

***Welcome to Niskayuna Reformed Church***  
***December 18, 2022***  
***Fourth Sunday of Advent***  
**Rev. Dr. Sherri & Rev. Michael Meyer-Veen**

With Music from The First Nowell, by Vaughan Williams

**The Approach to God**

The Lord be with you. **And also, with you.**

Welcome and announcements

Prelude   Prelude

J. Scala, soloist

Introit

Votum

John Moak

Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. Amen

The Call to Worship: Psalm 84:1-4

How lovely is your dwelling place,  
O LORD, Almighty!

**My soul yearns, even faints,  
for the courts of the LORD;  
my heart and my flesh cry out  
for the living God.**

Even the sparrow has found a home,  
and the swallow a nest for herself,  
where she may have her young—  
a place near your altar,

**LORD Almighty, my King and my God.  
Blessed are those who dwell in your house;  
they are ever praising you.**

\*The Salutation and People's Amen: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

Advent Candle Lighting (Responsive)

The Persons Family

One: The light of God's love that shines in Advent is not like a palace where the privileged dwell, or a secret society open only to those who know the password. God's love is warm and welcoming, with room for all.

**All: God's love is like a house, inviting us to make ourselves at home in God's presence. Comforting us with grace and challenging us with truth. Reminding us of our belovedness and belonging as children of God.**

One: While we desire to live in righteousness with God and peace with our neighbors, fear and anxiety often cause us to put up fences to protect our own sense of safety and security. Yet those same fences can also make us more suspicious of our neighbors and less able to hear God's voice or follow God's ways.

**All: The Angel said to Joseph in a dream, "Do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."**

One: We light the first candle of hope, like a mountain that shapes our view and guides our steps in God's good promises. We light the candle of peace, like a river that washes us anew, making room for the Spirit of God. We light the candle of joy, like the wilderness, God's presence alive and untamed, blossoming into our world, and we light the candle of love, like a house, warm and welcoming, making room for us as God's beloved children.

*(Lighting the four Advent Candles)*

Let us pray,

**All: Creator God, maker of heaven and earth, as your light continues to break into the darkness of this Advent season, we join with all creation in dreaming of your love, dwelling among us like a home, warm and inviting, with room for all. Help us to make ourselves at home in your presence as your beloved children and help us to make a home for you in our hearts as your faithful disciples. Come, O Come, Emmanuel – God with us. Amen.**

Song of Response: “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” #147 (Verse 1)

*O come, O come E – man – u – el, And ransom captive Is – ra – el,  
That mourns in lonely ex – ile here, Until the Son of God appear.  
Re-joice! Re-joice! E – man – u – el Shall come to thee, O Is – ra – el!*

Anthem        The Salutation Carol and The Sussex Carol

## **The Word of God**

Junior Sermon

Prayer for Illumination

Old Testament Reading:

Isaiah 7:10-16

This is the Word of the Lord. ***Thanks be to God.***

\*Gospel Reading:

Matthew 1:18-25

This is the Gospel of the Lord. ***Praise to you, O Christ.***

Sermon

“Heaven and Nature Sing – *Houses of Love*”

A Prayer for Blessing Upon the Word

\*Hymn      Hail to the Lord's Anointed

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### **The Response of God's People**

The Offering

Offertory      How Brightly Shone the Morning Star

\*The Doxology 544 and Prayer of Consecration

The Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

\*Hymn      Away in a Manger

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\*The Benediction

Benediction Response

\*The Postlude      The First Nowell  
                         Sharon Greene, soloist

Please stand if you are able.

Guest Musicians: Jackie Wright, flute. Joey Van Ullen, bassoon. Katy

Svatek, horn. Marla Bracco and Brooke Vincent, violins. Portia Zwicker, viola.

### **Announcements**

You are invited to join us on **December 19** for our last soup and bread dinner in the fellowship hall followed by a brief worship service focusing on the season of Advent. These evenings will begin at 6:00pm and are open to all. There will be a sign-up sheet to help provide for our soup and bread. The worship time will be informal and will include scripture, prayer, a time of reflection and some songs of the season. We hope you can make it!!

At the December 11, 2022, Congregational Meeting, Kathy Drapeau & Tom Henery were elected to the office of Deacon. Janel & Linda Gardner were elected to the office of Elder. Kathy & Tom will be ordained and Janel and Linda will be installed to these offices at the January 8th worship service.

The NRC Sunday School will return to performing our beloved Christmas Eve Children's Service in person this year! The Service will be held on Saturday, December 24<sup>th</sup> at 5 pm. Parents and their children should arrive at 4 pm to get dressed and ready. Everyone is invited to join us in worship at 5 pm. Our Candlelight service will be held at 9 pm on Christmas Eve. Come join us in celebration of our Savior's birth! There will be **NO** coffee hour on Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

The 2023 offering envelopes have arrived. You can pick them up in the Education Building, right outside the church offices. The building will be open after church, or you can stop by during the week.

The office will be closed on December 26th & January 2nd. Ellen will be on vacation December 21st-January 3rd. There will be someone in the office on December 27th & December 29th to answer phones. The deadline to turn in your 2022 donations is **Thursday, December 30th** at 9am, to count for 2022. There will be a deposit done after 1pm on that day!! Pastor Mike & Sherri will be on vacation December 26th-January 3rd. While the Meyer-Veens and Ellen are on vacation, please contact Suzi O'Brien if you have an emergency or Rick Wallace with any other issues.

Our Mission of the Month Collection will benefit America's VetDogs. The service dog programs of America's VetDogs were created to provide enhanced mobility and renewed independence to veterans, active-duty service members, and first responders with disabilities, allowing them to once again live with pride and self-reliance. America's VetDogs specializes placing highly skilled service and guide dogs to individuals with physical injuries, PTSD, hearing and vision loss, and seizures. Their mission is to help those who have served our country honorably live with dignity and independence. All services are provided at no cost — including transportation to and from their campus in Smithtown, NY. Your generosity is greatly appreciated. For SiCM, we will be collecting **personal care items**.

**Do you have empty pill bottles that you don't know what to do with??** There is a collection box in the Education Building (next to the eyeglass box) for them. Your donations will be used to help underserved communities around the world. Please remove all labels prior to donating.

The Mission and Service Committee continues to collect **used eyeglasses** and **hearing aids** for the **Lions Club International** to distribute to those in need. The collection box is in the Education Building. Please check your homes for glasses or hearing aids no longer needed and bless someone else with the gift of sight or hearing.

Parents with infants and small children are reminded of the room behind the balcony with an audio system to hear the worship service if needed.

## Scripture

### Isaiah 7:10-16

Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, <sup>11</sup> Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. <sup>12</sup> But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test. <sup>13</sup> Then Isaiah<sup>[a]</sup> said: 'Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? <sup>14</sup> Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman<sup>[b]</sup> is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.<sup>[c]</sup> <sup>15</sup> He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to

refuse the evil and choose the good. <sup>16</sup> For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.

### **Matthew 1:18-25**

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah<sup>[a]</sup> took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. <sup>20</sup> But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' <sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

<sup>23</sup> 'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and they shall name him Emmanuel',

which means, 'God is with us.' <sup>24</sup> When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, <sup>25</sup> but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son;<sup>[b]</sup> and he named him Jesus.