Sunday
December 24, 2023
10:00 PM

Christmas Eve Worship Service

CHRIST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

Christmas Eve Worship Service

December 24, 2023 Christ Presbyterian Church ✠ Canton, Ohio ten o'clock in the evening

**at these moments, we invite you to stand in body or spirit*

Please silence all electronic devices prior to the worship service

Organ and Choral Prelude (beginning at 9:30 PM)

Variations on Adeste Fidelis		Marcel Dupré
"Today the Virgin"		John Tavener
"Wexford Carol"	Sarah Pozderac-Chenevey, *alto*	arr. Richard Lakey
"O Men from the Fields"		Arnold Cooke
"And He Shall Feed His Flock" from *Messiah*	Jean Burquist, *soprano* Sarah Pozderac-Chenevey, *alto*	G.F. Handel
"Sing Angels, Kings, and Folk"		Ben Allaway

Welcome *and* Lighting of the Christ Candle *John 1:1–14*

The Christ Candle symbolizes the peace that comes with the Advent of Jesus of Nazareth

Call to Worship (*remain seated*)

Leader: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.
People: Those who lived in the land of deep darkness, on them light has shined.

***Hymn #133** "O Come, All Ye Faithful" Adeste Fideles

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!

True God from true God, Light from light eternal
Born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;
very God, begotten, not created! *O come, let us adore Him…*

Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation!
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all Glory in the highest! *O come, let us adore Him…*

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, Born this happy morning,
Jesus, to Thee be all glory given;
Word of the Father, Now in flesh appearing! *O come, let us adore Him…*

***Prayer of Adoration**

Leader: Good and gracious God, long ago on this holy night, in the region of Judea, in the city of Bethlehem, you gave us your Son.
People: The Lord of the universe came among us wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.
Leader: On this night, in the region of Stark, in the city of Canton, draw us into the mystery of your love.
People: Join our voices with the heavenly host that we may sing your glory on high. Give us a place among the shepherds, that we may find the one for whom we have waited. Amen.

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession (*in unison*)

Great God,
tell us again of the Savior's birth, so long ago, in the city of Bethlehem.
Tell us again that life can be abundant in faith and hope and love,
not because of who we are,
but because of what you have given us in Jesus Christ. Amen.

Response to Confession "O Holy Child of Bethlehem" St. Louis

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.

***Assurance of Pardon**

Leader: She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus,
because he will save his people from their sins.
People: This night, all creation sings a new song. All is made new. Christ is born. All is well.
Leader: Friends, believe the good news. In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.
People: Praise be to God, who sends the Son. Alleluia, alleluia!

***Gloria** "Come to Bethlehem and See" Gloria

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 Word

Hebrew Reading *"The Righteous Reign of the Coming King"* Isaiah 9:2–7

Leader: The Word of the Lord Pew Bible p. 555
People: Thanks be to God Large Print Bible pp. 780–81

Carol "What Sweeter Music" John Rutter

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!
Dark and dull night, fly hence away, and give the honor to this day
that sees December turned to May.
Why does the chilling winter's morn smile, like a field beset with corn?
Or smell like a meadow, newly shorn thus on the sudden?
Come and see the cause why things thus fragrant be:
'Tis he is born, whose quickening birth gives life and lustre, public mirth,
to heaven and the underearth.
We see him come, and know him ours,
who, with his sunshine and his showers, turns all the patient ground to flowers.
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.

Epistle Reading *"Teach Sound Doctrine"* Titus 2:11–14
Leader: The Word of the Lord Pew Bible p. 969
People: Thanks be to God Large Print Bible p. 262

Gospel Reading *"The Birth of Jesus"* Luke 2:1–14, 15–20
Leader: The Gospel of the Lord Pew Bible pp. 832–33
People: Thanks be to God Large Print Bible p. 71

***Hymn #112** "On Christmas Night, All Christians Sing" Sussex Carol

all On Christmas night all Christians sing, to hear the news the angels bring,
News of great joy, news of great mirth, news of our merciful King's birth.

lower voices Then why should we on earth be sad, since our Redeemer made us glad;
when from our sin he set us free, all for to gain our liberty?

upper voices When sin departs before his grace, then life and health come in its place;
heaven and earth with joy may sing, all for to see the newborn King.

all All out of darkness we have light, which made the angels sing this night:
"Glory to God in highest heaven; peace on earth and goodwill. Amen!"

Sermon "Do Not Be Afraid!" Rev. Benjamin George

"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…'" (Luke 2:10)

Our Response to the Word

***Affirmation of Faith (*in unison*)** Excerpt from *A Brief Statement of Faith*

We trust in Jesus Christ,
fully human, fully God.
Jesus proclaimed the reign of God:
preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives,
teaching by word and deed and blessing the children,
healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted,
eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners,
and calling all to repent and believe the gospel.
Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition,
Jesus was crucified, suffering the depths of human pain
and giving his life for the sins of the world.
God raised this Jesus from the dead,
vindicating his sinless life,
breaking the power of sin and evil,
delivering us from death to life eternal.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Eucharist

***Invitation to the Lord's Table**

***The Great Thanksgiving**
Leader: The Lord be with you.
People: And also with you.
Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: **We lift them to the Lord.**
Leader: Let us give our thanks to the Lord our God.
People: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**
Leader: With joy we praise you, gracious God,
for you have created heaven and earth,
made us in your image, and kept covenant with us—
People: **even when we fell into sin.**
Leader: We give you thanks for Jesus Christ, our Lord,
who came among us as the Word made flesh
People: **to show us your glory, full of grace and truth.**
Leader: Therefore we join our voices
with all the saints and angels and the whole creation
to proclaim the glory of your name.

