: Matthew Stefaniuk

Song Leaders: Michelle McKinnell, Dayna Stefaniuk, Doug McKinnell

Ushers: Bill & Anna Peters

Christmas

On the road to rejoicing

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship: Psalm 148

L: Alleluia! Praise Creator from the heavens; praise in the heights!

People: Praise God, all you angels; and all you heavenly hosts!

L: Praise God, sun and moon; and all you shining stars! Praise God, you highest heavens; and you waters above the heavens!

People: Let them praise the Name of the Lord by whose command they were created. God established them forever and ever and gave a decree which won't pass away.

L: Praise Creator from the earth, you sea creatures and ocean depths, lightning and hail, snow and mist and storm winds that fulfill God's word, mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars, wild animals and all cattle, small animals and flying birds, rulers of the earth, leads of all nations, all the judges in the world, young men and young women, old people and children -

All: Let them all praise the Name of our God whose Name alone is exalted, whose majesty transcends heaven and earth, and who has raised up a Horn for God's people to the praise of the faithful, all the people dear to God! Alleluia!

Hymn: Purple/VT #264 "Still, still, still"

Still, Still, Still

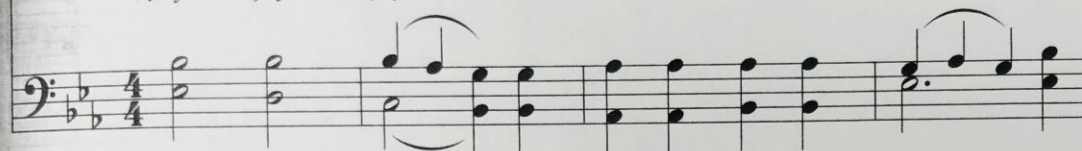
264

STILL, STILL, STILL 3.6.9.8.3.6

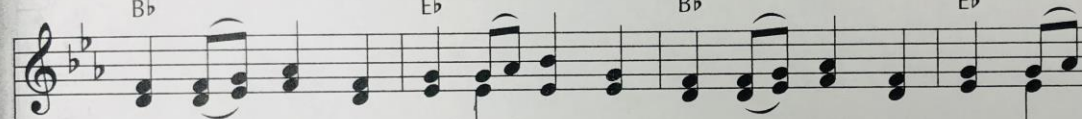
Capo 1: (D) (D/C#) (G) (D/A) (G) (A7) (D)
 Eb Eb/D Ab Eb/Bb Ab Bb7 Eb



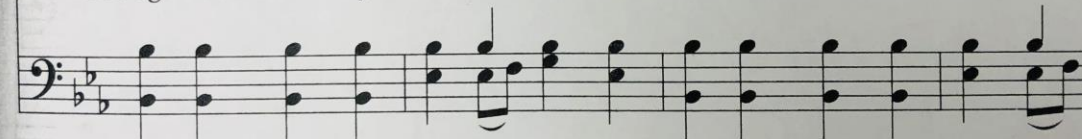
1 Still, still, still: the night is calm and still. The
 2 Sleep, sleep, sleep: sweet Je - sus, soft - ly sleep, while
 3 Joy, joy, joy; glad tid - ings of great joy! For



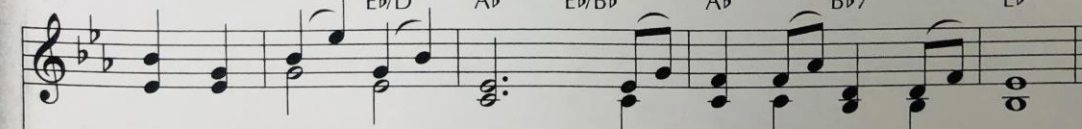
(A) (D) (A) (D)
 Bb Eb Bb Eb



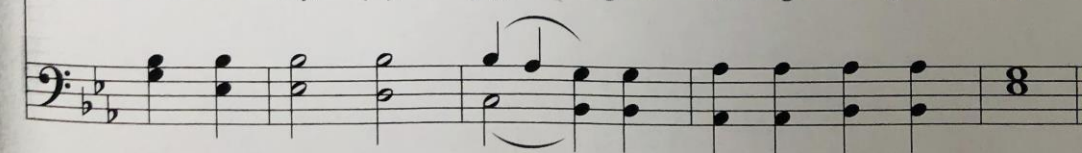
Christ - child in his crib lies sleep - ing; an - gels round him watch are
 Ma - ry sings, and gent - ly holds you, safe - ly in her arms en -
 through God's ho - ly in - car - na - tion, Christ is born for our sal -



