

The Lord's Day in Worship

COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
December 24, 2017

Christmas has a darkness
Brighter than the blazing noon,
Christmas has a chillness
Warmer than the heat of June,
Christmas has a beauty
Lovelier than the world can show:
For Christmas brings us Jesus,
Brought for us so low.

Earth, strike up your music,
Birds that sing and bells that ring;
Heaven has answering music
For all angels soon to sing:
Earth, put on your whitest
Bridal robe of spotless snow:
For Christmas brings us Jesus,
Brought for us so low.

—Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

CALL TO WORSHIP

Marty Crawford

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

Pastor: The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shone.

People: *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given;
And the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

Pastor: Of the increase of his government
and of peace there will be no end,
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,
to establish it and to uphold it

People: *with justice and with righteousness
from this time forth and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.*

 *Congregation stand as able.*

HYMN OF INCARNATION

“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;
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;
O, sing, all ye bright
Hosts of heav'n above!
Glory to God,
All glory in the highest;
O, come, let us adore Him;
O, come, let us adore Him;
O, come, let us adore Him;
Christ, the Lord.

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee,
Born this happy morning;
Jesus, to Thee be all glory giv'n.
Word of the Father,
Now in flesh appearing;
O, come, let us adore Him;
O, come, let us adore Him;
O, come, let us adore Him;
Christ, the Lord.

Words: attr. John F. Wade (1711-1786); tr. Frederick Oakeley (1802-1880).
Music: John F. Wade's Cantus Diversi, 1751.

PRAYER OF ADORATION

Almighty God, Who graciously sent Your One and Only Son
to be born of a peasant girl and laid in a manger
that we might be set free from the burden of sin
and the fear of death,
we worship and adore You
and pray that this holy night
You fill our hearts with grateful devotion
and lead us in the way everlasting,
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
Who with You and the Holy Spirit be forever praised. Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

Reader: Jesus said, "I am the light of the world;
the one who follows me will not walk in darkness
but have the light of life."

People: *We light this candle
in gratitude for His first coming
and in anticipation of His glorious return.*

Pastor: He will come to bring light and life to His people.

People: *Come, Lord Jesus,
shine Your light upon Your people.*

*The Christ candle is lit this evening by Paul, Sara, Marley, and Reid Litten
(4:30) and by John, Daisy, Slay, Sophie, and Mary Sanders James (6:00).*

READING FROM THE EPISTLES

Hebrews 1:1-4

Pastor: But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,
who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to be ruler in Israel,
whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.

People: *Therefore he shall give them up
until the time when she who is in labor has given birth;
then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel.*

Pastor: And he shall stand and shepherd his flock
in the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.

People: *And they shall dwell secure,
for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth.
And he shall be their peace.*

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: *Thanks be to God.*

HYMN OF PRAISE

“Of the Father’s Love Begotten”

Of the Father’s love begotten
Ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega,
He the source, the Ending He,
Of the things that are, that have been,
And that future years shall see
Evermore and evermore!

O, that birth forever blessed
When a virgin, blest with grace,
By the Holy Ghost conceiving,
Bore the Savior of our race,
And the babe, the world’s Redeemer,
First revealed His sacred face
Evermore and evermore!

Let the heights of heaven, adore Him;
Angel hosts, His praises sing;
Powers, dominions, bow before Him
And extol our God and King.
Let no tongue on earth be silent,
Every voice in concert ring
Evermore and evermore!

Christ, to Thee, with God the Father,
And, O Holy Ghost, to Thee
Hymn and chant and high thanksgiving
And unwearied praises be,
Honor, glory, and dominion,
And eternal victory
Evermore and evermore!
Evermore and evermore!
Evermore and evermore!

Words: Marcus Aurelius C. Prudentius, 4th century; tr. John M. Neale (1818-1866). Music: Plainsong, 13th century.

OFFERTORY

“Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming”

Youth Choir

Lo, how a rose e’er blooming From tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse’s lineage coming As men of old have sung.
It came, a flow’ret bright, Amid the cold of winter
When half-spent was the night.

This flow’r whose fragrance tender With sweetness fills the air,
Dispels with glorious splendor The darkness everywhere.
True man, yet very God, From sin and death He saves us
And lightens every load.

O Savior, child of Mary, Who felt our human woe;
O Savior, King of glory, Who dost our weakness know;
Bring us at length, we pray, To the bright courts of heaven
And to the endless day.

Bring us at length, we pray, To the bright courts of heaven
And to the endless day.

Words: Theodore Baker, 1894; Harriett R. Spaeth, 1875; John C. Mattes, 1914.
Music: German melody, 15th century / arr. by Michael Praetorius, 1609..

Any gifts placed in the designated envelopes, which can be found in the pew racks, will go directly to the PCA Ministerial Relief Fund. In accordance with James 1:27, the PCA began the fund to aid in the financial stress of the widows of our pastors and missionaries. Your gift to this fund acknowledges their life of service and provides for them in their time of need.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

Pastor: The peace of the LORD be with you.

People: *And also with you.*

Greet one another with words of peace and reconciliation.

A WORD TO THE CHILDREN

Dan Edwards

Children may come forward at this time and be seated on the steps for a special children's message.

READING FROM THE GOSPELS

Luke 2:8-20

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths 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,
and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

¹⁵When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

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

HYMN OF ANGELS

“Angels We Have Heard on High”

Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply
Echo back their joyous strains:
Glo...ria, in excelsis Deo!
Glo...ria, in excelsis Deo!

Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
Say, what may the tidings be,
Which inspire your heav'nly song?
Glo...ria, in excelsis Deo!
Glo...ria, in excelsis Deo!

Come to Bethlehem, and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.
Glo...ria, in excelsis Deo!
Glo...ria, in excelsis Deo!

Glo...ria, in excelsis Deo!
Glo...ria, in excelsis Deo!

Words: Traditional French carol. Music: Traditional French melody;
arr. by Edward S. Barnes, 1937.

MESSAGE

Luke 2:8-20

"Gloria in Excelsis Deo"

Sandy Willson

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

LIGHTING OF THE CHURCH

Dave Driskill

HYMN OF LIGHT

“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, Heav'nly 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!

Words: Josef Mohr, circa 1816. Stanzas 1 & 3 translated from German to English
by John F. Young, 1863. Music: Franz X. Gruber, circa 1820.

SILENT MEDITATION

HYMN OF THE ANGELS

Glo...ria, in excelsis Deo!
Glo...ria, in excelsis Deo!

BENEDICTION