

NORTHMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Welcome to Christ's Service of Worship for the Lord's Day

*December Twenty Fourth the Year of Our Lord
Two Thousand Twenty*

Christmas Eve

*O God, gentle as dream and splendid as angel song,
You voice sounds through the sky.
To shepherds watching in darkness, Your splendor flares.
Come to us, who also wait and watch in darkness,
weary and unexpectant.
Bless our lives with light and bathe the world in peace.
O Father of all mercies and salvation,
send Your blessing of peace into all the world
and upon all whom we name in the silence of prayer.*

Diane Karay, The Seasons of Mercy

**WE WELCOME YOU TO WORSHIP! You are special, because God brought you here today.
Together we celebrate and rejoice in God's blessings in our lives!**

Prelude

Building the Body

Gathering Carol

O Little Town of Bethlehem

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 wondering love.

O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the king,
and peace to all on earth.

Lighting of the Christ Candle

The O'Conner Family

Call to Worship

The people who have walked in darkness
have seen a great light.
Those who have lived in a land of darkness,
on them light has shined.
The light shines in the darkness.
The darkness has not overcome it.
Come, let us adore him!

Prayer of Invocation and Adoration (unison)

All glory be unto God in the highest,
and peace to all people on earth!
Living God, on this holy day we gather--
to stand with the shepherds, amazed at Your glory;
to sing with angels, rejoicing in Your grace;
to wait with Joseph, trusting in Your promise;
to pray with Mary, cradling Your gift of love.
May the good news that we hear this day inspire us
to tell the world of our great hope and joy,
for to us is born the Savior, the Messiah, the Lord.
Glory and praise to You forever! Amen.

Hymn

O Come, All Ye Faithful

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!

Refrain:

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 heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest! [Refrain]

Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be all glory given;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing! [Refrain]

Prayer of Confession (unison)

Holy Son of God, Light of the world,
we repent of our many sins.

We are broken, and rebellious against You,
and our choices are often contrary to Your Will.

Heal our brokenness, we pray, and bring us to wholeness.

Ease our pain and bring us hope, vision, and life.

Give us new heart, new joy, and a new song,
so that our prayers and our deeds might be one.

We ask it in the name of the babe who is King,

Your love made flesh, Jesus our Christ.

Hear these our silent prayers.

Assurance of Forgiveness

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace!

Christ has come! Christ is coming again!

Through him we are redeemed and made new.

The King of kings and the Lord of lords reigns forever.

Praise his holy name!

Response Hymn

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!

First Lesson Luke 1:26-38

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him 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 ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' ³⁴Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' ³⁵The angel said to 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 holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God.' ³⁸Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

The Christmas Prayer

Second Lesson Matthew 1:1-16 (excerpts)

¹An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham. ² Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, ³and Judah

the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Aram, ⁴and Aram the father of Aminadab, and Aminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, ⁵and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, ⁶and Jesse the father of King David. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, ⁷and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, ⁸and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, ⁹and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, ¹⁰and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, ¹¹and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. ¹² And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Salathiel, and Salathiel the father of Zerubbabel, ¹³and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, ¹⁴and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, ¹⁵and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, ¹⁶and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah.

Sermon

WHERE IS GOD IN THIS MESS?

Dr. Merritt

Hymn

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

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 the angelic host proclaim,
“Christ is born in Bethlehem!”

Refrain:

Hark! The herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn king!”

Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of the virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
hail the incarnate deity,
pleased in flesh with us to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel. [Refrain]

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth. [Refrain]

Affirmation of Faith

**We believe that Jesus is the Son of God.
We affirm that this joyous Gospel
was proclaimed in Bethlehem
where deity was cradled in a manger.
Few saw or understood this in-breaking,
this Word made flesh,
this divine love becoming human.
As an adult Jesus walked among us,
healing, teaching, touching, preaching,
breaking new paths to truth,
and making hope and joy real.
He explained life as it really is, as God intends.
We join now with all who receive him,
and seek to serve in his mercy and grace,
sharing Christmas love, hope, joy, and peace.
So be it! Amen!**

Celebration of the Lord's Supper

Invitation to The Lord's Table

Prayer of Thanksgiving

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.

Words of Institution

Sharing the Bread and the Cup

Prayer of Dedication

Congregational Hymn

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!"

Lighting of the Christmas Candle

*Hymn of Celebration

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 sing,
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.

Charge and Benediction

Postlude

*Indicates the People Standing

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NORTHMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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Russ Merritt, Transitional Pastor Melissa Hudson, Music Director
Susie Tallmage, Secretary Lauren Axelson, Nursery Attendant
Ministers...Members of Northminster

If you or someone you know should be included in the list of those needing special prayer, please contact the Minister. If prayers have been answered and we can celebrate God's goodness by removing your name from the list, let the Minister know.

Let us keep those listed below in our prayers.

Members

| | | |
|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Frances Bowling | Bobby Brammer | Charlotte Cooley |
| Jim Cregger | Michael Hambrick | Jake Hayes |
| Maryanne Huff | Atwood Huff | Barbara Jones |
| Dennis Kincer | Bob Lancaster | Homer Linton |
| Floyd Moretz | Mary Moretz | Ann Pace |
| Mac Pace | Buddy Smith | Sandy Smith |
| Frances Stevens | Jo Ann Threlkeld | |

Friends and Family

Joaquin Bielawski
Nancy Assaid (Sherry Moses' sister)
Tim Smith (Karen's husband)

*THE SESSION *

Clerk of Session: Holly Woodson

Elders: Bob Bielawski, Frankie Bielawski, Jeff Echols, Judy Ferrell, Vee Hayes, Lynn Kirby, Chuck Lockard, Sherry Moses, Bob Newman, Jeremy Newman, Betsy Robison, Dave Snider, Gayle Wise

