

SERVICE OF HOLY WORSHIP

December 24, 2017

11:00 am



Fourth Sunday of Advent ~ PEACE

Sermon:

“God is With Us”

Dr. Matthew Tennant

Scripture:

Luke 1:26-38

Anthem:

Joseph Dearest, Joseph Mine
— Broughton

Deacons: *Michelle Proffitt, Diane Mundell, Donna Marshall, Ed Smith, Jim Moore, Shirley Clark

Nursery Workers: Judy Gough, Suzanne Smith, Laura Faye & Carter Groff

Children’s Church: Pam Hallissy, Connor Marshall

Ushers for December: Ian Pallini, Ed Barker, Melvin & Mildred Spicer, Ron Tweel

Greeters: Pam & Jim Hallissy

Pray for those who have not
heard the Good News.

The Word

December 19, 2017

UNIVERSITY BAPTIST CHURCH

Vol. 69, No. 50

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA

On Watch

Peace in the Midst of Holiday Crazyness

Advent is almost over. The teenaged bride Mary seems like a distant dream. The simplicity of Jesus’ birth is far away. We have Christmas lists, parties, and shopping. At church, we have special worship services, music, and pageants. We fill the time. We talk about the coming Christ-child. We talk about the miracle. Secular holiday celebrations appropriate miracles. Santa becomes a symbol of the Greek ideals of truth, beauty, and goodness. Peace on earth gets trampled in Black Friday stampedes.

Consumerism is not the only attack on faith. Sometimes theology can undermine belief. Rudolf Bultmann demythologizes faith. And, the followers of the historical Jesus movement cast away birth narratives. This is somewhat like adults in Christmas movies who no longer believe in Santa Claus. Theologians ask good questions. Teasing out their answers need not erode faith. They can inspire critical thinking. They can help us bypass troublesome historicity and focus on God-incarnate. It can be like the end of a Christmas movie when everyone believes in the *spirit of Christmas*—can we have a definition, please?

Arianism views Jesus as subordinate to God. Docetism argues that Jesus appeared human but was really a phantasm. Adoptionism holds that Jesus became the Son of God at his baptism. The story of Jesus’ birth undermines these and other heresies. God entered the world. Jesus was fully human and fully God.

In the Bible, Mary sings. Joseph sees an angel. Jesus enters the world the way every other human has entered the world. He is a baby. His birth, life, death, and resurrection inspire 2.4 billion Christians around the world. Celebrations of Jesus’ birth on December 25 date to Pope Julius I in 345 CE. In twentieth-century America, Christmas developed into a cultural holiday of gift giving and celebrations. With each passing year, the celebrations increase. Movie makers find new ways to tell some version of the Christmas story, whether it involves Jesus or not. The words of the angels in Luke, “Peace on Earth” (Luke 2:14), fade. So, how can we find peace again?

Pause. Breathe. Think. Ask yourself, Who is Jesus? What does he mean to me? Why do I celebrate Christmas? Why do I give gifts? Why do I attend or throw holiday parties? Why do I attend or lead special Advent/Christmas worship services? All the activities surrounding the holiday can have value. They can remind us of who Jesus is and what he means to us. Parties celebrate our relationships with friends and family (John 15:13). Gifts can honor the recipient (Matthew 2:11). They can be about sharing with people in need (Hebrews 13:16).

In this busy season, the first step is to stop and take a deep breath. The second step is to think about Jesus, not the baby, but Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with God and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen. The third step is revisiting each item on the Christmas season agenda. In this process of slowing down and reflecting, we can keep the joy of the season. It can be fresh and new. We might even sense the childlike excitement of looking ahead to Christmas Day!

Peace,
~ Matt



Candlelight Service for the Entire Family

Sunday, December 24, 5:00 pm

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 Charlottesville, VA 22903
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 Fax (434) 979-6433
 Prayer Line (434) 923-0120
 Web Site www.universitybaptist.org



CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Concerns

Martha Wood — At Home

Thank You

Many thanks to you individually and collectively for prayers petitioned to God on my behalf. The acts of kindness shown—phone calls, cards, meals, and visits—during my recent surgery and recovery will not be forgotten.

— *Raynell Stokes & Family*

Stewardship Pledges for 2018

We invite you to prayerfully consider turning in a Pledge Card if you have not already done so. You can send your card to the church office, put it in the offering plate on Sunday, call Sue Walton at the office, or email office@universitybaptist.org

UBC Cancellation Policy

In the event of bad winter weather, announcements of any cancellations or changes in worship or church activities will be made on our local TV stations; Radio AM WINA 1070 and FM 98.9, ESPN AM 1450, FM WVTF 89.7, Z95.1, 3WV 97.5, and The Corner 106.1; and on the home page of our website. We will make an announcement usually no later than 8 am Sunday or 1 pm for Wednesday evening activities.



Your offerings this year have built on the successful ministry God has created at UBC. Please

prayerfully consider making an extra year-end gift to the church to set the stage for God's work in the future. All contributions need to be postmarked by December 31 to be included in the 2017 contributions statements.

Holiday Schedules

Church Office Closed

Mon., Dec. 25 and Tue., Dec. 26
 Mon., Jan. 1 and Tue., Jan. 2

No Wednesday Night Supper Programs, and Choirs

Wed., Dec. 20 and 27 and Jan., 3

No Sunday Bible Study

December 24 and 31

No Real Life Sunday, Dec. 24 and 31

WEDNESDAY, December 20

No Supper, No Activities

6:30 Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal

THURSDAY, December 21

9:30 Pre-K Play Group

SUNDAY, December 24

11:00 Morning Worship Service

5:00 Christmas Eve Candlelight

MONDAY, December 25

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

TUESDAY, December 26

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

WEDNESDAY, December 27

No Supper, No Activities

THURSDAY, December 28

9:30 Pre-K Play Group

Global Missions Post Office Reminder

- Pick up any cards addressed to you or your family.
- Do not place cards in the box after Sunday, December 24.



*Wishing you the gifts of Joy, Love, Hope, and Peace
 this Christmas and throughout the year.*

*Christmas Greetings from the Church Staff,
 Matt, Alba, Will, Sarah, Barbara, Sue, Alan, Thomas, and Lynn*