



New Covenant Presbyterian Church
December 24, 2020 10:00am Service



1125 Jamison Corner Road Middletown, DE
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The Worship of God
 Christmas Eve December 24, 2020
 Candlelight and Communion 6 PM

Greetings

Lay Leader #1: Brian Lindgren

Ringing of the Bells

Silent Night

The Bell Choir

Preparing Ourselves for Worship During the Prelude ...

A Prayer for Christmas:

Lord God, some of us are a little like the shepherds - just carrying on with our jobs despite the turbulence in the world scene. Give us a message - send us an angel that will start us seeking a new way of life.

Lord God, others of us are like the Wise Men from the east - we can see the need of some power to come and to give us direction, but we don't know in which direction to go. Give us the wisdom to see that it is not in physical power that our salvation lies, but in love and humility.

Lord God, some of us are like Joseph, who was confused when the angel came to him in a dream and foretold things that were difficult to believe. And yet, he was faithful to your plan for his life and that of Mary and the baby Jesus.

And so, Lord, God, we ask you for grace to faithfully answer your call to us. Give us the humility to accept your will and the strength to live in faith and love as your servants.

Preparing to Greet the Baby Jesus

Call to Worship

Lighting the Christ Candle

Brian & Landa Lindgren

- L: At Christmas, we celebrate the coming of God to earth in human form. Tonight, we light the Christ candle, symbolizing the coming of Jesus Christ into the world.
- P: *The shepherds listen to the songs of angels,*
- L: And the sages follow the stars.
 (The Christ Candle is lit.)
- P: *The glory of God shines in a manger!*
- L: Let us go and tell it on the mountain,
- P: *Over the hills and everywhere,*
- L: Go, tell it on the mountain,
- P: *That Jesus Christ is born!*

The Nativity Response (Sung to tune of *Breathe on Me, Breath of God*)

*Kindle this flame of Christ, may it burn bright and true
 Lighting the way that is of God, the journey we pursue.*

*God's realm is our desire, where peace and justice reign.
 Heaven and earth combined as one, when Christ shall come again.*

Hymn of Adoration # 44, vs. 1&4***O Little Town of Bethlehem***

***O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see the 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.***

***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!***

Prayer for Christmas

Gracious and merciful God, all glory be given to you for the wondrous gift, you have given us, of your Son, Jesus. To show your love for us, Jesus came into this world to give us light in our darkness, and hope for tomorrow. We give you thanks that, in Jesus, you joined us by sharing our human hurts and pleasures. With singing angels, we lift your name on high, and hear the Good News that we may rejoice on this night. Glory to you, our Lord and our God. Amen.

The Prophecy and Annunciation**Scripture**

**Isaiah 9:2, 6-7 Lay Leader #2: Alice Megonigal
The Birth of the Messiah Is Foretold**

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness - on them light has shined. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onwards and for evermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

[This is the Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*]

Hymn of Preparation #38, vs. 1, 3, 4 *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

***It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth, to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heaven's all gracious King":
The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.***

*Yet with the woes of sin and strife the world has suffered long;
Beneath the heavenly hymn have rolled two thousand years of wrong;
And we at war on earth hear not the tidings that they bring;
O, hush the noise and cease the strife to hear the angels sing.*

*And you, beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow,
Look now, for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing:
O, rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing.*

Scripture

Luke 1: 26-33 Lay Leader #3: Fred Noll
The Annunciation to Mary

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He 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 ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.'

[This is the Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*]

Hymn #23, vs. 1&3

Angels We Have Heard on High

*Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.
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!*

The Birth of Jesus

Scripture

Matthew 1: 18-25 Lay Leader #4: Pat Wright
The Angel Comes to Joseph In a Dream

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him

Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.’ All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ‘Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel’, which means, ‘God is with us.’ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

[This is the Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*]

Hymn #49, vs. 1&2 *Once in Royal David’s City*

*Once in royal David’s city stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby in a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild; Jesus Christ, her little child.*

*He came down to earth from heaven who is God and Lord of all,
And his shelter was a stable, and his cradle was a stall;
With the poor and meek and lowly, lived on earth our Savior holy.*

Scripture

Luke 2: 1-10
The Birth of Jesus

Carol

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for see - I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people.

[This is the Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*]

Dramatic Reading

’Twas the Night Before Christmas

Cheryl Shields

Special Music

Mary, Did You Know?

