



**New Covenant Presbyterian Church
December 26, 2021 10:00am Service**



**1125 Jamison Corner Road Middletown, DE
(302) 378-4446 www.newcov-church.org**

The Worship of God

1st Sunday after Christmas

Welcome, Announcements and Sharing of Our Vision

Lay Leader:

Preparing to Meet God

Preludes... *"That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them." Luke 2:8-9a (NLT)*

I sit alone near the window at the end of a long December day, my weary frame wrapped in a wordless sigh and a plush red blanket. The wintry woods beyond the glass are as quiet as my children who sleep down the hall.

Moonbeams mingle with the twinkling lights of our Christmas tree, and starlight waltzes with the shadows on the floor.

I take a deep breath and seek solace in the silence. But my heart refuses to rest in the hallowed hush.

For years, when my wee ones filled the nights with wails, I dreamed of a quiet like this.

But what I didn't know then — when my midnight hours thrummed to the rhythm of sniffing sighs and colicky cries — is that children aren't the only ones who can fill the night with clamor. Sometimes the quiet quakes noisy, too.

Doubts drowned out by the drone of the day can resurrect with a ruckus in the lull of night. Fear can run wild when our feet finally slow. And worry can howl reckless in the hush.

It's in the quiet where we often come face-to-face with our questions:

Do I really believe that God is good?

Does He truly see my needs and hear my prayers?

Do I trust Him enough to obey when it doesn't make sense?

Will His promises hold firm even if my hope falls short?

It's in the quiet where we learn to fight for **faith**.

So, I shift my eyes from that twinkling tree to the Bible on my lap. And I read aloud from those treasured pages.

"That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. 'Don't be afraid!' he said. 'I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior — yes, the Messiah, the Lord — has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger" (Luke 2:8-12, NLT).

God's Word dangles in the air like the velvet stockings hanging hopeful on my mantle. I close my eyes and try to listen to the truth of Scripture rather than the squall of my own soul. I imagine the Hope of Heaven landing on the dust of earth ... the squeals of fright and the blaze of light. The angel's declaration and the shepherds' consternation.

And I ask Jesus to show me something new in this familiar account of the very first Christmas. Then all at once, I see it through a haze of grateful tears:

The message the angels proclaimed on that Bethlehem hillside long ago didn't just change the course of one bygone silent night.

The good news of great joy changed the course of every silent night to come. Because we don't have a God who merely pierces our darkness. We have a Savior who lingers beside us on our long silent nights ([Isaiah 9:2-7](#)).

The prophets foretold it ([Isaiah 7:14](#)). The angel repeated it. And His name confirms it ([Matthew 1:23](#)). *God is with us.*

And in His presence, we can find everything we need when the quiet quakes noisy.

Dear Jesus, thank You for sticking with me whether I'm full of hope or full of fear. I'm glad my doubts don't diminish Your love and my qualms don't offend Your faithfulness. Teach me how to rest in Your presence when my heart is unsettled. I want to trust You more. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Special Music ?

Call to Worship

L: Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come.

A: For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and his name shall be called, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

***Hymn of Praise Hark the Herald Angels Sing - Page #**

Prayer of Confession:

A: We acknowledge that all have sinned and fall short of God's glory.

L: A time of silence will be observed for personal confession at the conclusion of this prayer. Confident in God's grace, let us confess our sin before God and one another.

A: Merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart and soul and mind and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. In your mercy, forgive what we have been, help us amend what we are, and direct what we shall be, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name...

(Lay leader: allow 30 seconds for silent prayer –screen/slide should have the words: Silent Prayer)

A: Kyrie eleison, Lord Have Mercy. Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness

L: Psalm 103:8-12

The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

A: Christ died for us, Christ rose for us, Christ reigns in power for us, Christ prays for us. Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation. The old life has gone; a new life has begun.

L: Believe the good news of the gospel: In Jesus Christ you are forgiven.

A: Thanks be to God!

***Hymn:** Away in a Manger

Meeting God in the Word

Childrens' Message:

Prayer for Illumination

Heavenly Father; we are so grateful that you are here with us, in this place, desiring to be in relationship with each and every one of us. As we prepare to hear your word, open our hearts and our minds. Clear the world from our thoughts that we may focus on your Word. May it permeate our minds, our hearts and guide our lives. Bless your word onto our hearts oh Lord that we may live by it. In Jesus Holy name we pray, Amen.

First Lesson

Psalm 148 Hear the word of God:

- ¹ Praise the LORD.^[a]
Praise the LORD from the heavens;
praise him in the heights above.
- ² Praise him, all his angels;
praise him, all his heavenly hosts.
- ³ Praise him, sun and moon;
praise him, all you shining stars.
- ⁴ Praise him, you highest heavens
and you waters above the skies.
- ⁵ Let them praise the name of the LORD,
for at his command they were created,
- ⁶ and he established them for ever and ever—
he issued a decree that will never pass away.
- ⁷ Praise the LORD from the earth,
you great sea creatures and all ocean depths,
- ⁸ lightning and hail, snow and clouds,
stormy winds that do his bidding,
- ⁹ you mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars,
- ¹⁰ wild animals and all cattle,
small creatures and flying birds,
- ¹¹ kings of the earth and all nations,
you princes and all rulers on earth,
- ¹² young men and women,
old men and children.
- ¹³ Let them praise the name of the LORD,
for his name alone is exalted;
his splendor is above the earth and the heavens.
- ¹⁴ And he has raised up for his people a horn,^[b]
the praise of all his faithful servants,
of Israel, the people close to his heart.
- Praise the LORD.

L: This is the word of the Lord

A: Praise be to God

Music:

Second Lesson Luke 2:41-52

The Boy Jesus at the Temple

⁴¹ Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. ⁴² When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. ⁴³ After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. ⁴⁴ Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵ When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. ⁴⁶ After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸ When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."

⁴⁹ "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"^[a] ⁵⁰ But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

⁵¹ Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

HYMN: What child is this?

Sermon Jesus is Born – Share the Good News!

Elder, Donna Casey

Responding to the Word

***Hymn** Oh come, all ye faithful

***Affirmation of Faith**

The Apostles' Creed – Traditional Version

A: 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 Ghost, 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 sitteth on the right hand of God the Father almighty. From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

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

Prayers and testimony of the People and the Lord's Prayer

Cares Chorus:

*I cast all my cares upon you.
I lay all of my burdens down at your feet.
And anytime I don't know what to do,
I cast all my cares upon you.*

The Call to Celebrate Our Gifts

The Invitation *You are invited to place your offering in the basket in the back of the sanctuary.*

Hymn of Dedication: Give Thanks

Prayer of Dedication

Going Out to Serve God

*** Blessing** **Wherever you go, God is sending you, wherever you are, God has put you there, He has a purpose in your being there. Christ who indwells you has something He wants to do through you where you are. Believe in this and go in His grace, and love, and power.**

***Response**

He Is Lord