***Sanctus: Hymn #562** SANCTUS (Schubert)

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full, full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest

Leader: We serve a majestic God,
whose compassion moved him
to send his only Son
from heaven to earth.
People: **This Son, born in a stable,**
lived and worked among us.
Leader: He taught, he healed,
he served, and he loved.
People: **This Son loved us so much**
that he died for us, rose for us, and lives for us.
Leader: He ascended to heaven,
where he is our mediator,
People: **interceding with the Father on our behalf.**
Leader: Before that he broke bread with his disciples
and simply said:
"Do this in remembrance of me."

And he took a cup and drank and simply said:
"This is a new covenant."
Therefore, in remembrance and in celebration,
we eat the bread and drink from the cup.
We proclaim our Lord's death and life until he returns.

Sharing of the Bread and Cup

Communion Music

"In the Bleak Midwinter" Catherine Dillon, *soprano* Harold Darke
Michael Wallace, *tenor*
please see hymn #144 for the text of this Christina Rossetti poem

Prayers of the People

The Lord's Prayer (*in unison*)

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.

Invitation to the Offertory

Offertory Anthem "See Amid the Winter Snow" Dan Forrest

See, amid the winter's snow, born for us on earth below,
See the tender Lam appears, promised from eternal years.
Hail, thou everblessed morn, hail redemption's happy dawn,
Sing through all Jerusalem: "Christ is born in Bethlehem."
Lo, within a manger lies He who built the lofty skies,
He, who, throned in light sublime, sits amid the cherubim.
Sacred infant, all divine, what a tender love was Thine,
Thus to come from highest bliss, down to such a world as this.

***Presentation Hymn** Greensleeves

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.
This, this is Christ the King, Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring Him laud, the Babe, the Son of Mary!

Prayer of Dedication

Sending

(*ushers light candles*)

***Hymn #124** "Still, Still, Still" Still, Still, Still

sung by the choir only

***Hymn #122** "Silent Night" Stille Nacht

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 Saviour is born, Christ the Saviour 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.

***Christmas Eve Prayer (*in unison*)**

Great God, as you came at night when all was still,
so enter our lives this night.
Illumine our paths with the light of Christ's presence,
that we may clearly see the way before us, the truth to speak
and the life to live for him, our Lord Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. Amen.

please extinguish your candles

***Hymn #134** "Joy to the World" ANTIOCH

Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King;
let ev'ry 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.

***Benediction**

Organ Voluntary "Bring a Torch, Jeannette, Isabella" Keith Chapman

A blessed and joyous Christmas and a Happy New Year
to all and to your loved ones.

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Candle Safety

In the interest of fire safety, we are asking Christmas Eve participants to observe the following precautions:

1. Drip guards provided must stay on each candle.
2. Candles must be disposed of in the containers provided at each exit.

The use of candles is a very meaningful part of our Christmas Eve Service. Your cooperation in making it safe will help us continue this tradition. The light will be passed to the congregation by the ushers during the Candle Lighting ceremony. To prevent dripping of melted wax, unlighted candles should be tipped into the lighted candle to accept the flame. Please keep ALL lit candles in an upright position, trying not to tip them. When extinguishing the flame, please cup your hand to the side of the flame and lightly blow out the candle.

Please note that due to New Years Eve falling on a Sunday, there will not be any Sunday school classes next week and we will hold one combined 10:30 AM worship service.

In that special service, Pastor Michael will re-present a historical sermon from December 31, 1899, entitled "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." This sermon from our archives was most likely preached by Rev. O Brown Milligan, who served as pastor of the then-First Presbyterian Church from 1895 to 1908.

The Cathedral Hour this Christmas Eve is given in joy and celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ our Savior, Come Let Us Adore Him!

Liturgist: Steve Schott

Elders of Christ Presbyterian Church
Jennifer Anderson
Charles Ash
Becky Banfield
Jennie George
David Hudson
Richard Milligan
Nancy Okonak
Adam Wiggins
Kristi Wood

Christ Presbyterian Church
Ministers: The People of Christ Church
Senior Pastor: Rev. David de Vries
Associate Pastor: Rev. Michael Wallace
Director of Music & Organist: Heather Cooper
Director of Chancel Choir: Dr. Britt Cooper
Director of Family and Children's Ministries: Kate George
Director of Youth Ministry: Bonnie Wiggins
Pastor and Director of Camp Wakonda: Rev. Benjamin George
Assistant Director of Camp Wakonda: Zack White
Business Administrator/Assistant Treasurer: Diane Nave
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Debbie Jacob
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HEARING LOOP INSTALLED
Switch hearing aid to T-coil

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