Landa Lindgren

*Mary, did you know that your baby boy would one day walk on water?
Mary, did you know that your baby boy would save our sons and daughters?
Did you know that your baby boy has come to make you new?
This child that you delivered, will soon deliver you.*

**Mary, did you know that your baby boy will give sight to a blind man?
 Mary, did you know that your baby boy will calm the storm with his hand?
 Did you know that your baby boy has walked where angels trod?
 When you kiss your little baby, you kissed the face of God?**

Mary did you know?

**The blind will see. The deaf will hear. The dead will live again.
 The lame will leap. The dumb will speak the praises of the Lamb.**

**Mary, did you know that your baby boy is Lord of all creation?
 Mary, did you know that your baby boy would one day rule the nations?
 Did you know that your baby boy is heaven's perfect Lamb?
 The sleeping child you're holding, is the Great, I Am.**

Mary, did you know? Mary, did you know?

Celebration of the Lord's Supper

Communion Hymn #507, vs. 1,3,5 *I Come with Joy

***I come with joy, a child of God, forgiven, loved and free,
 The life of Jesus to recall, in love laid down for me,
 In love laid down for me.***

***As Christ breaks bread and bids us share, each proud division ends.
 The love that made us, makes us one, and strangers now are friends,
 And strangers now are friends.***

***Together met, together bound by all that God has done,
 We'll go with joy, to give the world the love that makes us one,
 The love that makes us one.***

Invitation and Prayer of Consecration

Words of Institution

Sharing of the Bread and Cup

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Special Music *I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day*

***I heard the bells on Christmas Day, their old familiar carols play;
 And mild and sweet their songs repeat of peace on earth, goodwill to men.
 And the bells are ringing: "Peace on earth."
 Like a choir they're singing: "Peace on earth."
 In my heart I hear them: "Peace on earth, goodwill to men."***

***And in despair I bowed my head, "There is no peace on earth," I said,
"For hate is strong and mocks the song of peace on earth, goodwill to men."***

But the bells are ringing: "Peace on earth."

Like a choir, they're singing: "Peace on earth."

Does anybody hear them? "Peace on earth, goodwill to men."

***Then rang the bells more loud and deep: "God is not dead, nor doth he
sleep; (Peace on earth, peace on earth.)"***

***The wrong shall fail, the right prevail, with peace on earth,
Goodwill to men." (Good will to men.)"***

***Then ringing, singing on its way, the world revolved from night to day.
A voice, a chime, a chant sublime of peace on earth, goodwill to men.***

And the bells are ringing: "Peace on earth."

Like a choir, they're singing: "Peace on earth."

With our hearts, we'll hear them: "Peace on earth, goodwill to men."

Do you hear the bells? They're ringing: "Peace on earth!"

Like the angels singing: "Peace on earth!"

Open up your heart and hear them: "Peace on earth, goodwill to men!"

Peace on earth, Peace on earth, Peace on earth, goodwill to men.

Sharing the Light of Christ

Introduction

The star was the heavenly sign of promises long ago for God promised a Savior to the world, and the star in the East was the sign of the fulfillment of God's promise as it hung over the stable where Jesus was born.

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world" and he commissions us to share that light with the world. All the Advent candles have now been lit. We have prepared for the birth of Christ for 4 weeks, and we have come to the time to observe his birth.

When we see the light that will soon envelop us in this sanctuary, we are called to be reminded that, as the prophet Isaiah said, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light..." And the light overcame the darkness.

The light of God's love still has the power to overcome anything in this world. And so, tonight as we fill this room with light, let us remember that God's love knows no bounds, and God's power has no limits. Let us receive God's love and then go out and share it.

Hymn

O Holy Night

***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 appeared, 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!***

***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!***

Choir only: O Holy Night/Peace, Peace

(While this hymn is being sung, the Light of Christ will be passed to you, and you are invited to share it with your neighbor. As the sanctuary fills with light, we sing and bask in Christ's love which surrounds us. May we reflect upon this most precious gift we have been given.)

(While the congregation lights their candles, the choir will process to the chancel area and face the congregation, leading the congregation in song. Gradually, the lights will be dimmed and we will be enveloped in candlelight. Then, the choir will begin singing Peace, Peace and the congregation will be led to sing Silent Night at the appropriate time. These 2 hymns, sung simultaneously, will allow us to truly experience God's blessing of peace and joy this Christmas.)

****Hymn of Peace Peace, Peace and Silent Night Choir/Congregation***

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**

God sent Jesus into the world to redeem us from all selfishness. May God now send us into the world as the Light of Salvation. And may the blessings of Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be with you this day and forevermore.

***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 sin, and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.***

***Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all 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.***

