



Christmas Eve

CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

Greencastle Presbyterian Church

Tuesday, December 24, 2024

Prelude Music 6:45 pm

Worship 7:00 pm

A Word of Welcome

*The heavens tell of your glory this evening, O God. All creation sings for joy.
For tonight we celebrate a birth that took place centuries ago, that night
still brings to each of us great light and the promise of abundant life.*

*We come this evening to experience the awe; to be amazed;
and to hear the story again and make it our own.*

*We come seeking the love and acceptance that Jesus our Christ promises,
to make the story of Christ's birth transformational in us
and to create in us new life as well.*

Prelude

Christmas Suite

arr. Arnold Sherman

- I. Fanfare: *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*
- II. Air: *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*
- III. Finale: *Joy to the World*

GPC Bell Choir

Wexford Carol

Traditional Irish Carol

Fred Davison, *baritone*

In dulci jubilo

14th Century German Carol, arr. Richard Walters

Brian Keck, *baritone horn* Barry Leap, *piano*

Shepherds Left Their Flocks a-Straying

German Carol, arr. J. Frederick Davison

Marisabel Cordova, *soprano* Allan Wilson, *tenor* Paul Grane, *clarinet*

Coventry Carol

English melody, arr. Joel K. Boyd

Kaylynn Leap, *clarinet* Barry Leap, *piano*

Dr. J Frederick Davison, *Director of Music Ministries*

Musicians

Barry Leap, *piano & organ*
Marisabel Cordova, *soprano*
Paul Grane, *clarinet*
Brian Keck, *baritone horn*
Kaylynn Leap, *clarinet*
Allan Wilson, *tenor*

GPC Bell Choir

Mary Ann Ackerman
Brian Keck
Kelly Kerstetter
Barry Leap
Kaylynn Leap
Liam Papa
Dee Patton
Dorthalee Wilson

GPC Chancel Choir

Randall Ackerman
Margery Benson
Roberta Biesecker
Marisabel Cordova
Becky Fic
Barbara Grane
Donna Grosh
Brian Keck
Patsy Lee
JoAnne Lewis
Tom Thomas
Rebecca Wertime
Allan Wilson
Dorthalee Wilson

*The Call to Worship

Leader: A child has been born to us,

All: A son given to us;

Leader: All authority rests upon his shoulders, and he is named...

All: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace

**Glory to God in the highest and peace to God's people on earth.
Alleluia!**

*The Opening Prayer (Unison)

We praise you, O God, that in the birth of Jesus Christ, you have come to speak your Word of love and life. Touch us with unearthly joy, like the singing of the angels; fill us with wonder, like the eyes of children; teach us to humble ourselves before you, like the worshipping Magi. May our journey to the manger this year be only the beginning of a lifetime of service to Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

*Carol *O Come, All Ye Faithful*

No. 133

The Lighting of the Christ Candle

Reader 1: This evening the Christ Candle is lit. With the lighting of this candle the wreath is complete. The candle sits in the center of the wreath, and it is representative of the good news that Christ is the center of our lives. The color of the candle is white which represents the purity of Christ.

Reader 2: There is good news of great joy for all! The Messiah, our Savior is born. We light this candle as a sign of the Light of Christ. As the night sky was filled with light the message came...

To you is born this day,

A savior who is the Messiah.

Glory to God in the highest heaven,

And on earth peace among those whom God favors! (Luke 2:11, 14)

Reader 3: Let us pray together:

Great God, as you came at night when all was still, so enter our lives this night. You alone are our center and bright glory. Illumine our paths with the light of Christ's presence, that we may clearly see the way, the truth, and the life of Jesus our Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever. Amen

Carol *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* No. 119

The First Scripture Reading Titus 2:11-14

Solo *The Virgin's Slumber Song* Max Reger
Marisabel Cordova, *soprano* Barry Leap, *piano*

*The Gospel Reading Luke 2:1-20

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord!

All: Thanks be to God!

