

First Presbyterian Church of Bethlehem



Christmas Eve Communion Service 11:00 p.m.

December 24, 2021

WE GATHER

RINGING OF THE CHIMES

PRELUDE Brightest and Best

setting F. Peeters

CAROL

#44

O Little Town of Bethlehem

ST. LOUIS

1 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.

2 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 men on earth!

3 How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His heaven.
No ear may hear His coming,
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him
still,
The dear Christ enters in.

4 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!

WELCOME AND PASSING OF THE PEACE

LIGHTING OF CHRIST CANDLE

Joanne Kelhart

Leader: In God's house, there is hope;

People: for God loves us too much to leave us just as we are.

Leader: In God's house, there is peace;

People: for all that separates us from God is overcome.

Leader: In God's house, there is joy;

People: for God intends us not just to be alive, but to have abundant life in Christ.

Leader: In God's house, there is love;

People: for God is love, and whoever abides in love, abides in God.

Leader: In the center of our hope, of our peace, of our joy, of our love, is God;

People: for God came to this earth to dwell with us.

Leader: So tonight we light the Christ Candle, for in Christ God has come among us and stays with us always.

People: Tonight, we are all welcomed home.

ADVENT RESPONSE

#9

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

verse 1

VENI EMMANUEL

1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.

Refrain:

Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O
Israel.

WE CONFESS

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy God, you throw open the door and invite us into relationship, day in and day out. But instead of running towards you, we tiptoe around the edges of our faith, uncertain if we will risk truly coming in. We struggle to believe that a love so unfettered, so unfiltered, could be for us. Forgive us for the ways in which we hold back from deeper connection with you or withhold your radical love from others. Open our ears not just to hear your invitation, but to trust that its good news comes even and especially for us.

SILENT CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

WE LISTEN

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

FIRST READING Luke 2:1-7

Joanne Kelhart

Leader: The word of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God

SPECIAL MUSIC Elevation sur le Noel

Alexander Guilmant

Leader: The word of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God

SERMON

“Coming Home”

The Rev. J.C. Austin

WE RESPOND

HYMN

#53

What Child is This

GREENSLEEVES

1 What Child is this who, laid to rest
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems
sweet
While shepherds watch are keeping?

2 Why lies He in such mean estate,
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here
The silent Word is pleading. (Refrain)

Refrain:

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

3 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.
(Refrain)

GIVING OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Call to Give

Offertory

Swiss Noel

Claude D'acquín

Offertory Response

#36

In the Bleak Midwinter

verse 4

CRANHAM

4 What can I give Him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd,
I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man,
I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give Him:
Give my heart.

WE CELEBRATE THE LORD'S SUPPER

Invitation to the Lord's Table

The Prayer of Great 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

Music during Communion Song of Peace

Eric Thiman

CANDLE LIGHTING

#60

Silent Night

verses 1, 3, & 4

STILLE NACHT

1 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.

4 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!

3 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.

BENEDICTION

SENDING HYMN

#51

See Amid the Winter's Snow

HUMILITY

1 See amid the winter's snow,
Born for us on earth below,
See, the gentle Lamb appears,
Promised from eternal years.

Refrain:

Hail! that ever-blessed morn,
Hail redemption's happy dawn,
Sing through all Jerusalem:
Christ is born in Bethlehem.

2 Say, you holy shepherds, say,
Tell your joyful news today.
Why have you now left your sheep
On the lonely mountain steep?
(Refrain)

3 "As we watched at dead of night,
There appeared a wondrous light;
Angels singing 'Peace on earth'
Told us of the Savior's birth."
(Refrain)

POSTLUDE Postlude on "ANTIOCH"

Richard Purvis

David Macbeth, Organ