

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-Four
Christmas Eve

***O God, gentle as dream and splendid as angel song,
Your 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!

Bell Prelude *Silent Night*

Franz Gruber arr. C. Mocklebust/D. Mocklebust

Building the Body

Gathering Carol 121 *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!

Above the thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.

Yet in thy dark street shineth the everlasting light; the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

Lighting of the Christ Candle

Call to Worship (responsive)

Minister: The people who have walked in darkness
have seen a great light.

**Congregation: Those who have lived in a land of darkness,
on them light has shined.**

Minister: The light shines in the darkness.

Congregation: The darkness has not overcome it.

Minister: Come, let us adore him!

*Hymn 133 *O Come, All Ye Faithful*

*Prayer of Invocation and Confession (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.**

**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 113 *Angels We Have Heard on High* (Verse 1)

**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 Isaiah 9:2,6-7

² 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.

⁶ For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ 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.

The Christmas Prayer

Bell Voluntary

Still, Still, Still

Arr. Cathy Moglebust

Second Lesson Luke 2:1-15

¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph 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. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And 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. ⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.’ ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ¹⁴ ‘Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!’ ¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.’

Anthem *Night of Silence* Daniel Cantor
Cold are the people, winter of life, we tremble in shadows this cold endless night,
Frozen in the snow lie roses sleeping, flowers that will echo the sunrise,
Fire of hope is our only warmth, weary, its flame will be dying soon.

Voice in the distance, call in the night, on wind you enfold us You speak of the
light,
Gentle on the ear you whisper softly, rumors of a dawn so embracing,
Star unknowing of night and day, soon will we know of the morning.

Spirit among us, shine like the star, Your light that guides shepherds and kings
from afar,
Shimmer in the sky so empty, lonely, rising in the warmth of your Son’s love,
Star unknowing of night and day, Spirit we wait for your loving Son.

Children will remain in church today

Sermon *Christmas Meditation* Dr. Merritt

*Hymn 119 *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

*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

Hymn 123 *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*

Prayer of Dedication

*Hymn 122 *Silent Night* (verses 1-3)

*Lighting of the Christmas Candles

*Hymn of Celebration 134 *Joy to the World*

*Charge and Benediction

Postlude

*Indicates the People Standing

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Russ Merritt, Pastor Melissa Hudson, Music Director
Susie Tallmage, Secretary
Ministers...Members of Northminster

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

Let us keep those listed below in our prayers.

Members

Bill Bailey	Frances Bowling	Ellen Brumfield
Pam Claterbaugh	Marie Haines	Walt Haines
Jake Hayes	Hayes Family	Mary Ann Huff
Jyke Jones	Dennis Kincer	Skylar Kirby
Patsy Linton	Floyd Moretz	Ann Pace
Mac Pace	Justin Plymale	Buddy Smith
Sandy Smith	Vicki Whitworth	

Friends and Family

Nancy Assaid	Joaquin Bielawski
Shirley Basham	Donna Betters
Lucy Collier	Terry Foss
Issac Franklin	Gladys Hughston
Vicki Widener	Dan Cone
Glenna Myers	

***THE SESSION ***

Clerk of Session: Holly Woodson
Elders: Pam Claterbaugh, Richard Claterbaugh, Dana Esworthy, Matt Graybill, Joe Gwitt, Maggie Hambrick, Gary Harris, Jyke Jones, Lynn Kirby, Chuck Lockard, Judy Moore, Dora Slee, Dave Snider, Greg Theimer