(D/C#) (G) (D/A) (G) (A7) (D)
 Eb/D Ab Eb/Bb Ab Bb7 Eb



keep - ing. Still, still, still: the night is calm and still.
 folds you. Sleep, sleep, sleep: sweet Je - sus, soft - ly sleep.
 va - tion. Joy, joy, joy; glad tid - ings of great joy!



Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 61:10-62:3

I will joyfully exult in God, who is the joy of my soul! My God has clothed me with a robe of deliverance and wrapped me in a mantle of justice, the way a bridegroom puts on a turban and a bride bedecks herself with jewels. For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and a garden brings its seeds to blossom, so Creator makes justice sprout, and praise spring up before all nations. For Zion's sake, I will not be silent; for the sake of Jerusalem, I will not rest - not until her integrity shines like the dawn, her deliverance like a flaming torch. The nations will see your vindication and the rulers your splendor; you will have a new name that Creator's mouth will bestow. You will be a garland of beauty in God's hands, a solemn crown worn by your God.

Children's Christmas Song: **Gloria #204 HWB**

The image shows a musical score for a children's Christmas song titled "Gloria #204 HWB". The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a time signature of 6/8. It is labeled as "Canon" and "GLORIA III". The music consists of two staves. The first staff has four measures with lyrics: "Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a, in ex - cel - sis De - o!". The second staff has four measures with lyrics: "Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!". Above the notes are chord symbols: 1 Dm Gm C F, 2 Dm Gm C F, 3 Dm Gm C F, 4 Dm Gm C F. At the bottom, it credits the music to Jacques Berthier and mentions copyright information from 1979 by Les Presses de Taizé (France).

Children's Time: Patty Friesen

Offering Prayer/Offertory

Sharing Joys and Concerns/ Prayer of the Church

Hymn: Purple/VT #586 "All will be well"

Text: Carl P. Daw Jr. (USA), 1995, © 1996 Hope Publishing Company
Music: David J. Gonzol (USA), © 2019 David J. Gonzol

586

All Will Be Well

Ostinato Refrain

OUR LORD SAID THAT ALL WOULD BE WELL Irregular

Dm Gm/D C A sus A

All will be well, and all will be well, all

Bb C Repeat G

man - ner of things will be well.

Last time G Bb D

well, will be well, will be well.

Gospel Monologue: Luke 2:22-40 Jesus Presented in the Temple:
Edna Zacharias

22 When the day came for them to be purified, as laid down by the Law of Moses, the couple took Jesus up to Jerusalem and presented him to God. 23 For it's written in the Law of our God, "Every firstborn heir is to be consecrated to God." 24 They likewise came to offer in sacrifice "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons," in accord with the dictate of the Law of our God. 25 Now there lived in Jerusalem a man named Simeon. He was devout and just, anticipating the consolation of Israel, and he was filled with the Holy Spirit. 26 She had revealed to Simeon that he wouldn't see death until he had seen the Messiah of God. 27 Prompted by her, Simeon came to the Temple; and when the parents brought in the child to perform the customary rituals of the Law, 28 he took the child in his arms and praised God, saying, 29 "Now, O God, you can dismiss your servant in peace, just as you promised; 30 because my eyes have seen the salvation 31 which you have prepared for all the peoples to see— 32 a light of revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of your people Israel." 33 As the child's mother and father stood there marveling at the things that were being said, 34 Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, the mother, "This child is destined to be the downfall and the rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that is rejected, 35 so that the secret thoughts of many may be laid bare. And a sword will pierce your heart as well." 36 There was a woman named Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher, who was also a prophet. She had lived a long life, seven years with her husband, 37 and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the Temple, worshiping day and night, fasting and praying. 38 Coming up at that moment, she gave thanks to God and talked about the child to all who anticipated the deliverance of Jerusalem. 39 When the couple had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the Law of God, they returned to Galilee and their own town of Nazareth. 40 The child grew in size and strength. He was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was with him.

