

**First Presbyterian Church
Chippewa Falls, WI
Worship Service
December 24, 2020 – 4:30 PM
Christmas Eve**

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

CANDLE LIGHTING

Lighting of the Advent Candles

One: Tonight we light the white Christ candle in the center of our advent wreath proclaiming that God's wonderful plan is at the center of all our celebrations. The waiting is done! The baby has come to earth: Immanuel, God with us! And we are filled with joy!
(Light the four Advent candles as the reader speaks)

All: The prophet Simon saw the baby Jesus and proclaimed: I have seen the Savior, you have given to all people. He is a light to reveal God to the nations, and he is the glory of your people Israel.

One: We light the candles of hope, peace, joy and love. And tonight, we light the Christ candle. (Light the white candle.)

All As the Scriptures tell us, I bring you good news of great joy for everyone! The Savior – yes, the Messiah, the Lord has been born tonight in Bethlehem, the city of David

One: Sing this song of great joy with me as we celebrate the birth of Jesus!

HYMN: "O Little Town of Bethlehem" vs. 1 and 2 #44

OPENING MESSAGE

A decree. A census. A man and a woman arrive in Bethlehem to obey an emperor's wish. Shepherds on the night shift tend their sheep. In the midst of these ordinary events a baby's birth is announced with extraterrestrial fanfare. Glory is given to God in the highest; peace is promised on earth. Henceforth, the world shall be enlightened by God's Word made flesh.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON:

All: Your grace, O God, has appeared for the salvation of all, calling us to renounce false gods and irresponsible love. In the midst of our sin, Christ has appeared as a sign of our hope redeeming us and calling us to be a people eager to do your will. Make us zealous for good deeds in response to your wonderful deed in Jesus Christ. We confess the vain worship of ourselves and our neglect of your children. Forgive us and empower us to live upright and godly lives in this world.

One: Know this that the assurance of our forgiveness has come. "For a child has been born for us, a son given to us ... His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore."

HYMN: "Away in a Manger" vs. 1, 2, 3 #25

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING:**Isaiah 9: 2-7**

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

GOSPEL:**Luke 2: 1-14 (15-20)**

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

SERMON: **“Do You Hear What I Hear?”** **Rev. Rich Estrem-Fuller**

ANTHEM: **“When Mary Came to Bethlehem”** **by Jerry Way**

THE 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the Kingdom, and the power and the glory forever. AMEN

CHRISTMAS LITANY AND CANDLE LIGHTING

One: On a night like this, more than 2000 years ago a child was born in hope to change the world

All: And light shines

One: Tonight – somewhere – a child is being born in hope to change the world.

All: And light shines

One: Tonight – somewhere - someone who is ready to do harm pauses and remembers a child from long ago... and chooses hope and peace instead of violence.

All: And light shines

One: Tonight – somewhere – someone who is lonely and afraid is comforted by a stranger... and knows a moment of hope and love.

All: And light shines.

One: Tonight – somewhere – someone who is hungry or naked receives the gift of food or clothing... and knows hope, feeling full and warm.

All: And light shines.

One: Tonight – somewhere – someone who has been a prisoner is released... and knows hope and freedom.

All: And light shines.

One: Tonight – here and there – people choose to act with peace, with love, with generosity, with mercy... and Christ is born again in hope.

All: And light shines.

HYMN: **“Silent Night”** **vs. 1 #60**

CLOSING PRAYER AND BENEDICTION:

POSTLUDE: