



Zion Goshert's United Church of Christ

Worship ~ First Sunday after Christmas December 26, 2021

Pastor: Bruce Farrell
Ministers: All the Faithful Members

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

PRELUDE

WELCOME *and lighting of the Advent wreath and ringing of the bell*

ANTHEM

Ding, Dong Merrily

Voices of Zion

PASTORAL CALL TO WORSHIP

UNISON PRAYER

Eternal God, today is radiant with the brilliance of Your one true light, Jesus Christ. As we have come together to hear again, in readings, hymns and carols, the account of Christmas, we want to thank You for Your gift of Jesus, born in Bethlehem to be our Savior. We pray that You will accept and sanctify our worship, and that Your Holy Spirit will help us hear afresh the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ, in whose Name we pray.

INTRODUCTION

SONG

I Wonder As I Wander

[Appalachian]

**¹ I wonder as I wander, out under the sky, how Jesus the Savior did come for to die
for poor ordinary people like you and like I. I wonder as I wander, out under the sky.**

**² When Mary birthed Jesus, 'twas in a cow's stall, with wise men and farmers and shepherds and all,
but high from God's heaven a star's light did fall – the promise of ages it then did recall.**

**³ If Jesus had wanted for any wee thing, a star in the sky or a bird on the wing
or all of God's angels in heaven for to sing, He surely could have it 'cause He was the King.**

**⁴ I wonder as I wander, out under the sky, how Jesus the Savior did come for to die
for poor ordinary people like you and like I. I wonder as I wander, out under the sky.**

Traditional Appalachian Carol. (arr. John Jacob Niles 1933). Public Domain.

1st READING

As we heard in this Appalachian carol, Jesus was born to save ordinary people like you and me. That is the Good News of Christmas! But that good news began long ago already when God promised a Savior to Adam and Eve. It's a cruel irony that the story of God's gift of salvation began with the sin of our first parents who, when tempted by Satan, disobeyed God.
Genesis 3:8-15

INTRODUCTION

HYMN

'Twas In the Moon of Wintertime

[Huron; the first Canadian Christmas Carol]

**¹ 'Twas in the moon of wintertime, when all the birds had fled, that mighty Gitchi Manitou sent angel choirs instead.
Before their light the stars grew dim and wand'ring hunters heard the hymn:**

Refrain: *Jesus your King is born, Jesus is born, in excelsis gloria.*

**² Within a lodge of broken bark, the tender babe was found. A ragged robe of rabbit skin enwrapped His beauty 'round;
But as the hunter braves drew nigh, the angel song rang loud and high: [Refrain]**

**³ The earliest moon of wintertime is not so round and fair as was the ring of glory on the helpless Infant there.
The chiefs from far before Him knelt with gifts of fox and beaver pelt. [Refrain]**

**⁴ O children of the forest free, O sons of Manitou, the holy Child of earth and Heav'n is born today for you.
Come kneel before the radiant Boy, Who brings you beauty, peace and joy. [Refrain]**

Huron Words: St. Jean de Brebeuf (1643); translation: Jesse E. Middleton

2nd READING

The salvation that God promised, made necessary by disobedience, was to be accomplished through its opposite – obedience: the obedience of Abraham, the obedience of the Hebrew nation, the obedience of the Virgin Mary and, most importantly, the obedience of Christ. When Abraham proved obedient in his willingness to offer his only son Isaac as a sacrifice, God promised him that through his offspring all the nations of the earth would be blessed.

Genesis 22:16-18

INTRODUCTION

CAROL

Infant Holy Infant Lowly

[Polish]

**¹ Infant holy, infant lowly, for His bed a cattle stall.
Oxen lowing, little knowing Christ the babe is Lord of all.
Swift are winging, angels singing, noels ringing, tidings bringing. Christ the babe is Lord of all.**

**² Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping vigil till the morning new.
Saw the glory, heard the story: tidings of a gospel true.
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow, praises voicing, greet the morrow. Christ the babe was born for you.**

Polish carol; Tr. Edith Margaret Gellibrand Reed. TUNE: *W Zlobie Lezy* Polish folk tune. Public Domain

3rd READING

God kept that promise. Abraham's offspring became a large nation – the Jews, God's chosen people. But time and again, they fell into disobedience and sin. So through the mouth of the prophet Isaiah, God promised again to send the Savior.

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

INTRODUCTION

CAROL

He Is Born, the Divine Christ Child

[French]

**Refrain: *He is born, the divine Christ child, play the oboe and bagpipes merrily!
He is born, the holy child, sing we all of the Savior mild.***

**¹ Through long ages of the past prophets have foretold his coming;
through long ages of the past, now the time has come at last! [Refrain]**

**² O, how lovely, O, how pure is this perfect child of heaven;
O, how lovely, O, how pure, gracious gift of God sent down. [Refrain]**

**³ Jesus, Lord of all the world, coming as a child among us;
Jesus, Lord of all the world, grant to us your heavenly peace. [Refrain]**

Traditional French Carol. Jean-Romain Grosjean and Paul Webster in *Airs des Noël's lorrains*. (1862) TUNE: I'LL EST NEE

4th READING

So far, we have heard how the story of salvation began with God's promise of a Savior in the garden of Eden and how God said the Messiah would come from Abraham's children. Next, God announced the place where the Savior would be born. And, characteristically, God did not choose the capital city of a world empire, nor even Jerusalem, but a little village in Judea.

Micah 5:2-4

INTRODUCTION

CAROL

That Boy Child of Mary

[Malawi melody]

Chorus: *That boy child of Mary was born in a stable, a manger His cradle in Bethlehem.*

¹ What shall we call Him, child of the manger? What name is given in Bethlehem?

