

Worship Celebration: December 29, 2019
EPWORTH: a United Methodist Church

10:00 a.m. (TRADITIONAL)
1st Sunday of Christmas (Year A)

The Heart Of *Christmas*

*Gifts of
Christmas*

The Heart Of Simeon

Luke 2:22-38



Today is a special day for Epworth – it's Christmas! And it's the last Sunday for our Senior Pastor, Rev. Vicky Starnes. In this service we will celebrate Christmas and Jesus' entrance into the world, as well as reflect on the ministry we have shared with Rev. Vicky. The Gospel lesson for this First Sunday of Christmas speaks to beginnings and endings, as Simeon and Anna wait their whole lives to finally meet the Messiah, in the new born Christ Child. How does God call us to reflect on the ending we share with Rev. Vicky, even as we anticipate a new beginning with Pastor Vicki Gordy-Stith? As we celebrate Rev. Vicky's ministry, we will receive symbols of her ministry, in anticipation of sharing them next week with Pastor Vicki. God is with us – as we truly experience Emmanuel here at Epworth. Merry Christmas!

EPWORTH

a United Methodist Church

19285 Holland Glade Road, Rehoboth Beach, DE 19971
(302) 227-7743 ☩ www.eumcrb.org



VISION: Exploring Faith, Embracing Community

MISSION: Inviting All, Finding Your Place, Connecting to God, Demonstrating Care

☞ WE GATHER IN COMMUNITY ☞

Gathering Music

IT'S CHRISTMAS

Praise Team

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed, the little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where He lay, the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes, but little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.
I love you, lord Jesus! Look down from the sky and stay by my cradle 'til morning is nigh.

It's Christmas! The angels are singing, and I know the reason - the Savior is born.

It's Christmas! The bells are ringing, and I feel like shouting Joy to the World!

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay close by me forever and love me, I pray.

Bless all the dear children in Your tender care, and fit us for heaven to live with You there. {Refrain}

Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills, and ev'rywhere!

Go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born! {Instrumental - Refrain}

TAG: *Joy to the World! Joy to the World!*¹

Welcome & Sharing the Mission & Ministry of Epworth

Todd

*Passing the Peace of Christ

*Call to Worship (from *Gathered By Love* by Lavon Bayler)

L: Men and women, old and young, together:
Praise God and exalt the Author of Life.

P: Praise God in the highest heavens.
Praise God, all dwellers on the earth.

L: God commanded, and we were created.
God sustains us and enables us to grow.

P: Praise God, all who seek to live in faithfulness.
Glorify God's name and join the loving community.

L: Know that we are chosen by God, holy and beloved.
We are called into one body, the church of Jesus Christ.

P: Let us draw close to God and to one another.
Let us join with all creation to worship God.

*Carol

Angels We Have Heard on High

UMH 238

1. Angels we have heard on high sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

2. Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heavenly song? {Refrain}

3. Come to Bethlehem and see Christ whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee, Christ the Lord, the newborn King. {Refrain}
4. See him in a manger laid, whom the choirs of angels praise;
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid, while our hearts in love we raise. {Refrain}

Children's Celebration

Rev. Vicky Starnes

Opening Prayer

Todd

O God, giver of every gift, now and in times past, we remember your mighty acts that have given us strength and endurance through hardship and loss. We remember your steadfast love that has brought joy and new life. Be with us all in these days of change. We give thanks for all that has been good in our ministry together, and we confess with sadness those times when we have hurt one another or failed to live our ministry together faithfully. Forgive us, and help us forgive one another. Be now our shelter and our guide, this day and forevermore. Through Christ, the One in whom we have known grace and healing. Amen.

✠ WE ENGAGE THE WORD ✠

Hebrew Bible Lesson

Isaiah 63:7-9

Janet Taylor-Smith

I will recount the gracious deeds of the Lord, the praiseworthy acts of the Lord, because of all that the Lord has done for us, and the great favor to the house of Israel that he has shown them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love. For he said, "Surely they are my people, children who will not deal falsely"; and he became their savior in all their distress.

It was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

Epistle Lesson

II Corinthians 13:11-13

Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

*Gospel Lesson

Luke 2:25-40

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah.

Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, "Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."

And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too." There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

Brothers and Sisters,

This is the Word of God for the People of God.

SThanks be to God

Hymn of Response

There's a Song in the Air

UMH 249

1. There's a song in the air! There's a star in the sky!
 There's a mother's deep prayer and a baby's low cry!
 And the star rains its fire while the beautiful sing, for the manger of Bethlehem cradles a King!
2. There's a tumult of joy o'er the wonderful birth, for the virgin's sweet boy is the Lord of the earth.
 Ay! the star rains its fire while the beautiful sing, for the manger of Bethlehem cradles a King!
3. In the light of that star lie the ages impearled;
 and that song from afar has swept over the world.
 Every hearth is aflame, and the beautiful sing in the homes of the nations that Jesus is King!
4. We rejoice in the light, and we echo the song
 that comes down through the night from the heavenly throng.
 Ay! we shout to the lovely evangel they bring, and we greet in his cradle our Savior and King!

