

Bethany Presbyterian Church, Johnstown, PA
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Announcements Concerning the Service:

**Hymns and Carols during the telling of the story will not be announced. *Please remain seated for the entire service.*

**The Communion- All believers are welcome to celebrate Holy Communion. Please hold the element until all are served, at the Pastor's lead, all will partake together.*

**Please return this bulletin to the front pew after the service.*

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Rejoice, for God is with us — Emmanuel.

P: In the darkness of our world shines God's holy light.

L: Now there is reason to hope, to love, to laugh, to live.

P: God is truly with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God!

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,

O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,

O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation.

Sing all ye citizens of heaven above!

Glory to God, all glory in the highest! O come, let us adore Him,

O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

Lighting of the Advent Candles:

L: The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

P: And also with you.

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CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

(All who believe are welcome to join in the celebration of The Lord's Supper)

GREAT THANKSGIVING

THE LORD'S PRAYER

BREAKING THE BREAD

THE COMMUNION

(Please hold the elements until all have been served.)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

DEPARTING PRAYER: The Canticle of Simeon

L Having traveled to Bethlehem together and having beheld the child, born a king, let us pray using the word's of Simeon, a righteous and devote man who looked forward to the consolation of Israel and who beheld his coming:

P Lord, let your servants now depart in peace, according to your word; for our eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of your people Israel.

CELEBRATING THE LIGHT Silent 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.

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We Offer Our Gifts to God

Offertory

Offertory Response (What Child Is This?)

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh, come, peasant, king, to own Him.

The King of Kings salvation brings. Let loving hearts enthrone Him.

This, this is Christ the King whom shepherds guard and angels sing.

Haste, haste to bring him laud the Babe, the Son of Mary.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

ALL: Merciful God, we confess that often we find darkness more comfortable than light.

We confess that we find your good news frightening and unsettling, especially when we consider its demands as well as its promises. We confess that Christmas has become more to us than the birthday of the Christ, partly because we do not want a Christ-Child in our lives or in our world. Forgive us, break us, bend us, remake us. Give us the courage to lay ourselves open to the wonder and healing of your coming. Be born again into our world, be born again into our hearts and lives. Hear now our silent and personal confessions as we prepare ourselves for your nativity.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

L: The true light that enlightens all has come into the world.

P: That light shines on in the darkness, and the darkness has never been able to put it out.

L: This is the good news: God has heard our confession. God has forgiven our sin. Friends, Believe the Good News

ALL: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

CHRISTMAS EVE MEDITATION

Pastor Denise

L: Jesus Christ, the son of Mary, the son of God is born this night.

P: God's word has been made flesh among us.

L: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

P: Those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness - on them a light has shined.

L: You, O Lord, have multiplied the nation. You have increased its joy. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder.

P: His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

L: He is also called Emmanuel, for in him God is with us.

(As the Candles are lit all sing to the tune of Away in a Manger)

We honor Messiah with Christ candle's flame
our Christmas Eve candles glad tidings proclaim.

O Come all you faithful, rejoice in this night,
as God comes among us, the Christian's true light.

OPENING PRAYER

L: Gracious God, With joy and thanksgiving we gather as your people.

P: We have come to hear again the timeless story of Christ's birth.

L: In the excitement of this night, quiet our hearts that we may know the peace and fullness of this holy time.

P: Shine, O Light, in the darkness of our world.

L: Sing, O angels, in the stillness of our hearts,
"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those God favors."

ALL: This we pray in the name of the Child of Bethlehem. Amen.

The Prophecy of the Messiah

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7, John 1:1-2, 4-5

The Lighting of the Christ Candle

Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, Wonderful Counselor,
Almighty God, Emmanuel, Emmanuel, God with us, Emmanuel.

The Coming of Jesus Is Announced to Mary and Joseph

Luke 1:26-38, Matthew 1:18-25

The Preparations for the Birth of Jesus

Luke 2:1-5

O Little Town of Bethlehem

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 street shineth the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

Jesus is Born

Luke 2:6-7

What Child Is This?

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.*

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**
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**

Jesus' Birth is Announced to the Shepherds

Luke 2:9-14

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 men, from heaven's all gracious
King.

The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.

The Shepherds Find the Baby Jesus

Luke 2:15-18

The First Noel

The first noel the angels did say was to certain poor shepherds
in fields as they lay.

In fields where they lay keeping their sheep on a cold winter's
night that was so deep.

Noel, noel, noel, noel. Born is the King of Israel

The Wise Men Bring Their Gifts to Jesus

Matthew 2:1-11

The First Noel

And by the light of that same star, three wise men came from
county far.

To seek for a king was their intent, and to follow the star
wherever it went.

Noel, noel, noel, noel. Born is the King of Israel.

Then entered in the wise men three, full reverently upon the
knee.

And offered there in His presence their gold and myrrh and
frankincense.

Noel, noel, noel, noel.

Born is the King of Israel.

BENEDICTION

Joy to the World

Joy to the world! The Lord is come. Let earth receive her king.
Let every heart prepare Him room and heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven and
nature sing.

He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the nations
prove

The glories of His righteousness and wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love, and wonders, wonders of His love.

**Credit to Rev. Kathie S Wilkinson/Mt. Sylvan UMC as the
source for portions of this service.

ORGANISTS: John Griffin and Elaine Bilger

COMMISSIONED PASTOR: Denise Ann Todero

