



Lake Toxaway United Methodist Church
Sunday, December 27th, 2020

Dear Lake Toxaway family and friends,

I wish I had the ability to play a musical instrument like Charlie or to sing like Will. They were given the gift of musical ability. When I listen as Charlie plays or Will sings, I remind myself how much practice it takes to perform to one's best ability because it never seems like it is hard for Charlie or Will. Well, I practice listening!

And listening does not get many admirers, not like playing or singing does, and yet listening is essential for the life of the Spirit. This week in the Gospel, we hear a story of a professional listener, a man who dedicated his life to listening. And then when the time came, he played. He sang the song he had been listening for. He sat down to play the tune he had learned by ear!

It is a long story, but we need to read all of it! We need to listen for a while. We need to catch the tune; we need to follow the rhythms. Simeon learned how to listen. His name means "heard." It was what he was born to do, so he did. He was listening day and night. He was listening for the future. He was listening for hope, the consolation of Israel. He was listening for that which would bring peace and light. Day after day, he went to the temple to listen. He heard the cries of the people, the sacrifices of animals, the songs of the prayers. He heard the loud and the quiet voices. He heard the rituals spoken sometimes as though it had lost its meaning and sometimes as though the meaning was so deep it resonated through the soul. He heard the wordless prayers that were wept from swollen and reddened eyes. He heard the proud and grateful prayers of those who knew how blessed they were. He heard them and wept and laughed with them. He heard them all.

But he heard more because he listened deeper. He heard the responses. He heard the sighs of the Spirit as it flowed like wisps of comfort into the hearts of the hopeless and broken. He heard the soothing song of blessing as it played on hearts less in tune than his, but attentive, nonetheless. And then, that day, he heard the transition of the music into a higher key. And he saw in his gaze and welcomed the One who comes!

Then Simeon, who lived a life of listening, became a teacher of the song he knew. He sang into the hearts of those who came carrying more than they knew. His song was a gift to the church, "now let your servant depart in peace." Maybe Simeon was not saying it was time to die; maybe he was saying it was time to stop listening as he had heard the song of the one who sings a song of salvation.

He might be done listening, but he is not done singing. He has to teach the song to those who will sing it. And his friend and colleague, Anna, teaches it to any and all who are around. You could not stand silent in this worship service!

It takes time to listen, but it is worth the effort! Maybe if we listen more to the Spirit, we might know rest as Jesus promised. But we can also learn to sing, to play by ear. The Spirit needs to be shared. The song needs to be sung with our voices and in our hearts and heads. In our singing God is in our midst, and we are listening and singing and enjoying the company.

Faithfully,

Marcus

**Lake Toxaway United Methodist Church
Community Worship Service
First Sunday after Christmas
December 27th, 2020**

9:30 A.M. Livestream link: <https://youtu.be/8yrl0-KIPVQ>

PRELUDE

He is Born arr. Raymond H. Haan

GREETING

L: From the stillness of the blessed night of Jesus' birth,

P: We come before You, O God, in praise and thanksgiving.

L: From the astounding news sung to the shepherds,

P: We thank You for the gift of Your Son.

L: Let our hearts keep the joy and peace of Christmas always.

P: Let our spirits rejoice in God's presence with us.

L: Fill us with Your love, O God.

P: Pour your peace upon us that we may be bearers of Your Good News.

ALL: AMEN!

HYMN #246

Joy to the World

Located in the back of the bulletin - (Printed w/ permission)

OPENING PRAYER

God of Promise and Mysterious Light, be with us this day as we journey in our faith; to meet your Gift. Give us courage and hope along our way, as your light will continue to glow brightly in our path, leading us to service and discipleship in Jesus' Name. AMEN.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Isaiah 61:10-62:3

- 61:10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
- 61:11 For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.
- 62:1 For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her vindication shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch.
- 62:2 The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will give.
- 62:3 You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

Psalms 148

- 148:1 Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise him in the heights!
- 148:2 Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his host!**
- 148:3 Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars!
- 148:4 Praise him, you highest heavens, and your waters above the heavens!**
- 148:5 Let them praise the name of the LORD, for he commanded and they were created.
- 148:6 He established them forever and ever; he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.**
- 148:7 Praise the LORD from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps,
- 148:8 fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling his command!**
- 148:9 Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars!
- 148:10 Wild animals and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds!**
- 148:11 Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the earth!
- 148:12 Young men and women alike, old and young together!**
- 148:13 Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his glory is above earth and heaven.
- 148:14 He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his faithful, for the people of Israel who are close to him. Praise the LORD!**