The Christmas Eve Message -Pastor Robert Cook

Anthem *Away in a Manger (Forever Amen)* Traditional Carol
arr. Paul Wickman, and Molly Ijames

A Pastoral Prayer

The Prayer of Confession (Unison)

Merciful God, we confess that, in the midst of your glorious creation, we have neglected our role in its care. We ignore the cries of the hurting and the lonely, those on the margins and those who are oppressed. We focus on our own desires, while forgetting the needs of our neighbors. We have not prepared a way for the Lord through our words, deeds, actions or thoughts. Grant us your mercy in forgiveness; and lead us to act with compassion and justice, guided by your glorious light. (A time for silent confession)

The Assurance of Pardon and Peace

Leader: The one who loves us with a fierce tenderness takes away our guilt and leads us in the ways of life. The one who guides us with justice and mercy restores our fortunes and leads us home. Join me in these words of forgiveness:

All: By the grace of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Thanks be to God!

*The Doxology #606

*The Dedication of Our Offerings

The Service of Holy Communion

Pastor: Tonight, heaven and earth meet. Tonight, a barnyard shed is holy ground.

Tonight, strangers gather as family. And so, we come here, to the feast table of God, as Christ's invited friends, chosen and beloved.

If you have been here often, if the memory of this table stretches back through all your Christmases, you are welcome. If you have been here rarely, if reverence for bread and juice is strange to you, you are welcome. If you have much faith, or little, or wouldn't know where to begin even if you wanted to believe, you are welcome here. For Christ does not hold himself back from us, but boldly enters every heart.

Christ welcomes you to this table. That is all you need to know.

People: We long for God's presence with us in the child of the manger.

Pastor: Light of the world, we give thanks that you came among us, with healing in your touch compassion in your voice and grace in your power. Darkness may seem so strong, but the slightest light disrupts it. Descend upon our world again, we pray, vanquish the powers of evil, sorrow, and despair shine for those who grieve tonight who are lost or lonely, ill or empty who dread the night and fear the morning.

People: Shine in us, that we might shine for others so that all shadows would clear away and we would meet each other in heaven's light, and call each other beloved as you do us.

Pastor: God's Spirit invites us to rest ourselves in these gifts of bread and cup that they may be sure signs of God's love for us, forgiveness and life abundant.

We pray that Jesus will unite us with all the saints in every time and place, all those who loved him and all those he loved.

We pray that Jesus would remind us that at this table are those we miss so dearly tonight those who are missing from our holiday tables but ever present at his heavenly banquet would meet us with him in the bread and the cup. United with Christ together we sing Alleluia! Alleluia Lord, for you have saved and blessed us. Amen.

And now we join together in the prayer Christ himself has taught us, saying

The Lord's Prayer (Unison)

(All are welcome to the Lord's Table. Our ushers will serve the bread first. Please hold it till all are served. The pastor will guide us in taking the bread. Then the cup will be served in a similar way)

The Prayer After Communion (Unison)

Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have yourself to us. Grant that we may also give ourselves in service to others in the example and name of Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

*The Candle-Lighting Service

+ *Candle Lighting Notes:*

The person with the lit candle, hold it upright, and the unlit candle is to be tipped to it. This avoids the mess of dripped wax. Once candles are lit, it is important to keep them upright, again to avoid dripping wax. Remember to keep them away from anything flammable: bulletins, music, scarfs, coats, long hair, etc. At the conclusion of the service, please extinguish your candle and place them in the metal receptacle by the doors as you exit.

*The Candlelight Carol *Silent Night*

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.

*The Blessing

The Postlude We Three Kings

arr. Gordon Young

Barry Leap, *organ*

***May Christmas Eve truly be for you and yours
a wonderful and blessed night!***



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

With caring Honor to

*Our grandson, **Otis Bell** by Susan & Richard Bell (red)*

The entire fantastic staff of GPC! (11 people)

by Kathryn & Bill Greene (red)

<i>Rev. Dr. Robert Cook</i>	<i>Bonnie Speaks</i>	<i>Jan Eppleman</i>
<i>Dr. J. Frederick Davison</i>	<i>Bryan Larew</i>	<i>Barbara Grane</i>
<i>Susan Miller</i>	<i>Debbie Hock</i>	<i>Paul Grane</i>
<i>Keri Papa</i>	<i>Ryan Hock</i>	

