



Zion Goshert's United Church of Christ

Worship ~ Christmas Eve
Friday, December 24, 2021

Pastor: Bruce Farrell
Ministers: All the Faithful Members

1588 Mount Zion Road, Lebanon, PA 17046 717-865-3286 www.ziongosherts.org

*Please stand if you are able. Congregation, please speak or sing the words in **bold**.

PRELUDE

Tara Zimmerman

WELCOME (Ringing of the Bell)

WAITING & LONGING

SPECIAL MUSIC

Do You Hear What I Hear?

Olly Murphy

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

[Titus 3, Isaiah Psalm 96:1-3, 7-9, 10a, 11a, 13b]

Reader 1: On the first Sunday of Advent, we lit a candle for Hope. [*The first candle is lit.*] On the second Sunday, we lit a candle for Peace. [*The second candle is lit.*] On the third Sunday, we lit a candle for Joy. [*The pink candle is lit.*] Last Sunday, we lit a candle for Love. [*The last candle is lit.*]

Reader 2: Now the time has come to light a candle for Christ. [*The Christ Candle is lit.*] The season of watching and waiting is over. When the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy... through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, Whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. This is the light of the world and darkness cannot extinguish it.

Reader 3: As the angels sing, the shepherds draw near, and the Magi offer their gifts, we, too, are here with Jesus to offer our gifts and sing praise to God as they did so long ago in Bethlehem. Sing to the Lord a new song... all the earth. Tell of His salvation. Declare His glory among the nations, His marvelous works among all the peoples. Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Worship the Lord in holy splendor. Tremble before Him. Say among the nations, "The Lord is King!" Let the heavens be glad and let the earth rejoice. He will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with His truth".

All: Unto us a Savior is born is born!

*HYMN

O Come, All Ye Faithful

**¹ O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant, O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold Him, born the King of angels;**

Refrain: ***O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord.***

**² Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation. Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above.
Glory to God, all glory in the highest. [Refrain]**

**³ Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning, Jesus, to Thee be all glory given;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing. [Refrain]**

GOD'S WORD

Isaiah 7:14; 11:1-3; 22:22

Reader 1: Therefore, the Lord Himself will give you a sign: the virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and will call Him Emmanuel.

Reader 2: A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him – the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord – and He will delight in the fear of the Lord.

Reader 3: I will place on His shoulder the key to the house of David. What He opens no one can shut and what He shuts no one can open."

*HYMN

Hark the Herald Angels Sing

**¹ Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King. Peace on earth and mercy mild;
God and sinners reconciled!" Joyful, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies.
With th'angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"**

Refrain: *Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King."*

**² Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord, late in time behold Him come,
offspring of the Virgin's womb. Veiled in flesh the Godhead see. Hail th'incarnate Deity.
Pleased with us in flesh to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel. [Refrain]**

**³ Hail the heaven born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness! Light and life to all He brings,
risen with healing in His wings. Mild He lays His glory by, born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth. [Refrain]**

POEM

Waiting

Waiting
for the promised seed,
dropped
into a cove of hungry earth.
Waiting, 40 days and 40 years,
for the tree of Jesse,
the branch of David.
Noah's olive sprig to return, again,
as Christmas fruit,
rinsed in Jordan,
peeled by Pilate,
5,000 fed, then
sealed in a cove of stony earth.

Waiting
for the promised seed,
lifted
into wrappings of opaque clouds.
Waiting, with lamps of oil burning,
for a shoot from the stock of Jesse,
whose roots reach to the river.
Noah's olive sprig to return, again,
on a white horse
whose rider is called Faithful and True.
Waiting
for clouds to unwrap.
Waiting.

CANTATA

Voices of Zion
Mary, Did You Know

What Child is This? [Pew hymnal #312]

**¹ What child is this, Who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping?**

Refrain: *This, this is Christ the King, Whom shepherds guard and angels sing.
Haste, haste to bring Him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!*

**² Why lies He in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear for sinners here the silent Word is pleading. [Refrain]**

**³ So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh. Come peasant, king, to own Him.
The King of kings salvation brings. Let loving hearts enthrone Him. [Refrain]**

Ding, Dong, Merrily on High

LOVE IS HERE

GOD'S WORD

– adapted from John 1:1, 4–5, 9, 14; Luke 2:1–7; Matthew 1:22–23; 1 Timothy 1:15

Reader 1: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Reader 2: He was with God in the beginning. In Him was life, and that life was the light of all people.

