

THE SERVICE FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

11:00 p.m.

Thursday, December 24, 2015

Let all enter the sanctuary in a spirit of prayer.

Please remember to turn cell phones and pagers to silent for worship.

Where you see an asterisk () please stand if you are able.*



PRELUDES

CALL TO WORSHIP

* CAROL 119

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Mendelssohn

1. Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn 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 newborn king!"
2. Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come, offspring of the virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail the incarnate deity,
pleased in flesh with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"
3. 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 newborn king!"

* PRAYER FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

*We open our hearts to light...to holy light, the light of love, the light of justice,
the light of new life, the light of visions for a world of peace.*

May God be with you.

And also with you.

*God of glory, your splendor shines from a manger in Bethlehem,
where the Light of the World is humbly born into the darkness of human night.*

**Open our eyes to Christ's presence in the shadows of our world,
so that we, like him, may become beacons of your justice,
and defenders of all for whom there is no room. Amen.**

WELCOME

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

*...we light this Christ candle tonight, and we declare to all the world:
Christ is the light of the world and the center of our lives.*

ANTHEM

What Sweeter Music

Richard Rodney Bennett

*What sweeter music can we bring than a carol, for to sing
the birth of this our heavenly King? Awake the voice! Awake the string!*

Refrain:

*We see him come, and know him ours,
who with his sunshine and his showers,
turns all the patient ground to flowers.*

*Dark and dull night, fly hence away and give the honor to this day,
that sees December turned to May; if we may ask the reason, say:
The darling of the world is come, and fit it is we find a room to welcome him.
The nobler part of all the house here is the heart.*

*Which we will give him; and bequeath this holly, and this ivy wreath,
to do him honour, who's our King, and Lord of all this revelling.*

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 9:2-7 (page 555, Pew Bible)

*The Word of God for the People of God
Thanks be to God.*

READING

Where Shepherds Lately Knelt

by Jaroslav Vajda (1919-2008)

* CAROL 158

Born in the Night, Mary's Child

Mary's Child

1. Born in the night, Mary's Child, a long way from your home;
coming in need, Mary's Child, born in a borrowed room.
2. Clear shining light, Mary's Child, your face lights up our way;
Light of the world, Mary's Child, dawn on our darkened day.
3. Truth of our life, Mary's Child, you tell us God is good;
yes, it is true, Mary's Child, shown on your cross of wood.
4. Hope of the world, Mary's Child, you're coming soon to reign;
King of the earth, Mary's Child, walk in our streets again.

* CAROL 110

Love Has Come

Bring a Torch

1. Love has come: a light in the darkness!
Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it;
hear how their song of joy arises:
Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior!
Love! Love! Glory to God on high.
2. Love is born! Come, share in the wonder.
Love is God now asleep in the hay.
See the glow in the eyes of his mother;
what is the name her heart is saying?
Love! Love! Love is the name she whispers.
Love! Love! Jesus, Emmanuel
3. Love has come and never will leave us!
Love is life everlasting and free.
Love is Jesus within and among us.
Love is the peace our hearts are seeking. Love! Love!
Love is the gift of Christmas. Love! Love!
Praise to you, God on high!

THE OFFERING

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Angel's Carol

John Rutter

*Have you heard the sound of the angel voices
Ringing out so sweetly, ringing out so clear?
Have you seen the star shining out so brightly
as a sign from God that Christ the Lord is here?
Have you heard the news that they bring from heaven
to the humble shepherds who have waited long?
Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Hear the angels sing their joyful song.
He is come in peace in the winter's stillness
like a gentle snowfall in the gentle night:
he is come in joy like the sun at morning
filling all the world with radiance and with light.
He is come in love as the child of Mary;
in a simple stable we have seen his birth:
Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Hear the angels singing "Peace on earth."
He will bring new light to a world of darkness,
like a bright star shining in the skies above;
he will bring new hope to the waiting nations
when he comes to reign in purity and love,
Let the earth rejoice at the Savior's coming;
let the heavens answer with the joyful morn:
Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Hear the angels singing "Christ is born."*

SECOND LESSON

Luke 2:1-20 (*page 832, Pew Bible*)

The Word of God for the People of God
Thanks be to God.

