

WELCOME TO
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
OF BISMARCK, ND



December 24, 2024

4:30 p.m. Service

Our Mission

We are a community called to love God through worship and prayer, receiving and serving our neighbors with the compassion of Christ, open to new beginnings and the spiritual growth of children, youth and adults.



Worship Participants:

Rev. Dr. Leanne Simmons, Pastor

Debi Rogers, Chancel Choir dir.

Arvy Smith, Keyboards

Josh Stokka, Audio/Visual Specialist

Mark Jensen, Youth Ministry dir.

Amy Kinnischtzke, and Cathy Kinnischtzke,
and Karmen Svihovec ~ Ushers

ATTENDANCE BOOKS

You will find an Attendance Pad at the end of each pew. Please fill it out and leave it in pew for the church office to collect. (please include any updated address information)

Thank you to everyone for helping us with collecting attendance and statistics we submit to the Presbytery.

Christmas Eve Service

December 24th, 2024 ~ 4:30 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church of Bismarck, ND

*“Tell Me the Story of Jesus, write on my heart every word,
tell me the story most precious, sweetest that ever was heard
Tell how the angels in glory sang as they welcomed his
birth – glory to God in the Highest,
peace and good tidings on earth!”*

Prelude “Lo, How a Rose Is Growing” arr. Lee Dengler

Acolytes

Welcome and Announcements

Lighting the Advent Candle

Call to Worship

L: From the darkness of Creation, God brought forth Light!

P: That Light flooded over the waters of creation, sparkling, dancing!

L: From the fear and alienation, God sent forth a leading Pillar of Light!

P: That Light directed people who were on the path of freedom.

L: From the cries of the people, God offered the lights of Hope

P: Those lights beckoned people to God’s presence.


L: From the yearning of the spirit, God’s light was born again in a child

P: That Light shall never be diminished.

**All: Praise God for the warm light of God’s Incarnate Love.
AMEN.**

Hymn of Rejoicing “Angels, From the Realms of Glory” PH#22

Prayer of Confession

Lord of Light and Hope, All too often we focus on the darkness of the world and forget that you have already sent us undying light and never ceasing help. The babe in the 

manger brought to us a hope and a light that cannot be extinguished, no matter how it is opposed by the forces of darkness. Forgive us when we so easily get entangled in our own plans and concerns, and forget to pay attention to the true event of the coming of Christ. Help us to relax and listen, instead of rush and shout. May the songs of the angels, the surprise of the shepherds, and the joy of the Holy Family become part of our preparations and our lives. Open our ears, our eyes, our hearts and our spirits to again hear the old, old story, spoken by new voices in new ways. Remind us again of your never-changing love for us. Prepare us to serve you by serving others. This night we offer this prayer of our hearts to you, gracious God. AMEN.


Assurance of Pardon

Young Disciples

Christmas Eve Offering and Prayer

Pastor:

For centuries, God's promise of a final, beautiful Kingdom of God had played on the imagination of ancient Hebrews. The prophet Isaiah had written about it, describing a coming time of ultimate justice for all: a time when war would cease and all weapons would be melted down for use as agricultural implements, a time when all predatory behaviors would end, so much so that a child could play next to a lion's den or a snake pit and not be harmed. The courts before which people went for judgment would be fair, not favoring the rich or powerful, but dispensing peace as only God can dispense peace. Scripture describes it as a Kingdom in which there will be no want: vineyards will flourish, milk and honey will flow, and everyone would have enough. And all of this peace and justice would be brought in by a descendent of David, who would come to the throne as a Messiah.

The people pictured him in many ways: some as a general leading an army, some as a priest imposing true worship, 

some as a King from a rich, royal line. But nobody pictured anyone like Jesus. What Isaiah chapter 9 had foretold, they could never imagine, “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

Reading One: Mary

Mallory Henriksen

Mary, like most believers, never thought of the Messiah being born under such humble circumstances. She is amazed to learn what God is going, and despite the fact that such a birth is outside of her experience, she says, “yes.”

Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee,²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary.²⁸ The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.³⁰ But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God.³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David,³³ and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”

³⁴ “How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”

³⁵ The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.³⁶ Even Elizabeth

Syria.)³ And everyone went to their own town to register.

⁴ So Joseph also 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. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ 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.

⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.



Herod imagines that the Christ child will be a warrior-king, raising an army to topple his regime. He decides to strike first. Instead of a throne, Jesus becomes a political refugee.

Matthew 2:1-12

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem

² and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” ³ When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:

⁶ “But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.”

⁷ Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

⁹ After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹ On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.



John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. ⁶ There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. ⁸ He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

⁹ The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹ He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹² Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God - ¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Hymn “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

PH#31

Prayer

Benediction and Blessing

Postlude

“Still, Still, Still”

arr. Martha Mier



STAFF

Rev. Dr. Leanne Simmons, Pastor

Maureen Chrest, Administrative Assistant

Carol Thompson, Financial Assistant

Carmen Bryhn, Parish Nurse

Arvy Smith, Pianist/Organist

Gail Snustad, Pianist/Organist

Debi Rogers, Chancel Choir Director

Lael Hoerauf, Westminster Chimes Director

Josh Stokka, Audio/Visual Specialist

Judy Lentz, Membership Services Coordinator

Shawn Stettner, Child Care Center Director

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OFFICE HOURS:

MONDAY-FRIDAY 8-4:30

Christmas
EVE SERVICE