

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.

****BREATH OF HEAVEN (MARY'S SONG) – AMY GRANT**

WE GATHER AS THE PEOPLE OF GOD

L: The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;

P: on those living in the shadows of death a light has dawned

L: Jesus Christ is our Life and Light. In Christ's name, welcome!

P: In Christ's grace, let us worship God!

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Let us go, just as we are, to see what has happened. Let us go with the shepherds:

P: let us go and find the One of whom angels sang.

L: Let us go with those who are wise:

P: let us go and find the One who brings God's truth to us.

L: Let us go with the poor in spirit, and in flesh; let us go with those who are humbled by life:

P: Let us find the Glory of God born in a stable, and placed in a feeding trough.

L: Let us go with our friends and family, let us go with our neighbors and with strangers, let us go with the children of God:

P: let us go to find the One who comes to lead us home to God's kingdom.

L: O come, let us go to the Babe of Bethlehem; O come, let us adore him!

P: Christ our Lord!

Christmas Poinsettias

In Memory Of

Cindy Griffin

Jake Johnson

The Brewer Family

The Molnar Family

David Hayduk

Loved Ones

Loved Ones

In Honor Of

Loretta Davidson

Bobbie Johnson

Jessie Rager

Given By

John Griffin

Sandy & Laura Huchel

The Molnar's

The Molnar's

Linda Orlidge

The Vozsnyak's

Linda Orlidge

Given By

John Griffin

Sandy & Laura Huchel

Excerpt from "Poinsettias and Prayer"
By Marina Berzins McCoy

Many people enjoy decorating their homes or offices with poinsettias during the holiday season. Poinsettias, or flores de Nochebuena, are associated with Christmas based on a Mexican story about a girl who wanted to bring a gift to Jesus at Christmas Eve services but lacked the means.

On the way to church, she grabbed some weeds from the roadside to bring to Jesus. However, when she entered the church to make her offering, they blossomed into poinsettia flowers. This tale reinforces a common Biblical theme of God's tender and protective care for those who are poor and the special love that God has for people whom the world sometimes forgets. The story also reminds us that no matter who we are, God loves and appreciates our offerings, no matter how "poor" those gifts may be.

***CAROL: 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.

***BENEDICTION**

***BENEDICTION RESPONSE:**

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Hark! The herald angels, sing, "Glory to the newborn king:
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled."
Joyful, all you nations rise; Join with triumph of the skies;
With angelic hosts proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king"

**** LET IT BE CHRISTMAS ALAN JACKSON**

POSTLUDE

(Please place your candles in the baskets as you depart)

Organist: Elaine Bilger

Video/Projector Operator: Ed Sheets

***- Those who are able, please stand**

**** - Denotes Video Played On Projector**

OPENING CAROL: 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.

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;

Jesus, to thee be glory given;

Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing;

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

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

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

**All: We rejoice in God's steadfast presence in our lives,
and in God's unique presence in the life of Jesus of
Nazareth- born of Mary, growing through childhood into
an adult ministry, in all his life manifesting the peace,
love, and justice of God; his voice undimmed by the
centuries his call and his promise clear to us as it was to
his disciples so long ago. Come to us, Lord Jesus, be
born in us this night, in our hearts, our minds, our lives.
May the light of your life be kindled in us, And lead us
into the shining truth, of God with us, God for us, God in
us. Amen.**

CAROL: 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.

Joy to the earth! The Savior reigns: Let men their songs employ, while fields and floods, rock hills and plains, repeat the sounding joy...

No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground: he comes to make his blessings flow, far as the curse is found...

He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the nations prove, the glories of His righteousness and wonders of His love...

***UNISON PRAYER**

L: Let us Pray...

P: Eternal God, this holy night is radiant with the brilliance of your one true light. May that light illuminate our hearts and shine in our words and deeds. May the hope, the peace, the joy, and the love represented by the birth in Bethlehem this night fill our lives and become part of all that we say and do. May we share the divine life of your son Jesus Christ, even as he humbled himself to share our humanity. Amen.

THE CHRISTMAS STORY IN WORD & SONG

LUKE 1:26-38: The Angel Visits Mary

Luke 1:39-45: Mary And Elizabeth

P: I believe in Jesus, the son of the living god, born in Bethlehem this night, for me and the world.

CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

(All who believe are welcome)

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

THE COMMUNION

(Please hold the elements until all have been served)

The Body of Christ, the bread of heaven.

The Blood of Christ, the cup of salvation.

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.

THE LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

L: But these things did not stop the birth of Jesus then, nor will they now.

P: Lord Jesus be born in us today

L: Loving God, like Mary and Joseph, who trusted in your grace, we offer ourselves and our gifts to you. Bless our offering and hallow our every thought and our every action, that Christ may be revealed through them to the world that is yet in darkness. Amen.

***A Christmas Confession and Affirmation of Faith**

(Walter Russell Bowie: A Christmas Creed)

L: I believe in Jesus Christ and in the beauty of the gospel begun in Bethlehem.

P: I believe in the one whose spirit glorified a little town; and whose spirit brings music to persons all over the world, in towns both large and small.

L: I believe in the one for whom the crowded inn could find no room, and I confess that my heart still sometimes wants to exclude Christ from my life today.

P: I believe in the one who the rulers of the earth ignored and the proud could never understand; whose life was among common people, whose welcome came from persons of hungry hearts.

L: I believe in the one who proclaimed the love of God to be invincible;

P: I believe in the one whose cradle was a mother's arms, whose modest home in Nazareth had love for its only wealth, who looked at persons and made them see what God's love saw in them, who by love brought sinners back to purity, and lifted human weakness up to meet the strength of God.

L: I confess my ever-lasting need of God;

P: The need for forgiveness for our selfishness and greed, the need of new life for empty souls, the need of love for hearts grown cold.

L: I believe in God who gives us the best of himself

CAROL: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, That mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God Appear.

Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel, shall come to thee, O Israel!

O Come, Thou Day-spring, come and cheer. Our spirits by Thine advent here; Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, And death's dark shadows put to flight. **Refrain**

O Come, Thou Wisdom from on high, And order all things far and nigh; To us the path of knowledge show, And cause in us her way to go. **Refrain**

O Come, Desire of nations, bind. All peoples in one heart and mind; Bid envy, strife and quarrels cease, Fill all the world with heaven's peace. **Refrain**

LUKE 2:1-7: The Birth In Bethlehem

CAROL: 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**

LUKE 2:8-14: The Angels & The Shepherds

CAROL: Angels From The Realms of Glory

Angels from the realms of glory, Wing your flight o'er all the
earth; Ye who sang creation's story, now proclaim Messiah's
birth. Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn King.

Shepherds, in the field abiding, watching o'er your flocks by
night, God with us is now residing; yonder shines the infant
light. Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the
newborn King.

Sages, leave your contemplations, brighter visions beam afar;
seek the great Desire of nations; Ye have seen His natal star.
Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn King.

Saints, before the altar bending, watching long in hope and
fear; suddenly the Lord, descending, in His temple shall appear.
Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn King.

Luke 2:15-20: The Shepherds Worship

CAROL: Go Tell It On The Mountain

Refrain: Go tell it on the mountain, Over the hills and
everywhere: 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, our humble Christ was born, and
brought us all salvation, that blessed Christmas morn

Refrain

Matthew 2:1-11

JOHN 1:1-5; 3:16-18: The Word Made Flesh

CHRISTMAS MEDITATION- The Face of God- Pastor Ruth Ann Moore

THE GIFTS WE BRING SHARING GOD'S BLESSINGS: - The Offering Is Received

****HOPE IS ALIVE ELLIE HOLCOMB**

***DOXOLOGY**

PRAYER OF DEDICATION AND A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

L: It was cold and Mary and Joseph were fearful.

P: But that did not stop the birth.

L: They were poor and had no place fitting for their child.

P: But that did not stop the birth.

L: They were uncertain about what God wanted from them.

P: But that did not stop the birth.

L: Today we are still sometimes cold and fearful certainly poor
in many ways.

**P: We often feel we have no place and are unclear about
what God wants of us.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS & INFORMATION

Session will meet on Sunday December 28th After Morning Worship.

A Congregational Business Meeting will be held on Sunday January 18th following Morning Worship. All members are encouraged to attend.

We Are Updating the church email list. The list will allow us to send out reminders about upcoming events and other important information. Sign up on the church website or by placing your name and email address in the offering plate.

The West End Food Pantry is still in need of staples to keep their shelves stocked. Non-perishable food donations can be placed in the bins by the main entrance. Monetary donations can be placed in the offering plate.

Sign Ups for 2026 Lay Leaders are now being accepted. If you are interested in helping out, please sign up on the back bulletin board.

Orders are now being taken for 2026 Flower and Bulletin Sponsorships. Order forms and more information can be found on the back bulletin board. Orders can also be placed on the church website.

Visit Our Website (www.bethanyjohnstown.com) or follow us on Facebook (Bethany Presbyterian Church-Johnstown, PA) for- the latest news, information and much more!

