

New Holland Mennonite Church

December 29, 2024 • Volume 69, No. 52
Brunch: 9:30 a.m. • Worship: 10:00 a.m.

WORDS FOR THE BEGINNING — LOVE KNOWS YOUR NAME —



Gathering & Praising God

O Come All Ye Faithful Michael Lucarelli, classical guitar
Call to Worship / Candle Lighting Brenda Hurst

In a weary and worn world,
how do we begin again?
Where do we start?

Let us begin with hope.

Let us begin with peace.

Let us begin with joy.

Let us begin with love.

Yes, let us begin with love,

for surely love knows your name.

Today, in addition to the candles of hope, peace, joy, & love,
we light the Christ Candle.

For surely God is in this place.

Surely the Spirit is near.

Surely love knows our name.

May we rest in that good news.

Unto us a child is born.

A light shines in the darkness

and the darkness cannot overcome it.

Glory to God in the highest heaven! Amen.

Prayer for Illumination

Brenda Hurst

Oh, Holy Night

Ray Hurst, solo

Hearing God's Voice

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

Ray Hurst

To us a Child of hope is born (HWB 189)

Luke 2:1-5

Ruth Douglas Miller

O little town of Bethlehem (HWB 191) Kaleb Brasee, piano

Luke 2:6-7

Francy Bailey

Silent night, holy night Handbell duet: 6 bells & piano

Luke 2:8-14

Brenda Hurst

It came upon a midnight clear (HWB 195, vs 1, 2, 5) Organ

Luke 2:15-20

Marilynn Miller

What Child is this (HWB 215)

Responding

Affirmation of Faith

We believe that on Christmas night

a baby was born and placed in a manger.

**We believe that baby was God's love in the flesh,
who grew up to love the outcast and change the world.
We believe that Jesus' love was so big and so personal
that the world will never be the same.
So despite the mystery of this holy night,
we believe that a star shone,
that the shepherds ran,
that the angels sang,
and that love was born.
Yes, we believe it when the prophets say
that unto you,
unto us, a savior is born.
Glory to God in the highest heaven!
We believe.**

Communion

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming (HWB 211) Kaleb Brasee, piano

Prayer of the People Ray Hurst

Announcements

Sending

Joy to the world (HWB 318, vs 1, 2, 4) Organ

Benediction

Liturgy by Rev. Sarah Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

Coffee: Sue Martin; **Greeter/Close:** Tim Martin

Meal Coordinator: Pat Thomas

Offering: Francy Bailey & Keith Miller

December 22:

Attendance: 37 (4 Zoom) • **Offering:** \$2,705.00

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

January 2: Gloria Hartley

January 5: Steven Lantz & Lois Zimmerman

NEXT SUNDAY: January 5

Coffee/Greet: Pat Thomas; **Close:** Steven Lantz

Song Leader/Prayer: Jenn Esbenshade

Children's Time: Steven Lantz; **Worship Leader:** Jen Morales;

Sermon: John Denlinger; **Nursery:** Danika Snader

Sound: Kai Esbenshade

Offering: Wade Esbenshade & Lois Zimmerman

Artwork Front Cover: "Abolition Baby"

by Rev. Nicolette Peñaranda

Inspired by Luke 2:1-20 / Isaiah 9:6 / Paper collage on canvas

Before I started this piece, I went to the Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts and Culture in Charlotte, North Carolina. As our guide explained some of the architectural features of the building, I learned that abolitionists used to hang quilts outside of their homes to signal safety for those on the underground railroad. A few minutes later, I walked into an exhibit of large quilts draping the vibrant exhibit hall with explicit stories from slavery, 1990s ballroom culture, and an interpretation of Greek mythology. I was mesmerized by the manipulation of fabric and the storytelling that took place within each stitch. Are quilts symbols of resistance?

This trip inspired me to take a different approach to creating art for the Christmas story. While I typically produce maximalist canvases with overwhelming details, this piece is toned down and more precision-oriented. As someone who has never been able to draw a straight line, creating this quilt design out of paper was a discipline in and of itself. Creating it made me think of the kind of diligence and patience needed to sew a fabric quilt. These are projects made with love. The hands that sew them should never be taken for granted.

It is for this reason that I titled this piece, *Abolition Baby*. Even though we are over 150 years removed from the Civil War, abolitionism is still relevant today. The United States is only 4% of the world population, but it contains nearly 25% of the world's incarcerated population. According to the 13th amendment, slavery is illegal in the U.S. with the exception of incarcerated individuals. Some of the largest prisons in states such as Louisiana and Georgia are former plantations. Prison labor is used by major corporations where they pay Black and Brown people pennies on the dollar.

I will not declare Jesus an abolitionist, but I will note that Jesus would grow up to call out any society that created environments where people are forced to commit crimes or work in unprecedented fields in order to survive. Mary was excited to bring Jesus into the world because she believed in the promise of liberation for her people. Jesus' birth was a symbol of hope for the future, for a freed people. Love knows his name. And it is freedom.