

# Church on the Hill

A Congregation of the  
Reformed Church in America  
167-07 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Flushing, NY 11358

**December 24, 2023**

**10:30 AM**



Photo Credit: Emerson Chen Photography

**Rev. Dr. Ian Rottenberg — Guest Preacher**

**Mr. Sean Cotty — Music Director**

# ORDER OF WORSHIP

## Fourth Sunday of Advent

**BOLD** – Congregation responds

\* – Congregation Stands

**Prelude**

O Tannenbaum

Vince Guaraldi

**Welcome**

\* **Gloria Patri**

*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.*

**Votum**

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

**Sentences of Scripture**

**Prayer of Invocation**

Gracious God, we call upon your name, thanking you for your presence in our midst and yearning to receive your spirit in our hearts. Bless us with the hope, peace, joy, and love of this Advent season. Bless our words, our prayers, our songs, and our fellowship through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

**Advent Candle Lighting**

Love

The Rottenberg Family

**Call to Worship**

(From Psalm 89)

I will sing of your steadfast love, O Lord, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations. **I declare that your steadfast love is established forever; your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.** You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to my servant David: **'I will establish your descendants forever, and build your throne for all generations.** I will set his hand on the sea and his right hand on the rivers.' **You are my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation!**

\* **Hymn No. 145**

Of the Father's Love Begotten

## Prayer of Confession

Loving God, you see into each of us and know us fully as creatures in need of your constant care. We confess that we have neither heard your word nor followed your will. We have failed through things that we have done, and things that we have left undone. Give us a receptive spirit to hear your wisdom, and renew us in your strength. Amen.

## Assurance of Pardon/God's Wisdom for Life

**Anthem**            Praise Ye the Lord of Hosts (from the Christmas Oratorio)  
Camille Saint-Saens

*Praise ye the Lord of hosts, sing his salvation,  
Bless His name, show forth his praise in His holy house!  
Rejoice, ye heavens, and be joyful, on earth,  
Rejoice in the face of the Lord, for he cometh. Alleluia.  
Rejoice ye angels, rejoice all ye nations  
Now in the face of the Lord, for he cometh. Alleluia.*

## Prayer of Illumination

Open our eyes that we may see. Open our ears that we may hear. Open our hearts that we might accept your word for our lives. **Amen.**

## Scripture Readings

Simon Walsh

Luke 1: 26-38

p. 831

*This is the Word of the Lord.*

**Thanks be to God.**

## Sermon

Christmas Preparation

Rev. Dr. Ian Rottenberg

## \* Confession of Faith

The Apostles' Creed (RCA contemporary version)

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth.  
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.  
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
And born of the Virgin Mary.  
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
Was crucified, died, and was buried.  
He descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again.**

**He ascended into heaven,  
And is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
The holy catholic<sup>†</sup> Church,  
The communion of saints,  
The forgiveness of sins,  
The resurrection of the body,  
And the life everlasting. Amen.**

*† The word "catholic" means "universal,"  
referring to all followers of Christ worldwide.*

## **Anthem**

Dixit Maria

Hans Leo Hassler

*(Sung in Latin)*

*Mary said to the Angel:*

*Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord,*

*Let it be done to me, according to your word.*

## **\* Doxology**

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow,***

***Praise Him all creatures here below,***

***Praise Him above, ye heavenly host,***

***Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.***

## **Prayers of the People**

### ***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.**

**Lead us not into temptation,**

**But deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the Kingdom and the power**

**And the glory, forever. Amen.**

**Prayer Response**

O Jesus, Grant Me Hope and Comfort

*O Jesus, with Thy advent quiet  
My restless soul and anxious mind.  
In true humility I welcome Thee,  
Jesus Christ, my Joy divine.  
My thought, desires, and all my longings  
I dedicate, O Christ, to Thee.  
O come, Thou precious Sun most radiant,  
Thy beams illumine my heart and soul.*

**\* Hymn No. 133**

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

**\* Benediction**

**Response** (please be seated)

Veni Emmanuel

*Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!*

**Postlude**

Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy (from the Nutcracker Suite)

Tchaikovsky

## Music Notes

*Praise ye the Lord of Hosts* by Camille Saint-Saens (1835-1921) is the final movement in his Christmas Oratorio composed in 1858. The Oratorio has some similarities to J. S. Bach's Christmas Oratorio in the introductory movement and in that both works close with a chorale. It is worth noting, however, that with a total duration of approximately 40 minutes, Saint-Saens' Oratorio differs from Bach's three-hour work which was originally offered over six consecutive feast days. Saint-Saens uses the text from Luke 2 to tell the Christmas story and uses verses from Isaiah, Psalms, Lamentations, and John to explore the meaning of the birth of the Christ child.

Two of this morning's pieces are considered to be motets; *Dixit Maria* by Hans Leo Hassler (1564-1612) and the verse from Johann Wolfgang Franck's (1644-1710) *O Jesus, Grant Me Hope and Comfort*. A motet is loosely defined as any choral piece sung in multiple parts. If this definition seems to cover most pieces of church choral music, it's because it does. But this masks the motet's origins. While motets are not limited to sacred music, previously "sung" church music was primarily plainchant. Beginning around 1200, unidentified composers began to shape notes to match the words and added multiple voices. By the 15th century, polyphony and imitative counterpoint had become part of many compositions and motets flourished. As this morning proves, they remain a vibrant part of worship.

When the motet form was early in its development, a French music theorist named Jean de Grouchy (although professionally he went by the Latin form; Johannes de Grocheio) had reservations as to who should listen to this new music form. He believed that motets should not be heard by common people, "...because they do not notice its subtlety, nor are they delighted in hearing it; but [it should be heard] in the presence of the educated and those who are seeking out subtleties in the arts." We here at Music Notes believe that all in this congregation enjoy status in this second group.

## Announcements

### **CHILDREN AT WORSHIP**

Children at Worship will return on January 7th.

### **COFFEE HOUR**

Please join us for coffee hour after the service, downstairs in Gessner Hall.

### **OFFERING**

If you feel called to give, offering plates are located in the rear of the sanctuary, where you can leave your offering upon entry or exit of the sanctuary.

### **BARGAIN BOUTIQUE**

The Bargain Boutique will be closed Saturday, Dec. 30th, and will reopen on January 6. The Bargain Boutique is open on Saturdays from 10 am- 1 pm. Donations are accepted on Saturdays only. \*We are unable to accept: Electronics, TVs, Furniture, Textbooks, and Large Toys/Stuffed Animals\*

### **JOIN OUR EMAIL LIST!**

Be sure to sign up for our email list to keep up with the latest Church on the Hill happenings through the weekly email and the Beacon. A sign-up form can be found on **[churchonthehill.org](http://churchonthehill.org)**

## Prayer Requests

*If you would like to add a loved one to the prayer list, or if your loved one no longer needs to be on the prayer list, please contact the church office at [office@churchonthehill.org](mailto:office@churchonthehill.org)*

Karin Bennett

The Bermudez Family

Diane Blagburn

Katie and Clayton Buckley

The Cappellano Family

Richard D.

Thomas Degnen

Gabriel DeMelo

Lucas Ditta

Jim Doliner

Joanne Dunckhahn

The Family of Randy Eastman

Alison Friedman

Adam Gonzalez

The Greer Family

Rudy Jakob

Mary and Norman Kansfield

Susan Laurita

Donna Lemay

Gessa Markantonis

Rose McLain

Kathy Mendler-Murphy

Paul Mobius

Marti and Tom Pearce

The Family of Rev. Bob Perless

Iris and Ralph Prager

Patrick Sullivan

Ed Surujballi

Virginia Young



The sanctuary is looped for the hard of hearing. In order to connect to the system, please sit in the north set of pews (on your right when you enter the sanctuary) and set your hearing device to the "T" setting.



Nancy Gessner, Victor Han, **Vice Presidents**  
Nancy Gessner, **Clerk**

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- Linda Diez
- Nancy Gessner (VP)
- Victor Han (VP)
- Rhoda Jabbour
- Sarah White

**Deacons**

- Ginny Chan
- Emerson Chen
- Jerry Lutz
- Adriene Toy

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