Galatians 4:4-7

- 4:4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law,
4:5 in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children.
4:6 And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"
4:7 So, you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

Luke 2:22-40

- 2:22 When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord
2:23 (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"),
2:24 and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."
2:25 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.
2:26 It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah.
2:27 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,
2:28 Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,
2:29 "Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word;
2:30 for my eyes have seen your salvation,
2:31 which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
2:32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."
2:33 And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him.
2:34 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
2:35 so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed--and a sword will pierce your own soul too."
2:36 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,
2:37 as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day.
2:38 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.

- 2:39 When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth.
- 2:40 The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

L: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

P: Thanks be to God!

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

(Let us offer our silent confessions.)

***Most holy and merciful Father,
We confess to you and to one another,
that we have sinned against you
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our
whole heart and mind and strength.
We have not fully loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We have not always had in us the mind of Christ.
You alone know how often we have grieved you
by wasting your gifts, by wandering from your ways.
Forgive us, we pray you, most merciful Father;
And free us from our sin.
Renew in us the grace and strength of your Holy Spirit,
for the sake of Jesus Christ your Son our Savior. Amen.***

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Behold! God has given God's Son that we might have life--new, vital, sparkling. Feel the wondrous power and love of God in your heart this day and know that God is with you always. AMEN.

In the name of Christ, you are forgiven.

HOMILY

STATEMENT OF FAITH (*United Church of Canada*)

We are not alone; we live in God's world.

We believe in God: who has created and is creating, who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh, to reconcile and make new, who works in us and others by the Spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church: to celebrate God's presence, to live with respect in Creation, to love and serve others, to seek justice and resist evil, to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope.

In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us. We are not alone.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

GLORIA PATRI (UMH #70)

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

OFFERING

<https://www.wnccumc.org/online-donations-to-churches>

OFFERTORY

Joseph Dearest, Joseph Mine arr. Michael Burkhardt

DOXOLOGY

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Lord of all we see and all that we cannot see: Give us this day a glimpse of the complexities of the world and the simplicity of living our lives centered in you; loving you with all our heart, soul, and mind, and loving our neighbors well. Bless the gifts we offer you; but in our giving, help us focus on these other more basic gifts. May the love we show you and others be a testimony of whom we follow and who is worthy of our devotion. In Christ's holy name, we pray. Amen.

PASTORAL PRAYER AND PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE WITH THE LORD'S PRAYER

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.

CLOSING HYMN #238

Angels We Have Heard on High
Located in the back of the bulletin - (Printed with permission)

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Carol of the Bells arr. John S. Dixon

STAFF & LAY VOLUNTEERS

Pastor: Marcus Dodson: 828-553-0282, marcus61dodson@gmail.com

Organist: Charlie Steele: cwsorgan@comporium.net

Church Administrator: Saunders Grommesh, 469-569-2314, administrator@laketoxawayumc.org

Lay Leaders: Barbara Kline: 828-862-5585 and Paula Markert: 828-553-9434

Audio/Visual for Livestream Chair: Andy Harvill

Soloist/Vocalist: Will Cowan

Liturgist:

Prayer Concerns of the Community

Please pray for Rev. Evelyn Owen-Patterson and her son. Evelyn is the pastor of the Selicia UMC, so we also need to pray for the congregation. They were in a bad car accident and is hospitalized with serious injuries.

Please pray for Chad Zimmerman, Doris Sims, Thomas Blackstock, Cathie Fussell's nephew, Jeff Tilley, Marty Young, Madison Coleman & the Jeter family and Frank Hardin.

Please continue to pray for those who have had the death of a loved one in the recent weeks and months.

