

**First Presbyterian Church
Chippewa Falls, WI
Worship Service
December 24, 2021 – 4: 30 PM
Christmas Eve: A Holy Birth**

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING OUR OFFERINGS FOR THE FOOD PANTRY

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES:

Long ago the prophets declared the good news of the child of promise.

The star of Bethlehem illuminated the way for the Wise Men to come and worship the Christ Child.

The shepherds proclaimed it with Joy.

The angels sang "Glory To God in the Highest heaven." A child was born in Bethlehem, Christ the Lord. Do not be afraid.

We light the Christ Candle tonight because He is the Light of Life.

Let us pray: Glorious God, you make this holy day shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day, may we wake up to the brightness of his glory. AMEN

OPENING PRAYER:

O God of divine miracles, on this silent, holy night we come with joy and thanksgiving into this sanctuary to worship you. We praise you for your wonderful plan of salvation ...for the Holy Child Jesus, for the obedience of all who played a part in the Christmas drama. We pray for wisdom that we might understand your will in our lives. Help us to find ways to share the Good News of the Christmas miracle with others. Give us the courage and obedience of Mary. Give us the wonder and amazement of the shepherds as they responded in faith to the message of the angels. Give us the openness and compassion of the innkeeper. Give us the acceptance and the willingness to serve you that was demonstrated by the humble parents. Give us the sense of direction and the conviction of truth shown by the Magi. Make this Christmas a meaningful and life changing event in all our lives. We pray through Christ our Lord, whose holy birth we celebrate this night. Amen.

INVITATION TO CONFESSION, PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

One: Let us examine our hearts, and confess our sin to God.

All: On this Christmas Eve, God, we turn to you, knowing that we have not been all that you called us to be. Cleanse our hearts and minds that your Holy Spirit may come to heal us and lead us to you. Forgive our sins, and renew us tonight in the true spirit of Christmas. Amen.

One: On this night, of all nights, God will bless us with his grace and mercy, forgiving our sins and renewing us.

All: We celebrate the Good News of Jesus Christ. Amen.

HYMN #001 Come Thou Long Expected Jesus

SCRIPTURE 1 LUKE 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

HYMN #044 "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

SCRIPTURE 2 LUKE 2:1-7

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.

HYMN #056 "The First Nowell"

SCRIPTURE 3 LUKE 2:8-12

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.”

HYMN #023 Angels We Have Heard on High

SCRIPTURE 4 LUKE 2:13-14

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!”

HYMN #053 What Child is This

SCRIPTURE 5 LUKE 2:15-20

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.

HYMN #041 O Come All Ye Faithful

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE “ER or Stable” Rev. Richard Estrem-Fuller

CHRISTMAS PRAYER

“Away In the Manger”

All: O god, as we hear “Away in a Manager” we think of the many people who are away from home – not with their families this Christmas eve, those who are sick in the hospital, those who are in prison, those not at home because of work commitments or attending school at a distance, and all those who are traveling this night (pause).

“No Crib for a Bed”

All: We pray for the many homeless throughout our world – those who have suffered loss in hurricanes, fires and earthquakes, as refugees from civil wars; and those drifting from city to city looking for work (pause).

“the Little Lord Jesus Laid Down his Sweet Head”

All: This night we think of those needing rest – those fearing what lies ahead, those who cannot sleep because of pain, those who are struggling to make ends meet, and those who work this night looking after the health and safety needs of our community (pause).

“The Stars in the Bright Sky Looked Down Where he Lay”

All: We pray for the light of your love to touch all those who have lost faith, those who need their confidence and hope restored, and those who face an uncertain future, the leaders of our church and country and for ourselves (pause).

“The Little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay”

All: May your love be born afresh in each of us this night, that we may spread the light of your love to others. Amen.

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION TO THE LORD’S SUPPER

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

One: God be with you

All: And also with you

One: Lift up your hearts!

All: We lift them up to God!

One: Let us give thanks to God!

All: It is right to give God thanks and praise. We give you thanks and praise, God of Life,... Therefore, with all who serve you on earth and in heaven, we raise our voices, and say.

Holy, holy, holy, God of power and might.

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the One who comes in the name of our God.

Hosanna in the highest.

One: We give you thanks and praise, loving God,... with compassion and forgiveness.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

God of life, with this bread and cup,... through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, now and forever.

THE LORD’S PRAYER

COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION:

O God, through this bread and this cup, you have fed us with spiritual food and have made us one with you and with each other. Bless us with faith and courage, O God that we might go from this place to serve you in all love and joy. 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 #060 “Silent Night”

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE