



GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
FAMILY WORSHIP SERVICE**

CHRISTMAS EVE FAMILY CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

December 24, 2023

GATHERING

PRAYER FOR MEDITATION: *Living God, on this holy night we gather - to stand with shepherds, amazed at your glory; to sing with angels, rejoicing in your work; to wait with Joseph, trusting in your promise; to sit with Mary, cradling your love. May the good news of this night inspire us to tell the world of our great joy: for to us is born a Savior, the Messiah, the Lord. Glory and praise to you forever! Amen.*

OPENING SENTENCES

Rev. John White

One: There is good news of great joy for all!

ALL: ***Our Savior is born: the Messiah, the Lord.***

One: The grace of God has come to us.

ALL: ***Jesus Christ brings salvation to all.***

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

Improvisation on GREENSLEEVES

Fedak

Dr. Terry McRoberts

*LITANY FOR CHRISTMAS

Rev. Courtney Bowen

One: The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all.

ALL: ***Glory to God in the highest!***

One: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

ALL: ***Glory to God in the highest!***

One: For a child has been born for us, a Son has been given to us.

ALL: ***Glory to God in the highest!***

One: He is Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

ALL: ***Glory to God in the highest!***

One: To us is born in the city of David a Savior, the Messiah, the Lord.

ALL: ***Glory to God in the highest!***

One: And the Word became flesh and lived among us.

ALL: ***Glory to God in the highest!***

(silent prayers)

One: Christ is born! Give him glory! Christ has come down from heaven! Receive him!

Christ is now on Earth! Exalt him! O earth, sing to the Lord! O you nations, praise him in joy, for he has been glorified!

ALL: ***Amen.***

HYMN: 133** ***O Come, All Ye Faithful

ADESTE FIDELES

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE*Nick, Libby, Jaxon, Margaret + Ila Reynolds*

One: During the past four weeks, we have lit the candles of the Advent Wreath to remind us that the Christ Child brings hope, peace, joy, and love. Tonight, we come seeking hope, peace, joy, and love, and we find these things in a child. God made flesh as a baby in a manger. A baby who is both the beginning and the end of our salvation, who dwells with us even now, our Emmanuel, God with us.

ALL: *We live as people in the in-between who celebrate the arrival of the Light that shines in lost and broken places as we wait for the day when we will live in the fullness of God's kingdom.*

One: We light these candles as signs of our shocking hope, our just peace, our fierce joy, the love that transforms us, and Jesus Christ, our wondrous Light. May the Light burning in our hearts guide us, comfort us, protect us, and tend us in all seasons and circumstances, reminding us that day and night, in the light and in the darkness, God is with us. Our salvation has come! Amen.
(All five candles are lit)

One: Let us pray. Give us, O God, such love and wonder that with shepherds and magi, and pilgrims unknown, we may come to adore the holy child, the promised king.

ALL: *Let us, with angels, sing his praise and glory. Let us, with Mary, ponder the words of this night. We pray this in the name of Jesus, our Light, our Savior, our Emmanuel. Amen.*

RESPONSE *(all singing, refrain only from Hymn: 88 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel)*
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

ANTHEM*Sussex Carol*
Chancel Choir

arr. Clausen

FIRST READING*Isaiah 9:2, 6-7*
*A great light in the darkness.**Ayden Johnson****HYMN: 110** *Love Has Come*

BRING A TORCH

SECOND READING*Luke 1:26-35, 38*
*An angel appears to Mary.**Tammy Buchanan-Anderson****HYMN: 119** *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

MENDELSSOHN

THIRD READING*Luke 2:1-7*
*Mary gives birth in Bethlehem.**Ridley Alexander***FAMILY CHOIR (HYMN 115)***Away in a Manger*
(Families in the congregation are invited to come forward and participate)

MUELLER

FOURTH READING*Luke 2:8-20*
*Angels announce the Messiah.**Ann Y. Schmidt*

SPECIAL MUSIC *O Holy Night* Adam
Annika Jerge, soloist

FIFTH READING *Luke 2:8-20* Roger Stanfield
Magi come from the East.

ANTHEM *Star of Glory* Althouse
John White, soloist

CHRISTMAS EVE MEDITATION Rev. Courtney Bowen

***HYMN: 134 Joy to the World** ANTIOCH

SERVICE OF CANDLELIGHT

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

One: We light our candles, knowing that the One who is the source and promise of all light is the One whose birth we celebrate.

ALL: *Let there be light.*
(A candle is lighted)

One: Arise and shine, for your light has come! The glory of the Lord has risen upon you!

ALL: *Alleluia! Thanks be to God.*
(The Light of Christ is shared)

SIXTH READING *John 1:1-14* Rev. John White
The light of God illuminates our darkness.

***HYMN: 122 Silent Night! Holy Night** STILLE NACHT

***BENEDICTION** *(please extinguish candles)* Rev. Courtney Bowen

One: Go into the night, glorifying and praising God for all you have seen and heard.

ALL: *Alleluia!*

One: May Christ be your light, this night and forevermore.

ALL: *God's name be praised! Amen.*

(We request that you remain seated until after the Postlude and ask that you use the Postlude as a time to reflect upon the scripture that was read in today's service.)

POSTLUDE *IN DULCI JUBILO* arr. by Powell
Dr. Terry McRoberts