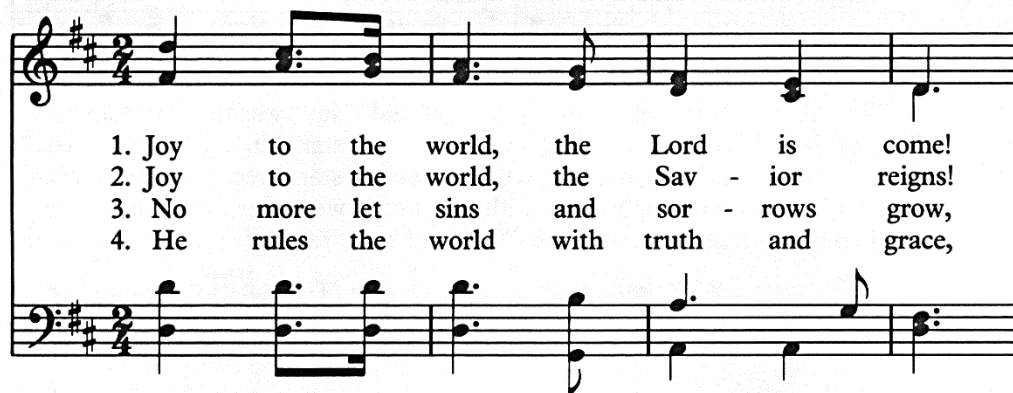
Announcements

9:30 AM Virtual Services: In order to maintain the health and safety of our congregation our services will be virtual only. Only the individuals necessary to conduct the service & provide sanctuary support (liturgists and a small group to participate will be in attendance). If you are interested in lending your support please reach out to Saunders at Administrator@laketoxawayumc.org.

Can you be a gift to our Students Scholars? Four Student Scholars Mentors are still needed. If you can pray, text, e-mail and call lending your support to our student scholars please reach out to Cathie Fussell at linguafrog@gmail.com or 910-572-2167. Now is a perfect time to be a mentor for next semester.

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Joy to the World



1. Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
 2. Joy to the world, the Sav - ior reigns!
 3. No more let sins and sor - rows grow,
 4. He rules the world with truth and grace,



Let earth re - ceive her King; let
 Let all their songs em - ploy; while
 nor thorns in - fest the ground; he
 and makes the na - tions prove the



ev - ery heart pre - pare him room,
 fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
 comes to make his bless - ings flow
 glo - ries of his righ - teous - ness,

WORDS: Issac Watts, 1719 (Ps. 98:4-9)
 MUSIC: Arr. from G. F. Handel, 1741, by Lowell Mason, 1848

ANTIOCH
 CM with Repeat

BIRTH AND BAPTISM

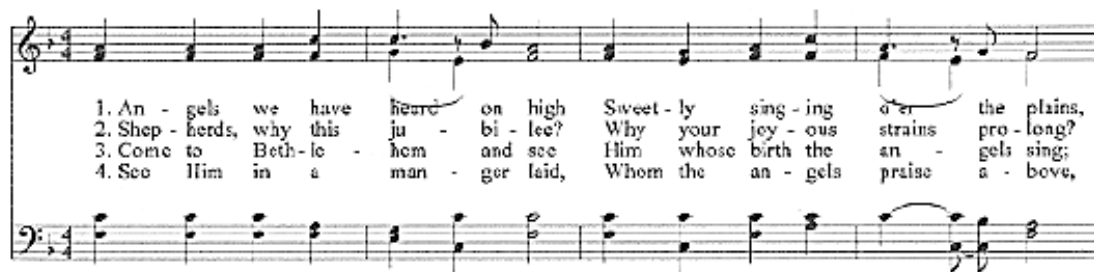
and heaven and na - ture sing, and
 re - peat the sound - ing joy, re -
 far as the curse is found, far
 and won - ders of his love, and

and re - peat the sound - ing joy, and
 re - far as the curse is found, far
 and won - ders of his love, and

sing, joy, found, love,
 and re - peat the sound - ing joy.
 re - far as the curse is found.
 far and won - ders of his love.

238 Angels We Have Heard on High

Traditional French carol



1. An - gels we have heard on high Sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,
 2. Shep - herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?
 3. Come to Beth - le - hem and see Him whose birth the an - gels sing;
 4. See Him in a man - ger laid, Whom the an - gels praise a - bove,



And the moun - tains in re - ply E - cho - ing their joy - ous strains,
 Say what may the tid - ings be Which in - spire your heav - en - ly song?
 Come, a - dore on bend - ed knee, Christ the Lord, the new - born King,
 Mar - y Jo - seph, lend your aid, While we raise our hearts in love.

Refrain



Glor i - a, in ex - cel - sis De - o!



Glor i - a, in ex - cel - sis De - o!

Music: Arranged by Edward Shippin Barnes
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