Sermon

Older, Wiser and Truly Blessed

Rev. Vicky Starnes

✠ WE RESPOND TO THE WORD ✠

Sermon Response

REAL

Hannah Ewald

Frozen statues in the cold, washed in moonlight, blue and gold.
 Mary's babe in plastic hay, quiet wonder on her face.
 Mary, you look so serene, far too pretty, much too clean.
 We might think we know you well but what stories would you tell?
 Of all the dirt and dust and shame; ev'ry burning labor pain.
 And as I turn to walk away I hear you say:

I am real. Don't turn me into memory or myth.

Let me be real, real, and I'll show you what it means to love like this. To be real.

Shepherds bending to the ground, Bethlehem is safe and sound.
Joseph, you look brave and true, but do we know what it was like to be you?
How many sleepless nights awake found you desp'rate and afraid?
And as I turn to walk away, I hear you say:

*I am real. Don't turn me into memory or myth.
Let me be real, real, and I'll show you what it means to love like this.*

To love like you don't even care about the hurry and the hustle.
Like you are unaware December comes with so much trouble.
'Cause you believe a baby came not in paintings or in plays,
but in ev'ry minute, ev'ry hour, ev'ry day. To be real... real.
You are real, real. Show us what it means to love like this.
To be real. To be real. More than a mem'ry. More than a story. Real. ²

Invitation to Offering *Please sign the blue Connections Pad and pass it down the row.*

Todd

*Offerings are given through cash and check, on-line giving, Texting at 302-488-0038
and by using our Giving Kiosk in the main lobby. There are Giving Cards in the pews to place in the plate, if you wish
Bless your heart for supporting our ministries!*

Offertory: *I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day* Praise Team & Chancel Choir

I heard the bells on Christmas day, their old familiar carols play.
And mild and sweet their songs repeat of peace on earth, good will to men.

*And the bells are ringing, "Peace on earth!" Like a choir they're singing, "Peace on earth!"
In my heart I hear them, "Peace on earth, goodwill to men.*

And in despair I bowed my head. "There is no peace on earth," I said.
"For hate is strong, and mocks the song of peace on earth, goodwill to men.

*But the bells are ringing, "Peace on earth!" Like a choir they're singing, "Peace on earth!"
Does anybody hear them? "Peace on earth, goodwill to men.*

Then rang the bells more loud and deep: "God is not dead, nor doth He sleep."
[Peace on earth, peace on earth.]

The wrong shall fail, the right prevail, with peace on earth, goodwill to men!"

Then ringing, singing on its way, the world revolved from night to day.
A voice, a chime, a chance sublime of peace on earth, goodwill to men.

*And the bells, they're ringing, "Peace on earth!" Like a choir they're singing, "Peace on earth!"
And with our hearts we'll hear them, "Peace, peace on earth, goodwill to men.*

*Do you hear the bells, they're ringing, "Peace on earth!" Like the angels singing! "Peace on earth!"
Open up your hearts and hear them, "Peace, peace on earth, goodwill to men.
Peace on earth, peace on earth. Peace on earth, goodwill to men." ³*

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Todd

§ 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 trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

☞AN ORDER OF FAREWELL TO VICKY STARNES AS SENIOR PASTOR☞

Litany of Response

Dear friends, you have allowed me to share the responsibilities of the ordained ministry in your midst. It is time for me to return to you these symbols of our life together. Will you hold them in trust until you offer them to your new pastor? § We will.

I was called among you to baptize. Here is water that symbolizes God's gift of Heather belonging to this family in Christ. *(a vessel of water is presented to a family whose child was recently baptized.)* § There is one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism.

I was called among you to proclaim the Good News. Here is the Bible, from Gwen which we have endeavored to preach a faithful word. *(A Bible is presented to a lay leader.)* § Thanks be to God for the Good News of Jesus Christ.

I was called among you to lead worship, to plan and guide our prayer and praise. Doug Here are the hymnals and books and papers from which we have drawn music and liturgy. *(Hymnals presented to music director.)* § We bring our praise and thanksgiving.

I was called among you to offer the sacrament of Holy Communion. Bev Receive now this chalice as a symbol of our life in communion. *(A chalice is presented to the layperson who is responsible for preparing the elements.)* § Taste and see that the Lord is good.

I was called among you to help order the life of the congregation through our vision Susan and mission. Here are our Mission Areas which guide and support our life together *(The Mission Area poster board is presented to the Governing Board Chair.)* § We are bound together in Christ Jesus.

I was called among you to help us all be good stewards of our resources. Chet I return to you the congregation's budget records and the keys to this church building. *(Records and keys are given to Trustee and Finance Chairs.)* § May we all prove to be faithful stewards of God's marvelous gifts.

I was called among you to lead us all in our Reconciling Ministry at Epworth FIRE Reps and in this Conference. This rainbow stole reminds us of our commitments to all God's people everywhere. *(Rainbow Stole is presented to FIRE reps.)* § We go to all the world in Christ's name.

