



CENTRAL
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PREPARATION

December 24, 2024
Christmas Eve

WORDS FOR REFLECTION

“Man’s maker was made man that He, Ruler of the Milky Way, might nurse at his mother’s breasts; that the Bread might hunger, the Fountain thirst, the Light sleep, the Way be tired in journey; that Truth might be accused by false witness, the Teacher be beaten with whips, the Foundation be suspended on wood; that Strength might weaken, that the Healer might be wounded, that Life might die.”

—AUGUSTINE

COLLECT OF THE DAY

God, who makes us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of your only son Jesus Christ: Grant that as we joyfully receive him as our redeemer, so we may with sure confidence behold him, when he shall come to be our judge, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

THE COMMON LECTIONARY READINGS

FIRST READING: Isaiah 9:2-7

PSALM: Psalm 96

SECOND READING: Titus 2:11-14

GOSPEL: Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PRELUDE

Central Chamber Ensemble

*God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen
We Three Kings
It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*

PROCESSIONAL HYMN PLEASE STAND

O Come, All Ye Faithful

John Francis Wade

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.

WELCOME

LESSON I

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7 | Isaiah Promises the Birth of the Messiah

- ²The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shone.
- ⁶For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
- ⁷Of the increase of his government and of peace
there will be no end,
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,
to establish it and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time forth and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

LIGHTING OF THE CHRISTMAS CANDLE

HYMN

O Come, All Ye Faithful—*continued*

True God of True God, Light of Light eternal,
Lo, he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Very God, begotten, not created:
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 heav'n 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 all glory giv'n;
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.

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden, cleanse the thoughts
of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we
may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name,
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION PLEASE BE SEATED

Lord Jesus Christ, if you had not limited all your majestic greatness into the cramped quarters of human nature, we could not know the limitless power and privilege of being your children. If you had not become poor, we could never have known the riches of your gospel. If you had not come to die, we could never have received endless life. Now Father, forgive us for not loving as you loved us at Christmas. Forgive us for not lowering ourselves to serve others as you have served us. We now adore you for the gift of your Son, for he is our hope and our life and our salvation. Amen.

SILENT CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

John 3:16-17

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

LEADER Hear and receive the good news of the gospel:
in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

ALL **Thanks be to God!**

PASSING OF THE PEACE PLEASE STAND

LEADER The peace of the Lord be with you always.

ALL **And also with you.**

HYMN

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Charles Wesley · Felix Mendelssohn

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 th’angelic host proclaim:
“Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
Hark! the Herald Angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King!”

Christ, by highest heav’n adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold Him come,
Offspring of the Virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail th’incarnate Deity,
Pleased as man with men to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! the Herald Angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King!”

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
Ris'n with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.
Hark! the Herald Angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

LESSON II

Micah 5:2, 4-5a | The Peace That Christ Will Bring Is Foretold

- ²But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,
 who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
 one who is to be ruler in Israel,
whose coming forth is from of old,
 from ancient days.
- ⁴And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord,
 in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.
And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great
 to the ends of the earth.
- ⁵And he shall be their peace.

HYMN

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Phillips Brooks · Lewis H. Redner

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.

For Christ is born of Mary; and gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars together proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth.

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heav'n.
No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him still, the dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in; be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.

Luke 1:26-35, 38 | The Angel Gabriel Salutes the Virgin Mary

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" ²⁹But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, ³³and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

³⁴And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

³⁵And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.

³⁸And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

What Child Is This?

William C. Dix · Greensleeves

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, peasant, king, 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.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth;

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord,
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit
Born of the Virgin Mary,
Suffered under Pontius Pilate,
Was crucified, dead, and buried.

He descended into hell.

The third day he rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven,

And is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
The holy catholic Church,
The communion of saints,
The forgiveness of sins,
The resurrection of the body,
And the life everlasting. Amen.

Luke 2:1-7 | Luke Tells of the Birth of Jesus

¹In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. ⁶And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

HYMN PLEASE STAND

The First Noel

Traditional English Carol

The first Noel the angel 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!*

They looked up and saw a star
Shining in the east beyond them far:
And to the earth it gave great light
And so it continued both day and night. *Chorus*

Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heav'nly Lord,
That hath made heav'n and earth of nought,
And with His blood mankind has bought. *Chorus*

LESSON V PLEASE BE SEATED

Luke 2:8-20 | The Shepherds Go to the Manger

⁸And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

¹⁵When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Angels We Have Heard on High

Traditional French

Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply
Echo back their joyous strains.
Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
Say what may the tidings be,
Which inspire your heav'nly song?
Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee,
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Matthew 2:1-12 | The Wise Men Are Led By the Star to Jesus

¹Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, ²saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” ³When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:

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

⁷Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. ⁸And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.” ⁹After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. ¹¹And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. ¹²And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

Joy to the World! The Lord is Come

Isaac Watts · George Frederic Handel

Joy to the world! The Lord is come:
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! the Savior reigns:
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, 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,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, 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,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders of His love.

John 1:1-14 | John Unfolds the Mystery of the Incarnation

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

⁹The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹²But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

OFFERING

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OFFERTORY

O Holy Night

Adolphe Adam

O Holy night! The stars are brightly shining
It is the night of our dear Savior's birth
Long lay the world in sin and error pining
'Til He appears and the soul felt its worth
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn
Fall on your knees; O hear the Angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born
O night, O Holy night, O night divine!

Led by the light of Faith serenely beaming
With glowing hearts by His cradle we stand
So led by light of a star sweetly gleaming
Here come the Wise Men from Orient land
The King of kings lay thus in lowly manger
In all our trials born to be our friend
He knows our need, to our weakness is no stranger
Behold your King; before Him lowly bend
Behold your King; before Him lowly bend.

Truly He taught us to love one another;
His law is love and His Gospel is Peace
Chains shall He break, for the slave is our brother
And in His name, all oppression shall cease
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we
Let all within us Praise His Holy name
Christ is the Lord; O praise His name forever!
His power and glory evermore proclaim
His power and glory evermore proclaim.

THE DOXOLOGY PLEASE STAND

Old Hundredth LM

Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye Heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

SERMON PLEASE BE SEATED

***Christmas Eve* | The One and Only**

Rev. Jason Harris

THE THANKSGIVING

LEADER Lift up your hearts.

PEOPLE **We lift them up to the Lord.**

LEADER Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

PEOPLE **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

LEADER It is indeed right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to you, Lord, holy Father, mighty Creator and eternal God.

PRAYER OF HUMBLE ACCESS

We do not presume to come to this, your Table, O Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but solely in your great mercy. We are not worthy to gather up the crumbs under your Table, but you are the same Lord who always delights in showing mercy. Grant us, therefore gracious Lord, that we who now receive these gifts of bread and wine, according to our Savior's Word, may share in the body and blood of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, that we may dwell in him forever and he in us. Amen.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

Prayer for Those Searching for Truth

Lord Jesus Christ, you claim to be the way, the truth, and the life. Grant that I might be undaunted by the cost of following you as I consider the reasons for doing so. If what you claim is true, please guide me, teach me, and open to me the reality of who you are. Give me an understanding of you that is coherent, convincing, and that leads to the life that you promise. Amen.

Prayer of Belief

Lord Jesus Christ, I acknowledge that you are so holy and I am so sinful that you had to die for me. Yet you are so merciful and I am so loved that you were willing to die for me. I confess that I have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed by what I have done and by what I have failed to do. I thank you for paying my debt, bearing my punishment on the cross, and offering forgiveness and new life. Knowing that you have been raised from the dead, I turn from my sins and receive you as Savior and Lord. Amen.

Prayer of Commitment

Lord Jesus, I know that if I do not love you with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul, and with all my strength, I shall love something else with all my heart and mind and soul and strength. Grant that by loving you first I may be liberated from all lesser loves and loyalties and have you as my first love, my chief good, and my final joy. Amen.

Communion is served with wine and gluten-free bread. Individually wrapped wafers and grape juice are available at each station.

Go Tell It on the Mountain

Traditional

*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. *Chorus*

The shepherds feared and trembled,
When, lo! above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus
That hailed the Savior's birth. *Chorus*

Down in a lowly manger
Our humble Christ was born,
And God sent us salvation
That blessed Christmas morn. *Chorus*

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.

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

Silent Night

Joseph Mohr · Franz Gruber

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 streams from heaven afar, heav'nly 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

We begin our worship with God's gracious invitation, and we conclude with God's blessing, his good word. It is appropriate to look up and open our palms as we receive the Benediction to symbolize how Jesus Christ lifts our heads and to demonstrate our eagerness to receive God's blessing.

DISMISSAL

LEADER Let us go forth to serve the world as those who
 love our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

ALL **Thanks be to God!**

POSTLUDE

Central Chamber Ensemble

Joy to the World (Reprise)
Go Tell It On the Mountain! (Reprise)

Members of our prayer team will be available immediately following the service at the front of the sanctuary to pray confidentially for you about any need or concern you might have. We encourage you to avail yourself of this opportunity to receive prayer. ☞