² His Name is Jesu. God ever with us. God given for us in Bethlehem.

³ How can He save us? How can He help us? Born here among us in Bethlehem.

⁴ Gift of the Father to human mother makes Him our Brother of Bethlehem.

⁵ One with the Father. He is our Savior. Heaven sent Helper of Bethlehem.

⁶ Gladly we praise Him, love and adore Him. Give ourselves to Him of Bethlehem.

Tom Colvin © 1969 Hope Publishing Company. CCLI Song # 78086; CCLI License # 2731364

5th READING

In the fullness of time, God made the final preparations for the birth of the promised Savior. God sent the angel Gabriel to tell the Virgin Mary that she would be the mother of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Luke 1:26-33

Though undoubtedly quite shocked at the announcement, Mary accepted her task and soon broke out in song: "Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!"

INTRODUCTION

CANTICLE

Tell Out, My Soul

[English; Song of Mary]

**¹ Tell out my soul the greatness of the Lord! Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice.
Tender to me the promise of His word. In God my Savior shall my heart rejoice.**

**² Tell out my soul the greatness of His Name! Make known His might, the deeds His arm has done.
His mercy sure from age to age the same; His holy Name, the Lord, the Mighty One.**

**³ Tell out my soul the greatness of His might! Powers and dominions lay their glory by.
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight, the hungry fed, the humble lifted high.**

**⁴ Tell out my soul the glories of His word! Firm is His promise and His mercy sure.
Tell out my soul the greatness of the Lord to children's children and for evermore.**

Timothy Dudley-Smith © 1962 Renewal 1990 Hope Publishing Company. [CCLI Song # 2402653](#); [CCLI License # 2731364](#). TUNE: WOODLANDS Greatorex (1919). Public Domain.

6th READING

The preparations that God had made for the restoration of His disobedient creatures had taken centuries. The Lord had formed a nation from which the Savior was to come. The Lord had chosen the place where the Messiah would be born and had prepared the woman who would be the mother of the Savior. Now, at last, the time had come: the Savior promised long ago was born!

Matthew 1:18-25

INTRODUCTION

CAROL:

Silent Night, Holy Night

[Austrian]

**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! Here at last, healing light.
From the heavenly kingdom sent, abundant grace for our intent.
Jesus, salvation for all. Jesus, salvation for all.**

**³ Silent Night! Holy Night! Mindful of mankind's plight.
The Lord in Heav'n on high decreed from earthly woes we would be freed
Jesus, God's promise for peace. Jesus, God's promise for peace.**

**⁴ Silent Night! Holy Night! By His love, by His might
God our Father us has graced as a brother gently embraced
Jesus, as one of mankind. Jesus, as one of mankind.**

**⁵ 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.**

Words: Joseph Mohr (1816). Tr. Freeman Young. New translation: Bettina Klein © 1998 Silent Night Museum. Tune: STILLE NACHT Franz Xaver Gruber (1818). Public Domain.

7th READING

God's plan for the salvation of sinful people had taken a great step forward in the birth of the Savior, Jesus Christ. The child Who would one day make the sacrifice of perfect obedience had been born at last. And just as God achieved the plan of salvation through people of little importance, God now revealed the birth of the Messiah to shepherd people of little importance.

Luke 2:8-20

INTRODUCTION

CAROL

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

[Latin/German]

**¹ Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice.
Give ye heed to what we say: Jesus Christ was born today.
Ox and ass before Him bow and He is in the manger now.
Christ is born today! Christ is born today!**

**² Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice.
Now ye hear of endless bliss; Jesus Christ was born for this.
He has opened heaven's door and we are blest forevermore.
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!**

**³ Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice.
Now ye need not fear the grave; Jesus Christ was born to save;
calls you one and calls you all to gain His everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!**

Words: Klug's Geistliche Lieder, Wittenberg, 1535. Translator: John Mason Neale. TUNE: IN DULCI JUBILO originally a German folk dance melody, 14th century. Public Domain

8th READING

Some time after the shepherds returned to their work, wise men appeared from the East. They followed a star to Jerusalem and then found out from King Herod that they needed to go to Bethlehem.

Matthew 2:9-12

But not everyone worshiped the newborn Son of God. Contrary to the clean and tidy pictures on many of our Christmas cards, we read in the Bible that Jesus' birth involved mass murder.

Matthew 2:16

But God saved his Son from Herod's demonic plan so that later Jesus could die and live again to save God's people from their Sin- to fulfill the promise made ages ago.

INTRODUCTION

CAROL

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

[African-American spiritual]

Refrain: ***Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills, and ev'rywhere; go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born.***

**While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens there shone a holy light. [Refrain]**

**The shepherds feared and trembled when lo, above the earth
rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth. [Refrain]**

**Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born,
and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn. [Refrain]**

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord God, you are glorious in the highest heavens. You send peace on earth among those whom you favor. As we have heard again Your plan of salvation and the good news of Jesus' birth, we pray: give peace to your church, peace among the nations, peace in our homes, and peace in our hearts; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

NOTES ON PARISH LIFE

POSTLUDE

SERVICE NOTES

- In preparation for this service, have candles lit on the Advent wreath and throughout the church.
- If possible, display some Christmas art from other nations throughout the sanctuary.
- You may want to consider adding a meditation to one of the readings.
- The hymns in this service were selected from the most recent editions of the following hymnals: The Psalter Hymnal (PsH), The Presbyterian Hymnal (PH), Rejoice in the Lord (RL), the Trinity Hymnal (TH), the United Methodist Hymnal (UMH), and the Worshiping Church (WC).