I was called among you to lead Epworth through the changes before (Todd) our church, as our United Methodist denomination finds itself at a crucial crossroads. This key with the word COURAGE imprinted on it is a reminder of God's presence as you continue to forge this path. (*Courage Key is presented to Rev. Todd*)

§ Epworth will be Epworth and God is with us!

Litany of Dedication

L: And now, it is time for new beginnings. Today I complete my calling as your pastor. You will look now to your new pastor for all the privileges and responsibilities that are a part of pastoral leadership in this congregation. I will always be bonded with you as sisters and brothers in Christ, and I promise to hold you and your new pastor in prayer.

This is the beginning of a new relationship with you, and you with me, in Christ Jesus. As a symbol of this new relationship, I leave this stole at the altar for Pastor Vicki to pick up and wear on her first Sunday, as she begins her time as your pastor.

P: We receive this stole as a symbol of your ministry among us. We send you forth now with our prayers and blessing, for this is a day of new beginnings.

☞ WE ARE SENT INTO THE WORLD ☛

*Benediction

Vicky

L: As we journey through the Christmas season, more than a star guides us.

P: As we traverse the hillsides of faith, more than a messenger shows us the way.

L: As we ride the rapids of our lives, more than an angel shields us from harm.

P: When we live the truth of Christmas, more than the delight of holiday meals blesses us.

L: In Christmas, we taste the joy of our salvation.

P: We touch the presence of the living God.

L: Go with God.

*Sending Forth

DAYBYDAY

Day by day, Day by day, Oh, dear Lord, three things I pray:

To see Thee more clearly, Love Thee more dearly,

Follow Thee more nearly, Day by day. (*Repeat 4X*)

LAST VERSE:

Day by day, Day by day, Oh, dear Lord, three things I pray:

To see Thee more clearly, love Thee more dearly, (*Repeat line 3x*)

Follow Thee more nearly, Day by day. Day by day by day by day. ⁴

* = Please stand as you are able; § = congregational response

Bulletins for the month of December are sponsored in honor of Denny's birthday, 12/14, and granddaughter, Sarah's birthday, 12/16, by Laurel St. Germain.

Chancel Flowers are given to the glory of God and:

- ❖ In loving memory of her parents, Curtis & Charlotte Drury, by Diana Young;
- ❖ In God's glory to honor our pastor with love.

Stephen Ministers, wearing blue name badges, will be at each service if anyone in the Epworth family wants to talk about any life challenges.

The special Peace Candle on the Chancel shines to remind us of God's desire for peace throughout our world and our call to be God's peacemakers.

DVD and Broadcast Ministries: All Church Service at Epworth are presented using multimedia technology. The screens above the Chancel area are used for text, videos, photographs and live cameras. Each service is digitally recorded for archive purposes as well as for distribution to our homebound members on DVD. These recording may also be broadcast or archived on our web page. Therefore; you may, at any time, be seen and recorded on camera - anywhere throughout the Sanctuary.

Assisting with today's service as

- Greeter(s):** Nettie Green
- Acolyte:**
- Sound:** Josh Megee, Sharon Wert, Arne Jerfsten, Karen Kaufman, Sofia Tamburello
- Ushers:** Head Usher: Russ Mullen
Usher Coordinator – Worship Pathway:
Sam Sonnett, Russ Mullen

Ministers: The Church Family... *Lay Leader:* Gwen Osborne

Senior Pastor: Rev. Vicky Starnes ... *Associate Pastor:* Rev. Todd Shultz

Director of Music Ministries: Doug Yetter ... *Accompanist:* Linda Jo Hess ... *Coordinator of Caring Ministries:* Mickie McManamon

Communications & Technologies Manager: Kenneth Mahan ... *Office Manager:* Darlene Ford

Special Projects: Debbie Hunt ... *Administrative Assistant:* Diana Young ... *Sound Tech:* Josh Megee

Preschool Director: Betsy Plowman ... *Nursery:* Cathy Crawford ... *Cemetery Superintendent:* Jay Stevenson

Lead Interpreter: Sandy Davis...*Custodian:* Wanda Hudson ... *Maintenance:* Mike Harrigan



EPWORTH
REHOBOTH BEACH
a United Methodist Church
Open Hearts Open Minds Open Doors

19285 Holland Glade Road Rehoboth Beach, DE 19971
302.227.7743 www.EUMCRB.org



Large-Print Bulletins & Hearing Assist Devices are Available
Please see an Usher for assistance



American Sign Language
at 9:15 Service



Affiliated with other United Methodists for greater inclusiveness through the Reconciling Ministries Network
www.RMNetwork.org

worship@epworth
7:45 & 11:15 - Traditional 9:15 - Contemporary

Worship Resources

Song lyrics by permission of CCLI license no. 1019082.

¹ *It's Christmas:* Traditional; arr. Chris Tomlin & Ed Cash ©2015 Worship Together Music

² *Real:* Nichole Nordeman & Chris Stevens ©2013 Birdwing Music

³ *I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day:* Henry Wadsworth Longfellow; Mark Hall & Dale Oliver ©2008 My Refuge Music

⁴ *Day by Day:* Stephen Schwartz ©1971 Valando Music Co.