The victims of Hurricane Helene

by Carole L. Malin & David Rutherford (pink)

Our family, we love you!

by Scott, Rhiannon, and Candace Rutherford Peterson (white)

Jessye Ritter by Linda Tarr (red)

Chris & Racheal Bowman by Keith & Cindy Marconi (red)

Ryan & Brianne Marconi by Keith & Cindy Marconi (red)

The Birth of Jesus by Rebecca Wertime (pink)

Michol & Mitchell Austin

Lucien & Alexander Austin

by Anthony & Virginia Vallillo (red)



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

In loving Memory of

John & Tillie Wine by Ed & Debbie Wine and family (*red*)

Dr. Joseph Cain by Ed & Debbie Wine and family (*red*)

Tom & Josephine Stouffer by Jeff Stouffer (*white*)

Dr. Don & Treva Luck by Jeff Stouffer (*white*)

My wife, Melissa Wills by Steven Wills (*red*)

Daniel M. Sachs by Jan S. Eppleman (*red*)

Becky Sachs Mackey by Jan S. Eppleman (*red*)

Robert & Dixie Davis by Terry & Lynn Davis (*pink*)

Shirley Cook by Terry & Lynn Davis (*red*)

Russell Everetts by Jane Everetts (*red*)

Kathryn's parents, Mr. & Mrs. H. E. Faith

by Kathryn & Bill Greene (*red*)

Kathryn's brother, Dr. Mark E. Faith

by Kathryn & Bill Greene (*red*)

My parents, Arthur & Mary Long by Carole L. Malin (*pink*)

Pete Peterson, *Husband, Dad, Pappy*

by Scott, Rhiannon, and Candace Rutherford Peterson (*red*)

Carolyn Rutherford, *Mom & Grandma*

by Scott, Rhiannon, and Candace Rutherford Peterson (*pink*)

All our family who await us in Heaven

by Fred & Debbie Young *(red)*

*Our parents, **George & Shirley Price and
Harry & Maxine Morris***

by George & Pamela Price *(red)*

Kathryn Welterlen Rees by Judith & Craig Welterlen *(red)*

Roy & Maria Welterlen by Judith & Craig Welterlen *(white)*

Hubert & Ruth Williams by Judith & Craig Welterlen *(red)*

*My mother, **Beatrice Dunster*** by Nancy Lee D. Moore *(red)*

*My father, **Ken Dunster*** by Nancy Lee D. Moore *(red)*

*My brother, **Ken Dunster, Jr.*** by Nancy Lee D. Moore *(red)*

Michael Sean Austin by Anthony & Virginia Vallillo *(white)*

SERVING THE CHURCH

Rev. Dr. Robert Cook, *Pastor*

Dr. J. Frederick Davison, *Director of Music Ministry*

Colleen Seidel, *Liturgist*

Communion Servers – Jeff & Deb Shank, Gabe & Sheila Gates,

Chris Johnston, Marcie Tinninis

Jim Papa, *Audio/Video Technician*



**GREENCASTLE
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**

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Making the House Ready for The Lord

Dear Lord, I have swept and I have washed but
still nothing is as shining as it should be for you.

Under the sink, for example, is an uproar of mice —
it is the season of their many children. What shall I do?

And under the eaves and through the walls
the squirrels have gnawed their
ragged entrances — but it is the season
when they need shelter, so what shall I do?

And the raccoon limps into the kitchen and
opens the cupboard while the dog snores,
the cat hugs the pillow; what shall I do?

Beautiful is the new snow falling
in the yard and the fox who is staring boldly
up the path, to the door.

And still I believe you will come, Lord:
you will, when I speak to the fox, the sparrow,
the lost dog, the shivering sea-goose,
know that really I am speaking to you whenever I say,
as I do all morning and afternoon: Come in, Come in.

+ Mary Oliver



But the angel said to them, *“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”*

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

*“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”*

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, *“Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”*