



**December 28, 2025**  
**First Sunday After Christmas**  
***Let Fear Fuel a Fire for Justice***

**PRELUDE (A Time for Quiet Meditation)**

*Listen to the Angels*

*Mark Hayes*

**WORDS OF WELCOME / ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**\*RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: In worship we hear God's story and we ask,

**All: "What did God do long ago?"**

One: "What is God doing, here and now?"

**All: "What can I do in response?"**

One: Listen, God is speaking. Listen, it may be time to act.

**All: Let us worship our moving, inspiring, with-us God.**

**\*GATHERING SONG #110**

*Love Has Come*  
*(verse 1)*

*Bring a Torch*

***Love has come: a light in the darkness! Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies. See, all heaven has come to proclaim it; hear how their song of joy arises: Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior! Love! Love! Glory to God on high.***

*(verse 2)*

***Love is born! Come, share in the wonder. Love is God now asleep in the hay. See the glow in the eyes of his mother; what is the name her heart is saying? Love! Love! Love is the name she whispers. Love! Love! Jesus, Emmanuel.***

*(verse 3)*

***Love has come and never will leave us! Love is life everlasting and free. Love is Jesus within and among us. Love is the peace our hearts are seeking. Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas. Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!***

Text by Ken Bible / Text ©1996 LNWhymns.com (admin. Music Services) / Reprinted under OneLicense.net #A-722956

**CALL TO CONFESSION**

One: God's invitation is simple: do justice, love kindness, walk humbly with God. And yet, those acts have always been easier said than done. In confession, we speak honestly with God. In response, God offers us grace, picks us up, and shows us the way to keep walking toward God:

**UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**Emmanuel, God with us, you call on us to remember, but we love to forget: to forget how many people go hungry; to forget every act of gun violence; to forget how many students do not have access to good education. We love to forget the injustices in our world that feel too big for us to face.**

\*Please stand as you are able.

**But you are a God who refuses to forget. So today we pray: make it impossible for us to overlook the stories of those in need. Make it impossible for us to sweep injustice under the rug. Open our eyes and our hearts and fuel a fire for action; with hope for a better tomorrow.**

*(Time of Silence)*

### **WORDS OF FORGIVENESS**

One: Family of faith, even when we fail to do justice and love kindness; even when we allow fear to freeze us in place, God still loves us. On our best days and our worst, we are held in God's grace. We are forgiven. We are sent to serve.

**All: Thanks be to God. Amen.**

### **\*SONG OF RESPONSE #136**

*Go, Tell It on the Mountain*  
*(refrain)*

*Go Tell It*

***Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere; go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!***

*(verse 3)*

***Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born, and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn.***

*(refrain)*

### **\*SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

One: In Christ we discover a peace that surpasses all human understanding. Let us share that same peace with one another. The peace of Christ be with you.

**All: And, also, with you.**

### **BLESSING FOR THE MEAL**

Thank you God for the bread. To those who hunger, give bread. To those who have bread, give a hunger for justice. Thank you God for the bread. Amen.

### **SERVING THE MEAL**

### **UNISON PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

**Thank you God for the Word. To those who seek your truth, may they hear your Word clearly. To those who hear your Word clearly, may they speak of love fervently. Thank you God for the Word.**

### **SCRIPTURE READING**

*Matthew 2:1-23*

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup> asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' <sup>3</sup> When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; <sup>4</sup> and calling together all the chief priests and

\*Please stand as you are able.

scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. <sup>5</sup> They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: <sup>6</sup> "And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel."'

<sup>7</sup> Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup> Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' <sup>9</sup> When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup> When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. <sup>11</sup> On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. <sup>12</sup> And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

<sup>13</sup> Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.' <sup>14</sup> Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, <sup>15</sup> and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, 'Out of Egypt I have called my son.'

<sup>16</sup> When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. <sup>17</sup> Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: <sup>18</sup> 'A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.'

<sup>19</sup> When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, <sup>20</sup> 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead.' <sup>21</sup> Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel.

<sup>22</sup> But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. <sup>23</sup> There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, 'He will be called a Nazorean.'

## **TABLE DISCUSSION**

**TIME OF RESPONSE** – "Is Justice Worth It?" by Micah Bournes (video)

## **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

## **\*SENDING SONG #100**

*My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout*

*(verse 1)*

*Star of the County Down*

***My soul cries out with a joyful shout that the God of my heart is great,  
and my spirit sings of the wondrous things that you bring to the ones  
who wait. You fixed your sight on your servant's plight, and my  
weakness you did not spurn, so from east to west shall my name be  
blest. Could the world be about to turn?***

*(refrain)*

***My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your justice  
burn. Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is  
about to turn.***

*(verse 2)*

***Though I am small, my God, my all, you work great things in me, and  
your mercy will last from the depths of the past to the end of the age to  
be. Your very name puts the proud to shame, and to those who would for  
you yearn, you will show your might, put the strong to flight, for the  
world is about to turn.***

*(refrain)*

Text by Rory Cooney / ©1990 GIA Publications, Inc. / Reprinted under OneLicense.net #A-722956

## **\*BENEDICTION**

### **POSTLUDE**

*Joy to the World!*

*Joel Raney*

\*Please stand as you are able.

---

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Every Day for Everyone Bible Study**

Thank you to all the faithful participants of this 2025 year-long bible study.  
Our **final discussion group** will be on **Sunday, January 4, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.**  
in the church library.

### **Pass-it-on Resale Store**



The **store will be open** on:

**Friday, January 9, 2026**

(1 p.m. – 4 p.m.)

**Saturday, January 10, 2026**

(10 a.m. – 2 p.m.)

Pass-it-on is accepting donations. Please contact Brenda Wahl at  
440-829-7841 or [passitonamissionoflove@gmail.com](mailto:passitonamissionoflove@gmail.com).

### **Notice from Treasurer's Office**

If you would like to have your 2025 pledges credited to 2025, please turn them  
into the offering basket no later than today, December 28.

## **Offering Envelopes for 2026**

For those that receive offering envelopes, please retain the current box you have for 2026. If at any time you are in need of more envelopes, please contact the office. If you do not receive envelopes and would like to, please contact the church office.

### **VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

**[www.valleypresbychurch.org](http://www.valleypresbychurch.org)**

**VPC Guest Wifi Password: VPC12345**

17560 Chillicothe Road  
Chagrin Falls, OH 44023  
Phone: (440) 543-1071  
Email: [valleypc@netlink.net](mailto:valleypc@netlink.net)

Rev. Dr. John Wahl, Pastor  
Cell Phone: (216) 287-2405  
Email: [revjohnwahl@netlink.net](mailto:revjohnwahl@netlink.net)

Heart of Valley Preschool  
Heidi Cregar, Director  
Phone: (440) 708-2572  
Email: [hovcp@netlink.net](mailto:hovcp@netlink.net)

Director of Music: Nancy Sullivan  
Liturgist: Beth Krause

Organist: John Kautzman  
Greeter: Gerry Chittock