



Online Worship Resource (Sunday, December 25, 2022)

Christmas Day Service ~ 1:00 p.m.

BOLD TYPE IS SPOKEN BY THE CONGREGATION

Prelude:

Sleepers Wake
David Maley, organ

J.S. Bach

Welcome and Announcements

*Call to Worship

John Kerr

Please stand as you are led and join me in our responsive Call to Worship:

Walking toward Bethlehem,

listening every step of the way

for the sound of our name,

for the announcement that we have found favor with God.

Walking toward Bethlehem,

watching every step of the way

for a new star in the sky,

for guidance in our daily lives.

Walking toward Bethlehem,

sensing we are not alone.

Angels are all around us.

The prayers of saints surround us.

Walking toward Bethlehem,

hoping we shall find a baby in a manger:

a simple sign that God loves us still

and reason enough to sing God's praise.

Carol: "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.

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.

Call to Confession

Chuck Hasbrouck

God graciously and patiently waits for us to name our sin and need of repentance. Using the words of Archbishop Oscar Romero, let us confess our sin together. Let us pray. . .

Prayer of Confession

"No one can celebrate a genuine Christmas without being truly poor. The self-sufficient, the proud, those who, because they have everything, look down on others, those who have no need even of God -- for them there will be no Christmas. Only the poor, the hungry, those who need someone to come on their behalf, will have that someone. That someone is God. Emmanuel. God-with-us. Without poverty of spirit there can be no abundance of God." Merciful God, we need you. Come and be with us, we pray.

Silent Confession

Assurance of Pardon

Break forth into singing, for the Lord has redeemed us.

Glory to God in the highest and peace to all people on earth! Amen.

Response: "O Come, All Ye Faithful" Refrain

O come, let us adore Him; O come, let us adore Him; O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!

Passing the Peace

May the Peace of Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

Time with Children

Prayer for Illumination

John Kerr

Let us prepare our hearts to hear God's Word by praying together the prayer for Illumination:

Holy God, through your Spirit, illumine our hearts and minds that we might see Christ, the living Word, the light of the world. Amen.

Hush
By Lucinda Hynett

John Kerr

Sssh.

Can you hear it?
An expectant silence,
a hushed anticipation,
as if the very galaxy
is holding its breath.
There are some truths
even the stars know,
like darkness,
like loneliness
and how the night
can be a living thing.
And how once, long ago,
the night waited in wonder
along with the darkness
and the loneliness,
for the sound of a baby's cry,
for the miraculous
to come down
to the earth mundane.

Written for the 1982 Carol Service of Nene College, Northampton

Dick Davis

One of the oxen said

"I know him, he is me—a beast
Of burden, used, abused,
Excluded from the feast—
A toiler, one by whom
No task will be refused:
I wish him strength, I give him room."

One of the shepherds said

"I know him, he is me—a man
Who wakes when others sleep,
Whose watchful eyes will scan
The drifted snow at night
Alert for the lost sheep:
I give this lamb, I wish him sight."

One of the wise men said

"I know him, he is me—a king
On wisdom's pilgrimage,
One Plato claimed would bring
The world back to its old
Unclouded golden age:
I wish him truth, I give him gold."

Mary his mother said

"I know his heart's need, it is mine—
The chosen child who lives
Lost in his Lord's design,
The self and symbol of
The selfless life he gives:
I give him life, I wish him love."

⁷ How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of the messenger who announces peace,
who brings good news,
who announces salvation,
who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.'
⁸ Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices,
together they sing for joy;
for in plain sight they see
the return of the LORD to Zion.
⁹ Break forth together into singing,
you ruins of Jerusalem;
for the LORD has comforted his people,
he has redeemed Jerusalem.
¹⁰ The LORD has bared his holy arm
before the eyes of all the nations;
and all the ends of the earth shall see
the salvation of our God.

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

Favorite Carol Medley

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
 The flying cloud, the frosty light:
 The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
 Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
 The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
 For those that here we see no more;
 Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
 And ancient forms of party strife;
 Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
 The faithless coldness of the times;
 Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
 The civic slander and the spite;
 Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

15th Century Poem, Author Unknown

Barbara Allen

Lo, in the silent night
A child to God is born
And all is brought again
That ere was lost or lorn.

Could but thy soul, O Man,
Become a silent night!
God would be born in thee
And set all things aright.

New Testament Reading

Matthew 1: 18-25

Pastor Michelle

¹⁸ 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. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰ 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. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' ²² All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ 'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel',

which means, 'God is with us.' ²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, ²⁵ 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.**

Favorite Carol Medley

Christmas in Fifty Words

Vallerie Pringle

God reached down,
 Spirit's touch.
Virgin conceived,
 Joseph feared much.

Angel said,
 "Don't be afraid."
Joseph awoke,
 Marriage vows made.

Augustus decreed,
 Bethlehem bound.
Joseph and Mary,
 No room found.

Word made flesh,
 Born on straw.
Angels' hosanna,
 Shepherds' awe.

Cattle low as shepherd kneel,
 Mary ponders....
 God is real.

I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old, familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet
The words repeat
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!
And thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along
The unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!
Till, ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day,
A voice, a chime,
A chant sublime
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!
Then from each black, accursed mouth
The cannon thundered in the South,
And with the sound
The carols drowned
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!
It was as if an earthquake rent
The hearth-stones of a continent,
And made forlorn
The households born
Of peace on earth, good-will 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, good-will to men!"
Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
"God is not dead; nor doth he sleep!
The Wrong shall fail,
The Right prevail,
With peace on earth, good-will to men!"

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴ in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

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

Call for offering

John Kerr

Rejoice! For I bring good news and great joy to all people: today is born to us a Savior, Jesus Christ the Lord. Let us with gladness present the offerings of our life and labor to the Lord. Let us pray together. . .

Prayer of Dedication

On this glad new day for all the earth we are grateful for giving hearts made joyful in the gift of your Son. For you, O God, are generosity itself. Bless these gifts we offer to the benefit of those in need. Bless our lives in service of sharing your love and light in the world, through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Prayers of the People and 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.

Carol: "He Came Down"

He came down that we may have love; He came down that we may have love; He came down that we may have love; hallelujah forevermore.

He came down that we may have light; He came down that we may have light; He came down that we may have light; hallelujah forevermore.

He came down that we may have peace; He came down that we may have peace; He came down that we may have peace; hallelujah forevermore.

He came down that we may have joy; He came down that we may have joy; He came down that we may have joy; hallelujah forevermore.

Responsive Benediction

Pastor Michelle

The Work of Christmas

Howard Thurman

When the song of the angels is stilled,

When the star in the sky is gone,

When the kings and princes are home,

When the shepherds are back with their flock,

The work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost,

To heal the broken,

To feed the hungry,

To release the prisoner,

To rebuild the nations,

To bring peace among brothers,

To make music from the heart.

Postlude

"Bring a Torch, Jeanette Isabella"
David Maley, organ

Are. Keith Chapman

Christmas Day Participants:

*Rev. Michelle Fincher, Jane Kerr, organist, Judy Viccello, Director of Music,
David Maley, piano & organ, John Kerr, Chuck Hasbrouck,
Vallerie Pringle, Barbara Allen, Glenn Fahrig, and Pastor Michelle, readers.*