December 29, 2019

GUIDE FOR WORSHIP

Hearing assistance is available, please see an usher
Please join in responses printed in blue lettering
*All who are able, please stand

Those seated on the aisle, please fill out the welcome sheet on the clipboard in the pew rack, and pass it to the next person. Request: the last person to sign, please put the sheet in plate. Thank you.

Welcome

Prelude

Call to Worship

“The Work of Christmas”  
by Howard Thurman

When the song of the angels is stilled,  
when the star in the sky is gone,  
when the kings and princes are home,  
when the shepherds are back with their flocks,  
the work of Christmas begins:  
to find the lost,  
to heal the broken,  
to feed the hungry,  
to release the prisoner,  
to rebuild the nations,  
to bring peace among the people,  
to make music in the heart.

*Gathering Song

“It Came Upon the Midnight Clear” vv. 1, 3 & 4

*Gathering Prayer

“Lord, make me an instrument of Thy Peace.”  
Teach me how to order my days, that with your sure touch  
I may say the right word  
at the right time  
and in the right way—  
lest I betray the spirit of peace.  
Let me not be deceived by my own insecurity and weakness  
which would make me hurt another as I try desperately to help myself.  
Keep watch with me, O my God, over the days of my life,  
that with abiding enthusiasm I may be in such possession of myself  
that each day I may offer to Thee the full, unhampered use of me,  
in all my parts, as an instrument of Thy Peace.  

Amen.

Children’s Time

Barb Thompson
A Reading by Howard Thurman

“Look well to the growing edge! All around us worlds are dying and new worlds are being born; All around us life is dying and life is being born. The fruit ripens on the tree; the roots are silently at work in the darkness of the earth against a time when there shall be new leaves, fresh blossoms, green fruit. Such is the growing edge! It is the extra breath from the exhausted lung, the one more thing to try when all else has failed, the upward reach of life when weariness closes in upon all endeavor. This is the basis of hope in moments of despair, the incentive to carry on when times are out of joint and [people] have lost their reason, the source of confidence when worlds crash and dreams whiten into ash. The birth of the child—life’s most dramatic answer to death—this is the growing edge incarnate. Look well to the growing edge!”

Message

“May I Suggest...”

Song of Response

“May I Suggest”
Susan Werner, soloist and composer

Prayers of the People/Lord’s Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name. Thy kindom 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 kindom, and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Invitation to the Offering

“I give you the gift of peace.
In the same way God sent me, I am now sending you.”
- John 20:21

*Doxology

“Make Us One”
(sung twice)
*Prayer of Dedication*

O God of all good longings and possibilities, when we are spent from the labor and longing to rest in our deliverance, when we hunger to stay in the celebration and crave a lasting sabbath, you tell us this is where our work begins.

For the labor that is never over,
give us strength;
for the healing that is ever before us,
give us coverage.

May our resting be for renewal, not forever; and may we work for nothing save that which makes your people whole.

Amen.

*Blessing and Commissioning*

*Sending Forth Song*  
“Peace I Leave with You, My Friends”  
Page 5 & 6

Postlude

**Sources:**


**Reading** is by Howard Thurman, *The Mood of Christmas & Other Celebrations* (Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1985), 23.

**Prayer of Dedication** adapted from Jan Richardson, in *Night Visions*, 1998, p. 89.