READING

The Bairn

by John L. Bell (1949-)

* CAROL 121

O Little Town of Bethlehem

St. Louis

1. 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 streets shineth the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.
2. For Christ is born of Mary and, gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the king, and peace to all on earth.
3. How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.

MEDITATION

Room for Light

Dr. Sue Lowcock Harris

* CAROL 125

Before the Marvel of This Night
Choir sings verse 1; all join in on verses 2 & 3

Marvel

1. Before the marvel of this night, adoring, fold your wings and bow;
then tear the sky apart with light and with your news the world endow.
Proclaim the birth of Christ and peace, that fear and death and sorrow cease:
sing peace; sing peace; sing gift of peace; sing peace; sing gift of peace!
2. Awake the sleeping world with song: this is the day the Lord has made.
Assemble here, celestial throng, in royal splendor come arrayed.
Give earth a glimpse of heavenly bliss, a teasing taste of what they miss:
sing bliss; sing bliss; sing endless bliss; sing bliss; sing endless bliss!
3. The love that we have always known, our constant joy and endless light,
now to the loveless world be shown, now break upon its deathly night.
Into one song compress the love that rules our universe above:
sing love; sing love; sing God is love; sing love; sing God is love!

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Invitation to the Table

The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

May God be with you.

And also with you.

People of God, open your hearts.

We open our hearts to God and to each other.

*Let us give thanks to the Holy One
who sends us the Hope-Child, the Light of the World.*

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

(the prayer continues...)

The Lord's Prayer *(together)*

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.

Breaking the Bread

The Communion of the People

We will receive communion this evening by passing the bread and the cup to one another in the pew. Red wine is in the center and white grape juice rings the outside. Gluten-free bread is available at the communion table. Our tradition is to eat the bread as it comes to you, and then to hold the cup so we may commune together.

Music at the Communion

The Wexford Carol

arr: Charles Floyd and Yoyo Ma

Shana Kuhn, soloist

Good people all this Christmas-time consider well and bear in mind

What our good God for us has done in sending His beloved Son.

With Mary holy we should pray to God with love this Christmas Day;

In Bethlehem upon that morn, there was a blessed Messiah born.

Near Bethlehem did shepherds keep their flocks of lambs and feeding sheep;

To whom God's angels did appear, which put the shepherds in great fear.

"Prepare and go," the angels said, "to Bethlehem; be not afraid,

For there you'll find this happy morn a princely babe, sweet Jesus born."

With thankful heart and joyful mind, the shepherds went this Babe to find.

And as God's angel had foretold, they did our Savior Christ behold.

Within a manger He was laid, And by his side the Virgin maid,

Attending on the Lord of life, who came on Earth to end all strife.

Sharing the Peace

May the peace of the Child of Peace be with you all.

And also with you.

Prayer after Communion

* PASSING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

Please light each candle carefully, leaning the unlit candle toward the lighted one, and then passing the light to the next person. Hold the lighted candle upright at all times. Place your candle in a receptacle at the door when leaving.

* CAROLS FOR THE LIGHT

What Child Is This, 145

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?
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.
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!

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;
come, one and all, to own him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
let loving hearts enthrone him.
Raise, raise the song on high.
The virgin sings her lullaby.
Joy, joy, for Christ is born,
the babe, the son of Mary!

Silent Night, 122

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.

* BENEDICTION

* CHORAL RESPONSE

Infant holy, infant lowly,
for his bed a cattle stall;
oxen lowing, little knowing
Christ the babe is Lord of all.
Swift are winging
angels singing,
noels ringing,
tidings bringing:
Christ the babe is Lord of all!
Christ the babe is Lord of all!

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly, Hymn 128

Flocks were sleeping; shepherds keeping
vigil till the morning new
saw the glory, heard the story,
tidings of the gospel true.
Thus rejoicing,
free from sorrow,
praises voicing
greet the morrow:
Christ the babe was born for you!
Christ the babe was born for you!

Church Poinsettias 2015

The Poinsettias gracing our Sanctuary this Christmas Season have been graciously given by:

Janice Agazio – In gratitude to our military for serving our country.

Mispa Bikoi – Merry Christmas!

Steve Conrad – In memory of Loved Ones

Elaine Cook – In memory of Marjorie Cook

Elaine Cook – In memory of Bob Marsden

The Curran Family – Peace, Hope, Joy and Love

Jennifer D'Angelo - In memory of my beloved grandmother

The Duda Family – Peace on Earth

The Eichhorn Family - In honor and memory of our parents and grandparents.

The Eyes Family – In memory of Leonard & Doris Eyes and Margaret Colwell.

Melanie Fadrowski – In honor of Davey Winyall

Nancy Fayer – In memory of Annetta Wissing

Nancy Fayer – In memory of Paul Norris

Ann Foltz & Beth & Jillian Sanders– In memory of John Foltz

Blessing & Richard Gunden – To the Glory of God for Richard Gunden's ability to bear pain with humor.

Blessing & Richard Gunden – To the Glory of God in celebration of all members of First Church Family.

Blessing & Richard Gunden – In memory of father, J. C. Iheme, whose faith in God continues to enhance mine.

Blessing & Richard Gunden – In memory of cousin Miriam Bankole who left this world so young.

Blessing & Richard Gunden – In memory of uncle Abraham Osagie, who left us this year.

Blessing & Richard Gunden – In memory of my dearest friend, Gloria Carlyle, who will always be close to me in spirit.

Blessing & Richard Gunden – In memory of Richard's parents, Ruth and Marlin Gunden.

Blessing & Richard Gunden – In memory of Phil Gunden who left us so young.

Laura Hampton – To the Glory of God

Alice Haskins – In memory of Gwen Daniels

Alice Haskins – In memory of Joseph Walton

Morton & Sue Lowcock Harris – In memory of Doris W. Lowcock and Edward J. Lowcock, Sue's parents

Morton & Sue Lowcock Harris – In honor of Martha N. Harris and in memory of Otha M. Harris, Morton's parents

Phyllis Hollman, Susan Meseke and Family - In memory of John H. Hollman

Blondelle Hunter – Thankfulness for Family

The Kammerer/Douglas Family – In memory of David Kammerer, loving husband, father & grandfather

Gloria L. Keesee – In memory of Bland A. Leebrick, Sr.

Gloria L. Keesee – In honor of Anne G. Leebrick

Gloria L. Keesee – In honor of children and grandchildren

Janet & Will Klingaman – In honor of Richard Christopher Oles and Noah William Klingaman, our grandsons.

Mary LaCount – In memory of Sharon LaCount.

Tracy Krzys – In honor of my children, Eric, Amanda, Andy & Meredith

Matt Lang - In memory of Diana Lang

The Leslie Family – To celebrate the blessing of church family and friends.

Bruce Leipold & Dede Newport – Come, Lord Jesus, Light of the World!

Jim & Lisa Mikles – Christmas Blessings to All

Evelyn Mogren - In honor of Christiana O'Neal

Doria Musaga – In memory of innocent victims of violence and their families.

Roy & Agnes Reid – In honor of our children, Erin Reid and Jevne Reid Sweeney.

Roy & Agnes Reid – In honor of our grandson, Isaiah Roland-Reid.

Secret Pal - In honor of Janet Sivo from her Secret Pal

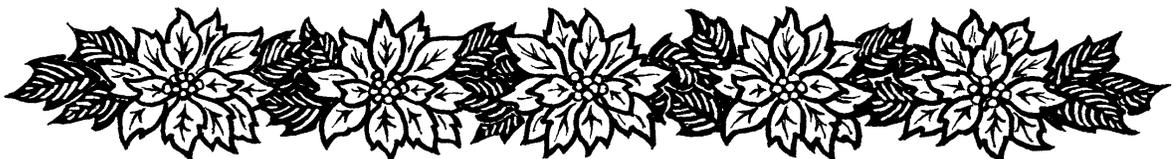
Kathy Robie-Suh – Glory to God!

Martin, Caroline, Cheryl & Nathan Smith – In honor of Martin's parents, Gail & Myrna Smith, celebrating 65 years of marriage.

Bob, Margot, Sara & Anne Watson – In memory of Jan Watson

Margot Watson & Bob LeCompte – In honor of Molly, Emily & Christopher LeCompte

Davey Winyall – In memory of Milton Winyall



We welcome you to this household of faith tonight, and pray that as you celebrate the birth of Christ you will be filled with God's gifts of hope, peace, joy, and a great and generous love.

May God's Holy light, shining in Jesus Christ, fill your life.

Thank you to our Ushers, Greeters, and Audio Team for tonight's services:

5:00 p.m. Margot Watson, Emily LeCompte, Angela Nichols, Jonathan St. John

7:00 p.m. Margot Watson, Emily LeCompte, Jonathan St. John

9:00 p.m. Craig Lorch, Mispa Bikoi, Bob Reese, Carol Reese, Debbie Reese, Laura Burris

11:00 p.m. Rod Summerford, Melanie Fadrowski, Debbie Reese, Davey Winyall, Brian Ventre

Thank you to Paul Lindenmann and Roy Leierzapf, trumpet at the 7:00 & 9:00 p.m. services and Gabriel Hightower, cello at 11:00 p.m.

Thank you to the Handbell Choir for playing in the Upper Commons prior to each service:

7:00 p.m. Dave Claus, Christine Lindenmann, Elaine Cook, Jon Barnett

9:00 p.m. Dave Claus, Christine Lindenmann, Elaine Cook, Amanda Foust

11:00 p.m. Suzie Jamaris, Amanda Foust, Elaine Cook, Jon Barnett

Lighting the Candles on the Advent Wreath: Alice Haskins, Morgan Williams (7:00); Siedlecki Family (9:00); Seabright/Hightower Family (11:00)

Childcare for Infants and Toddlers is available tonight during the 5, 7 and 9 p.m. services. Ask an usher for directions to Room 151 or 159.

Holiday Office Hours: The church office will be closed Friday, December 25, Saturday, December 26, Monday, December 28 and Tuesday, December 29. **The church office will be open: Wednesday, December 30 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Thursday, December 31 from 9:00 a.m. to noon.** The Church Office will be closed on Friday, January 1 in celebration of New Year's Day.

Come One, Come All to Worship on Sunday, December 27! There will be one family-friendly worship service with Christmas Carols at **10:00 a.m.** Nursery care will be available during the worship service. Following the service join us for the End of Year Brunch in Lyle Buck Hall. We'll share great food and fellowship.

Are you looking for a church home? First Presbyterian Church is a community of people who are enthusiastic about walking the way of Jesus Christ together. You can speak with any of the Pastors, Elders, Deacons or any member of First Presbyterian Church about what it means to be part of this company of Jesus' friends. You can visit our website to find out more about our mission and ministry, www.firstpreshc.org. And Pastor Morton and Pastor Sue would also be pleased to speak with you, just call the Church Office at 410.730.3545.

Regular Sunday Morning Worship schedule resumes on January 3, 2016.

8:30 a.m. Worship | 10:30 a.m. Worship | 11:30 a.m. Discipleship Hour

Church School - The Education Hour - ages 2 through Adult resumes on Sunday, January 10, 2016 at 9:30 a.m.

Visit our website to see what is happening: www.firstpreshc.org

The First Presbyterian Church of Howard County

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Ministers: All the members of the church

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The Rev. Ruth Bell, Parish Visitor

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The Rev. T. Webster Brenner, Parish Associate

The Rev. Stephen Mann, Parish Associate

We are an Earth Care Congregation ✦ We are a Stephen Ministry Church

Inspirit Counseling Services at First Presbyterian Church

Meredith Barger 410-433-8861 x104 | John Michalcyzk 410-433-8861 x115