

**We welcome you to Fairhill Manor Christian Church's Christmas Eve service. Join Zoom at 6:30 pm. Worship will begin at 7 pm. In preparation for worship, please gather that which can be "bread" and "cup" for you as we share Communion, as well as a candle for each person to light at the end of the service. As we sing the hymns, please keep yourself muted on Zoom and then join the leader in singing. We encourage you to dim your lights as we sing "Silent Night" together, enjoying the light of each others' candles. May you have a blessed Christmas as we celebrate the birth of Jesus our Savior!**



**Fairhill Manor Christian Church**  
*(Disciples of Christ)*

351 Montgomery Ave.  
724-225-8610

Rev. Chris Stillwell, Senior Pastor  
Rev. Gena Sheller, Associate Pastor  
December 24, 2020

**Prelude**

Audra Allen, organist

**Welcome**

Pastor Gena

**Call to Worship**

Rev. Stillwell

In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Let us come before God with our ears tuned to hear that Word, our hearts receptive to receiving that Word, and our wills ready to do that Word, through the power of the Holy Spirit and worship together.

**Opening Hymn**

*"O Come All Ye Faithful"*

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;

Sing, choirs of angels,  
sing in exultation,  
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God, all  
Glory in the highest; (refrain)

**Refrain**

O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

**Invocation and Lord's Prayer**

Pastor Gena

Gracious God,  
With joy and thanksgiving we gather as your people.  
We have come to hear again the timeless story of Christ's birth.  
In the excitement of this night, quiet our hearts

that we may know the peace and fullness of this holy time.  
Shine, O Light, in the darkness of our world.  
Sing, O angels, in the stillness of our hearts,  
"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those God favors."  
This we pray in the name of the Child of Bethlehem, who will teach us to pray this way...

*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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.*

## **First Lesson**

## **Genesis 3:8-22**

Chuck Riggle

## **Lighting of the Christ Candle**

Rev. Stillwell

The Lord be with you.

The light of God comes to us tonight  
We have wandered like the shepherds of old with our hearts full of awe and wonder  
For Jesus Christ is the light of the world. A light no darkness can extinguish.

We now crown the Advent wreath with the light of life and the light of the world the light of the Christ candle signifying that our wait has finally come to an end and God's light has been given to the world.

*The Christ candle is lit.*

## **Unison Prayer:**

Lord, open our minds and hearts by the power of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may hear and rejoice in the good news of our Savior's birth. Amen

## **Hymn of Faith**

*"Come O Long Expected Jesus"*

Come, O long-expected Jesus,  
born to set your people free.  
From our fears and sins release us;  
Christ, in whom our rest shall be.  
You, our strength and consolation,  
come salvation to impart;  
dear desire of many a nation,  
joy of many a longing heart.

Born your people to deliver,  
born a child, and yet a king,  
born to reign in us forever  
born your gracious realm to bring.  
By your own eternal Spirit  
rule in all our hearts alone;  
by your all-sufficient merit  
raise us to your glorious throne.

## **Second Lesson**

## **Isaiah 9:2, 6-7**

Rita Hritz

## **"Christmas – Meeting the Christ Child" A Children Worship & Wonder Story**

Pastor Gena

This is the season of Advent, the time we get ready to celebrate the mystery of Christmas, the time when we are *all* on the way to Bethlehem. But who will show us the way?

The prophets. Prophets listen to God, so they can show us the way. Isaiah was a prophet who listened and spoke the word of God. He said one day the Messiah would be born. The Messiah would be like a light shining in darkness. This is what Isaiah said: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined."

This is the candle of the prophets. It reminds us that prophets like Isaiah listen to God, so they can show us the way to Bethlehem. Let us enjoy the light of the prophets.

Mary and Joseph are on the way to Bethlehem. They can show us the way. They have a secret. An angel came to them and said, "Do not be afraid. Be joyful. You will have God's special Son. You will name him Jesus."

Here is Mary and Joseph and the donkey, who are on the way to Bethlehem, where Jesus will be born.

This is the candle of the Holy Family. It reminds us not to be afraid, but to be joyful on the way to Bethlehem. Let us enjoy the light of the Holy Family.

The shepherds are on the way to Bethlehem. They can show us the way. They have good news too. An angel came to them and said, "Do not be afraid. Be joyful. Today, a Savior, God's special Son, is born in Bethlehem. You will find him lying in a manger."

Here are the shepherds and their sheep, who are on the way to Bethlehem to see the special child who was born.

This is the candle of the shepherds. It reminds us of the good news: a Savior, the special Son of God, is born. Let us enjoy the light of the shepherds.

The Magi are on the way to Bethlehem. They can show us the way. The Magi saw a special star in the sky, a star for a king. They followed the star to Bethlehem, bringing gifts for the newborn king: gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Here are the Magi and their camel.

This is the candle of the Magi. It reminds us of gifts, of God's gift of Christ, the newborn king. Let us enjoy the light of the Magi.

Tomorrow is Christmas, the day we celebrate the mystery of God becoming a person. Soon we will all be at Bethlehem to meet the Christ child, the special Son of God.

Here is the newborn Christ child, lying in a manger bed... Christ the Light, a Light for the whole world.

This is the Christ candle. It reminds us that Christ is Light. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. Let us enjoy the Light of Christ.

Now I will change the lights.

The light of the prophets...and the light of the Holy Family...and the light of the shepherds...and the light of the Magi...and the Light of Christ can be with us always in many ways and many places all through the year. So we can keep Christmas all year around.

I wonder how it feels to be in Bethlehem?  
I wonder how many got to Bethlehem and if they saw the Christ child?  
I wonder how they feel about this newborn baby?  
I wonder how this little baby is a light to the whole world, a light no darkness can overcome?  
I wonder how all these people and animals feel about the baby?  
I wonder how Jesus feels about them?  
I wonder how God feels?

From *Young Children and Worship* by Sonja M. Steward and Jerome W. Berryman, pp. 143-6.

### **Hymn of Hope**

*“Hark the Herald Angels Sing”*

Hark! the herald-angels sing,  
"Glory to the new-born King;  
peace on earth, and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled!"  
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,  
join the triumph of the skies;  
with the angelic host proclaim,  
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"  
Hark! the herald-angels sing,  
"Glory to the new-born King!"

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.  
Hark! the herald-angels sing,  
“Glory to the new-born King!”

### **Third Lesson**

**Matthew 1:18-25**

Marsha Sams

### **Hymn of Peace**

*“It Came Upon the Midnight Clear”*

It came upon the midnight clear,  
that glorious song of old,  
from angels bending near the earth  
to touch their harps of gold;  
"Peace on the earth, good will to all  
from heaven's all-gracious King!"  
The world in solemn stillness lay  
to hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come,  
with peaceful wings unfurled,  
and still their heavenly music floats  
o'er all the weary world;  
above its sad and lowly plains  
they bend on hovering wing,  
and ever o'er its Babel-sounds  
the blessed angels sing.

### **Fourth Lesson**

**Luke 2:1-7**

Amy Caldwell

### **Pastoral Prayer**

Rev. Stillwell

Illuminating God, we gather tonight from far and near to hear again the old, old story. Take us into that night long ago, and in our imaginations, let us marvel at the holy child, worship on bended knee, and sing with the angels. Let us behold the tender love of Mary and the watchful care of Joseph. Let us be blessed by the gaze of the child born to die and yet destined to live.

As you sent your light into our world, gracious Lord, we pray that this night our lives will be transformed just as the lives of the shepherds were, and we will sing and praise your

magnificent mercy, for Christ is born again and again, born to set us free, born to give us hope, born to change the world. May he be born again tonight to us as we pray for each other, and pray for the world.

As light and love came down at Christmas, illuminating our path, we pray for those in darkness; the darkness of fear, of cold, of despair, of sickness. May your light shine on them and may we be able to share the light to brighten their life. For light shines down from a star, illuminating the babe who is the light of the world. Love shines this night in order to show us how to be the light of the world. Protect us, saving God, with your light, when the darkness threatens to overcome us and cast away our fear.

You are the light of the world, shine upon us this night. Shine in our lives, that we may shine with your love. Shine in our world, that your light may overcome all darkness and fear. Shine through our worship, that our souls may be strengthened with the power of your light and love.

May your light come from the Christ child to each of us, so that individually we brighten the world like a candle in the dark. May we pass this light to others in the year to come so that one by one we brighten the world with your light and together stand against the darkness of the world.

Tonight, wherever we are, we lift our voices, lift our spirits, lift our hearts, lift our very souls, to shine bright and recommit ourselves to being light to the world. This we pray as the world has begun the slow process of turning away from the darkness and embracing the light. May each day be lighter and brighter and draw us closer to you, as you have come to be with us, Immanuel, God with us, forevermore. Amen.

### **Anthem**

“Mary’s Boy Child,” by Jester Hariston  
Performed by Jim Cope

### **Fifth Lesson**

**Luke 2:8-14**

Jim Ulery

### **Hymn of Joy**

*“How Great Our Joy!”*

While by the sheep we watched at night,      Born is the Child, in manger small,  
lo, there appeared an angel bright:      whom God has sent to save us all. (refrain)

Refrain:

How great our joy! Great our joy!

Joy, joy, joy! Joy, joy, joy!

Glory to God who reigns on high!

Glory to God who reigns on high!

### **Sixth Lesson**

**Luke 2:15-20**

Von Lacock

### **Call to Offering**

Rev. Stillwell

The day of rejoicing is coming, the prophet Isaiah says, and we await it together; our gifts today in this season of waiting and hope help us to strengthen one another and to offer hope to the world as we look forward to that great day of everlasting joy.

## **Offering Prayer**

Pastor Gena

Loving God,  
you have given us your greatest gift—  
your very Word come to us, to live with us and through us, to free us from all that binds us.  
We give you great thanks and praise.  
As you have given to us, so now we share your gifts with a world in need.  
May this offering of our resources and of our very lives help to bring your light and love to  
those who wander in darkness and despair.  
Amen.

## **Invitation to Communion**

Pastor Gena

I invite you to look at the words of the hymn we are about to sing, “What Child Is This.”  
These are the words of a poem called “The Manger Throne,” written in just one day in 1865  
by a man named William Dix.

William Dix was a successful twenty-nine year old insurance salesman in Glasgow, Scotland, when he was unexpectedly stricken with a severe illness that brought him close to death. He was bedridden for a long period of time and suffered severe depression. Perhaps it was in coming so close to death that William began to see life differently as he finally recovered. He began to read the Bible extensively and was inspired to write poems and hymns like this one.

William begins his poem with a question, “What child is this?” He isn’t asking for biographical details as much as he is inviting us to ponder, to wonder, to marvel about who this child is ... for you, for me. “What child is this?”

As we ponder, in our mind’s eye we see the scene coming to life, the scene we heard described tonight as Amy and Von and Jim read from Luke 2 – the child sleeping on Mary’s lap while angels sing and shepherds keep their watch.

As we rise to the joyous refrain, we hear the proclamation of who this child is and who he will become for the first time – this, this is Christ the King! And we ourselves are called to join the holy scene, no longer mere observers, but coming quickly to add our voices to the chorus of praise for this baby, the Son of Mary.

So if this, this is Christ the King, then why is he lying in such shabby conditions, the second verse asks? Why, why? Just in asking this question we begin to open our hearts to the fuller truth of who this child really is. The paradox of a king lying in a manger will come to us again as the first become last and the last become first, as love shows itself stronger than hate and death, as weakness and vulnerability become signs of strength. Indeed, what child is this?

In his poem, William doesn’t go back to the full-throated praise of the refrain after the second verse. Instead he continues this way...

Nails, spear shall pierce Him through,  
The cross be borne for me, for you.  
Hail, hail, the Word made flesh,  
The Babe, the Son of Mary.

And it is this unimaginable love that flings the doors wide open as we round into the third verse, the circle of those welcomed into this scene expanding to include any who would put

this child on the throne of their hearts. “So bring him incense, gold and myrrh, come, rich and poor, to own him.” We are invited to the manger, bringing our gifts to this child, looking around to find ourselves kneeling down alongside both rich and poor to worship him.

What child is this? What child is this for you... for me? This, this is God with us. This, this is the one who invites us to be a part of his family no matter who we are, no matter our circumstances, no matter our past or our present or our future, no matter how successful we are, no matter how much we have failed, no matter what our neighbor or that family member or that teacher or our boss thinks of us. This, this is the one who invites us to take him up on his offer, his offer to carry our burdens, his offer to show us how to live life fully again. This, this is the one who will die on a cross, experience death fully, and rise to new life again – to show us that life and love are more powerful than anything and anyone. This, this is LOVE.

At a time when few people wrote hymns about Christmas, William Dix penned this, his proclamation about who Christ is – an expanding realization born out of his own suffering and misery.

What child is this to you? Come, find your place in this scene tonight. Come, worship. Come, ponder. Just come. There is room for you. And, who knows, perhaps you will find another line of your poem here at this table tonight. What child is this?

Let us sing.

### **Communion Hymn**

*“What Child is This?”*

What child is this, who, laid to rest,	Why lies He is such mean estate
on Mary's lap is sleeping?	where ox and donkeys are feeding?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,	Good Christians, fear: for sinners here
while shepherds watch are keeping?	the silent Word is pleading.
This, this is Christ the King,	Nails, spears shall pierce him through,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing:	the cross he bore for me, for you.
haste, haste to bring him laud,	Hail, hail the Word made flesh,
The babe, the son of Mary.	the Babe, the Son of Mary.

### **Prayer at the Table**

Kevin Puskarich

Dear God, on this Christmas Eve night we gather to celebrate the birth of your son Jesus, The Christ and to give thanks for your provision of the bread of life and the cup of salvation. We give thanks because you have sustained us by your Spirit for the journey we take with you. As we take this bread and drink this juice we do so in remembrance of his life, of his death and of his resurrection, which provides us with life in its fullness. We shall never grow tired of the message of healing and hope that is promised in the story of Christmas and are comforted by the knowledge that in the one we call Emmanuel; you are present with us. May these elements of bread and juice convey your presence to each and all of us, so that we can go forth into the world as bearers of your shining light. AMEN

### **Words of Institution**

Pastor Gena

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as

often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes. (1 Corinthians 11:23-26, NRSV)

### **The Service of Candle Lighting**

Rev. Stillwell

On this night, more than any other the candle becomes more than a simple form of light. It is a symbol of overwhelming joy even in the midst of despair. It is a beacon of hope for brighter and lighter days ahead. It is the power of God, the light of Christ, and the warmth of the Holy Spirit. Just as all of these things proceeded from the birth of Christ now they proceed from the Christ candle. Please light your candle and join us in singing “Silent Night”.

### **Closing Hymn**

*“Silent Night, Holy Night”*

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.

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!

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.

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.

### **Seventh Lesson**

**John 1:1-5**

Pat Donahoo

### **Benediction**

Rev. Stillwell and Pastor Gena

May the promise of Emanuel, God with us, fill your life this night. For Jesus Christ, the life of all people, is born into the world and into our hearts. May our world never be the same.

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## *In Memory of...*

Norman P McDonough, Sr  
 Our Parents  
 Robert (Whitey) Withrow  
 Thomas Ellis  
 Earl Doria  
 Amy Doria  
 Tom, Sr and Grace Ulery  
 Jim Boyles  
 Ed & Della Faber

Linda Barnhart

Betty Drach  
 Diana Pierson  
 Helen Crunick  
 Kenny Britten  
 Harry L "Magoo" McKee  
 Charles and MaryAnn Devenney  
 Harry Thomas

By the family of Norman P McDonough, Sr  
 By Dave and Carol Davis  
 By Garnet Withrow  
 By Elinor Newman  
 By Phyllis Doria  
 By Phyllis Doria  
 By Tom and Pam Ulery  
 By Eleanor Boyles  
 By Darla and Rick Lewis  
 Jeanne and Perry Riffle  
 By Darla and Rick Lewis  
 Jeanne and Perry Riffle  
 By Literacy Council of Southwestern PA  
 By Literacy Council of Southwestern PA  
 By Literacy Council of Southwestern PA  
 By Literacy Council of Southwestern PA  
 By Literacy Council of Southwestern PA  
 By Karen and Ed Thomas  
 By Karen and Ed Thomas

## *In Honor of...*

Owen and Charlotte Stillwell

By Rev Chris and Jessie Stillwell

