
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

December 24, 2011

7:30 P.M.

A Service of Scripture and Song The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

THE GATHERING

PRELUDE "Star Carol" Dick Hippeard, *Saxophone*

GREETINGS

OPENING MUSIC "Emmanuel" CB 243

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Tonight, let us celebrate Christmas in the Spirit of Jesus Christ, who came to us from the heart of God's own being.

P: He took the form of a servant, being born in human likeness.

L: Our Advent wreath is complete, with all five candles, including the central Christ candle, lit. Let us now celebrate God's entering into our lives in human form, to bring light to all the world.

P: May hope, peace, joy, and love – the gifts of Jesus Christ to us – be reborn in our hearts this night!

L: Let us worship God!

***HYMN** "O Come, All Ye Faithful" CB 249

THE PROPHETIC HOPE: BETHLEHEM

RESPONSIVE LESSONS: Micah 5:2-5a and Luke 2:1-5

L: But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel,

P: Whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.

L: Therefore Israel will be abandoned until the time when she who is in labor gives birth

P: and the rest of his brothers return to join the Israelites.

L: He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord,

P: in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.

L: And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth.

P: And he will be their peace.

L: In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.)

P: And everyone went to his own town to register.

L: 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.

P: He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

HYMN “O Little Town of Bethlehem” CB 250
(Verses 1 and 4)

THE BIRTH IN THE MANGER

UNISON LESSON: Luke 2:6-7

While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

***HYMN** “Gentle Mary Laid Her Child” PH 27
(Verses 1 and 3)

THE ANGELS’ SONG

RESPONSIVE LESSON: Luke 2:8-14

L: And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night.

P: An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

L: But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

P: Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.

L: This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

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

HYMN “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” CB 277

THE SHEPHERDS' RESPONSE

RESPONSIVE LESSON: Luke 2:15-20

L: 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."

P: So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

L: When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child,

P: and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

L: But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

P: The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

HYMN "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks" CB 272
(Verses 1, 2, 5)

MEDITATION "Fear Not!" Dr. Williams

COMMUNION AND CANDLELIGHTING

***HYMN** "A Communion Hymn for Christmas" Chancel Choir

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Invitation and Institution

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Breaking of the Bread

Communion of the People (*Please hold elements*)

CANDLE LIGHTING – *from the Christ Candle*

L: Jesus is the light of the world. As his followers, we are called to receive this light, and to let it shine in word and deed for all to see. As we receive the light from the Christ candle, may the joy of Christmas through the presence of Christ within us bring praise to God our heavenly Father!

The Elders distribute the Light.
*[While the light is passed through the congregation, the
introduction to “Silent Night” will be played.
Please begin singing after this is played through one time.]*

*HYMN “Silent Night” CB 253

*HYMN “Joy to the World!” CB 270
(Verse 1)

***CHRISTMAS LITANY**

L: The time of wait is over ... Christmas is here!

P: We have witnessed to this very hour, this very night, and we hope that the world will hear the good news which we have spoken.

L: May these candles remind us that Christ is the light of the world, the center of our lives, the shining beacon of hope for all the universe.

P: Christ is born! Praise God!

L: We thank you, O God, that the light of Christ shines clearly tonight.

P: We will carry the light of Christ in our hearts, now and always.

Please extinguish your candle now.

***CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

***POSTLUDE**

* Congregation please stand, if able

CB = Celebration Hymnal (maroon) / PH = Presbyterian Hymnal (blue)

No formal offering is being received this evening. If you feel led to make a gift, offering plates are in the back of the sanctuary for this purpose. Sunday worship will be held as usual at 11:00 tomorrow morning, on Christmas Day.