Reader 3: The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it. The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.

All: The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us.

Reader 2: We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, Who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Reader 1: In those days, Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world.

Reader 3: This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to their town to register.

- Reader 1: So Joseph went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.
- Reader 2: All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Emmanuel" (which means "God with us").
- Reader 3: Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.
- Reader 1: While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped Him in cloths and placed Him in a manger because there was no guest room available for them.

SONGS

Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee (Christmas)

**¹ Joyful, joyful we adore You, God of glory Lord of light.
Angels lifting praise before You sing throughout this holy night.
In a manger lies a baby, Child of Mary, Son of God.
Voices joined in joyful chorus praise You for Your gift of love.**

**² All Your works declare Your glory. All creation joins to sing.
Praise resounds as earth rejoices in the birth of Christ the King.
Shepherds kneel before the Infant. Trumpets sound and anthems raise.
As with joy our hearts are lifted, joined in wonder, love, and praise**

The Birthday of a King

**¹ In the little village of Bethlehem, there lay a Child one day.
And the sky was bright with a holy light o'er the place where Jesus lay.**

Chorus: *Alleluia, O how the angels sang. Alleluia, how it rang.
And the sky was bright with a holy light.
'Twas the birthday of a King.*

**² 'Twas a humble birthplace, but O how much, God gave to us that day.
From the manger bed, what a path has led, what a perfect holy way. [Chorus]**

GOD'S WORD

Luke 2:8-20

- Reader 1: There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them,
- Reader 2: "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today, in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."
- Reader 1: Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel praising God and saying,
All: "Glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth, peace to those on whom His favor rests."
- Reader 3: When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another,
- Reader 1: "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has told us about."
- Reader 3: So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and the baby, Who was lying in the manger. When they had seen Him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this Child and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.
- Reader 2: But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

SERMON: Love's Gentle Arrival

SONG

O Little Town of Bethlehem

**¹ O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep, the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.**

**² For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above, while mortals sleep,
the angels keep their watch of wondering love,
O morning stars together proclaim the holy birth
and praises sing to God the King and peace to all on earth.**

³ How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heaven.
No ear may hear His coming but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive Him still the dear Christ enters in.

⁴ O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray.
Cast out our sin and enter in. Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell.
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.

CANDLE LIGHTING

Silent Night

[As the singing transitions to Silent Night, light from the Christ candle is passed among the congregation.]

¹ Silent night! Holy night! All is calm, all is bright
'round yon virgin, mother and child! Holy infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

² Silent night! holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing: "Alleluia!
Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born!"

³ Silent night! holy night! Son of God, love's pure light,
radiant beams from Thy holy face with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth! Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth!

⁴ Silent night! Holy night! Wondrous star, lend thy light.
With the angels let us sing "Alleluia" to our King.
Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born!

PUBLISHING GOD'S LOVE

As you wait for Christ to return, live as people of the Light, and go with God's blessing.
May hope in Christ's return sustain you, God's peace saturate the world around you,
the joy of the Holy Spirit strengthen you, and the love of the triune God encircle you,
in this moment and in all the moments to come. Amen.

POSTLUDE

With thanks to the readers: Gloria Boyer, Marie Dunkle-Weise, Mary Holtan

Citations for Worship 2021.12.24

O Come All Ye Faithful. Words and TUNE: ADESTES FIDELES John Frances Wade (1743).

Hark the Herald Angels Sing. Words: Charles Wesley. TUNE: MENDELSSOHN (51171) Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1840).

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Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee (Christmas). Linda Lee Johnson

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TUNE: HYMN TO JOY Ludwig von Beethoven (1824).

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O Little Town of Bethlehem. Words: Phillips Brooks (1868). TUNE: ST. LOUIS Lewis H. Redner (1868).

Silent Night. Joseph Mohr (1818). TUNE: STILLE NACHT Franz Gruber (1818). Public Domain.

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