Response to the Scripture:

Leader: For the Word of God in Scripture,
For the Word of God among us,
For the Word of God within us,

People: Thanks be to God!

Hymn: Purple/VT #243 / HWB#206 "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly"

Infant holy, infant lowly 206

W ZLOBIE LEZY 87. 87. 88. 77

G D G G/B C D7 G

1 In - fant ho - ly, in - fant low - ly, for his bed a cat - tle stall;
 2 Flocks were sleep - ing, shep - herds keep - ing vi - gil till the morn - ing new,

D7 G D7 G G/B C D7 G

ox - en low - ing, lit - tle know - ing Christ the babe is Lord of all.
 saw the glo - ry, heard the sto - ry - tid - ings of a gos - pel true.

C Am D Bm Em Am Dsus D

Swift - ly wing - ing an - gels sing - ing, bells are ring - ing, tid - ings bring - ing;
 Thus re - joic - ing, free from sor - row, prais - es voic - ing, greet the mor - row:

G Am D7 Em Bm G/B C G/D D7 G

Christ the babe is Lord of all, Christ the babe is Lord of all!
 Christ the babe was born for you, Christ the babe was born for you!

Sermon: by Patty Friesen

Anna in the Temple/Julian in the Anchor-hold

Luke 2:22-40 by Patty Friesen Christmas Sunday, Dec. 27/20

Just as the Spirit had come upon John the Baptist, Mary, Elizabeth, and Zechariah, so also now Simeon is identified as one on whom the Spirit rests. Following this introduction of Simeon, the narrator reports that the meeting in the Temple was no accident. Simeon was guided there by the Holy Spirit. For the third time the Spirit is mentioned in the introduction to this scene. What is about to happen is God's doing. Devout Simeon was in the Temple because he was prompted to be there by the Spirit; Jesus' parents were there because they were fulfilling the requirements of the Law. Simeon says the coming of Jesus heralds peace, salvation for all peoples, a light for the Gentiles, and the glory of the Lord in Israel. "Peace" occurs 14 times in Luke, where it is both the goal and the result of God's redemptive work in Jesus. Simeon saw God's salvation not because he happened to live at the right moment in history but because his devotion and the work of the Spirit in him had led him to understand that God's hand was at work in Jesus' birth.

Luke is fond of pairing male and female figures in his narrative. The role of Simeon and Anna in the Temple at the end of the birth narrative balances the role of the aged Zechariah and Elizabeth at the beginning of the narrative. Anna's character and piety are emphasized, but not her words. As a prophet, Anna continues the tradition of female prophets in the OT (Miriam, Deborah; Huldah; and Isaiah's wife, Isa 8:3) and anticipates the role of female prophets in the early church (Acts 2:17; 21:9; 1 Cor 11:5).

I love this story of Anna the prophetess living in the temple. Sometimes I feel like I live at church during busy weeks but imagine actually living here: sleeping in the youth room, making breakfast in the kitchen and working out in the gym. It wouldn't be so bad. Other people in church history besides Anna have lived inside religious spaces. In the middle ages these people were called anchorites who lived in tomb-like/womb-like round dwellings attached to churches - inhabiting the liminal space between church and world. Socially distanced from the world, and freed from the distractions of the active life, they could devote themselves completely to contemplation and intercession. It took a step of faith to enter a space of isolation and it required even more faith, patience and resilience to remain there and find contentment. Can we learn from these church dwellers how to make the most spiritually of physical distance and isolation? (Christian Century, June 17/20, p. 12)

The late fourteenth century was a time of terrible upheaval. With the Black Plague, the Hundred Years War and the crisis of one pope refusing to give up to another pope burdened Europe with an atmosphere of anxiety. Intense concern about personal salvation outside the prescribed confines of church theology led to a proliferation of new forms of religious expression. Much of the new spirituality emerged from lay people aspiring to lives of holiness outside of conventional religious orders.

The yearning for a personal, experiential faith contributed to a flowering of non monastic Christian mysticism. Fourteenth century England produced a significant number of mystical classics, written in the vernacular, often by lay people living in self-isolation addressed to other lay people seeking a more intimate relationship with God. The Showings by Julian of Norwich is one and perhaps the greatest of these works.

Julian was born in 1342. At some point in her youth she prayed that she might be granted three graces: recollection of Christ's passion, and three wounds of contrition, compassion and longing for God. Her prayer was answered at the age of thirty when she fell so serious ill that she was given last rites. She did not die, but she experienced revelations about God our Creator who is also our Protector and Lover, working good through all manner of things. We are soul and body enclosed in the goodness of God.

Julian also meditated on feminine images of God. Jesus, she says is our true Mother who bears us in the womb of his love and nourishes us with his own flesh. Throughout her writings, the affirmation of the goodness of creation and her stress on the beauty, friendliness and love of God contrast sharply with a theology that emphasizes the anger and omnipotent judgement of God over a sinful world. She spent 20 years meditating and writing about these death-bed visions she received, patiently waiting for their meaning to emerge.

Later in life, she entered an anchor-hold which means she would have been literally sealed in a dwelling attached to the wall of a church. Her cell would have allowed a view of the church interior, as well as an outside window for the delivery of food and the reception of visitors seeking spiritual counsel. She may also have enjoyed a garden and the companionship of a cat. She is often pictured with her cat.

What may today seem like an extreme form of rejection of the world was recognized in her own time as serving an important social function to her community. She did not directly address the major political and health crises of her day but she was not remote from them. In an age of anxious uncertainty, Christians were desperate to seek assurances of salvation, of the meaning of suffering and of the power and goodness of God. Julian's central insight was that the God who created us out of love and who redeemed us by suffering love, also sustains us and

wills to be united with us in the end. This love, and not sin, fundamentally determines our existence. Evil has no independent status; whatever we may suffer, God has already suffered. The worst, as she noted, has already happened and has been repaired. Thus, she would say, in her most famous words, “All will be well, all will be well, and all manner of things will be well.” (Robert Ellsberg, *All Saints*, p. 210)

For Julian, the anchor-hold was not a tomb but a womb, as she was being formed into new life. Isolation can be a place or period of darkness, discomfort and uncertainty where nothing seems to be happening. It may not yield up ready insights or meanings. It may feel unproductive and useless. But for Julian in the anchor-hold and for Anna in the temple, the deeper truth of enclosure is that it is also a place of gestation. To believe this requires both patience and hope. It asks us to practice watching and waiting for what may be emerging, while we shelter at home, like anchorites resting in their cells and prophetess waiting in the temple. (CC. p. 13).

Let us pray...Sheltering God, you have held us and enfolded us in our homes while we wait out this pandemic. Thank you for glimpses of mercy and purpose in this waiting even while we get restless and bored as well. Help us see this time as rest and trust as we wait on you in the new year. Amen.

Hymn: Purple/VT #208 “With Mary Sing Magnificat”

208 With Mary Sing Magnificat

FOREST GREEN CMD

(D) G D Am D D7 G

1 With Ma - ry sing mag - nif - i - cat; with Mir - iam dance in praise;
 2 The One who hon - ored Riz - pah's stand a - gainst a king's de - cree
 3 With con - fi - dence we may pro - claim Love's lib - er - at - ing pow'r,

D G D Am D D7 G

with proph - et An - na speak a word of faith in joy a - blaze,
 and bol - stered clev - er mid - wives' plans to foil bru - tal - i - ty
 bear wit - ness to the sav - ing grace still with us ev - 'ry hour,

Em Bm D G D G C D

for love and mer - cy shall pre - vail; no need shall be ig - nored;
 re - mains through con - flict, doubt, and fear our Ad - vo - cate and Friend;
 and sing with thanks, de - light, and praise a new yet an - cient song;

D G D Am D D7 G

the lost shall find their home a - gain and ev - 'ry hope re - stored.
 each grief and loss shall be re - deemed; each pain - ful wound shall mend.
 to - geth - er sing mag - nif - i - cat with voic - es clear and strong.

Text: Jeannette M. Lindholm (USA), © 2000 Jeannette M. Lindholm (admin. Augsburg Fortress)
 Music: English traditional; harm. Ralph Vaughan Williams (England), *The English Hymnal*, 1906

Benediction: People of God, people on the road: Go forth, rejoicing, for like Anna and Simeon and Julian our eyes have seen the salvation of God!