

# Christmas Eve Service

COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



"The birth of this little boy is the beginning of a confrontation between the kingdom of God—in all its apparent weakness, insignificance and vulnerability—and the kingdoms of the world. Augustus never heard of Jesus of Nazareth. But within a century or so his successors in Rome had not only heard of him; they were taking steps to obliterate his followers. Within just over three centuries the Emperor himself became a Christian."

—Tom Wright

Come, Desire of Nations, come!  
Fix in us Thy humble home:  
Rise, the woman's conqu'ring seed,  
Bruise in us the serpent's head.

Adam's likeness, now efface,  
Stamp Thine image in its place:  
Final Adam from above,  
Reinstate us in Thy love.

—from "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

## LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

12:00 p.m. | The Hulseys

4:30 p.m. | The Waltchacks

6:00 p.m. | The Grays

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

—John 8:12

### ☒ CALL TO WORSHIP

### ☒ RESPONSIVE READING

Psalm 148:1-2, 13-14

Leader: Praise the LORD!

*All: Praise the LORD from the heavens;  
praise him in the heights!  
Praise him, all his angels;  
praise him, all his hosts!*

Leader: Let them praise the name of the LORD,  
for his name alone is exalted;  
his majesty is above earth and heaven.

*All: He has raised up a horn for his people,  
praise for all his saints,  
for the people of Israel who are near to him.  
Praise the LORD!*

☒ Congregation stand as able.

## ☒ PRAYER OF ADORATION

## ☒ HYMNS OF ADORATION

"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!

God of God, Light of Light; Lo, he abhors not the Virgin's womb:  
Very God, Begotten, not created  
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 citizens 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!

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

☒ "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 th'angelic hosts proclaim,  
 "Christ is born in Bethlehem."  
 Hark! the herald angels sing,  
 "Glory to the newborn King!"

Christ, by highest heav'n adored;  
 Christ, the everlasting Lord;  
 Late in time behold Him come,  
 Offspring of a virgin's womb.  
 Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see;  
 Hail th'incarnate Deity:  
 Pleased, as man, with men to dwell,  
 Jesus, our Emmanuel!  
 Hark! the herald angels sing,  
 "Glory to the newborn King!"

Hail the heav'n born Prince of Peace!  
 Hail the Son of Righteousness!  
 Light and life to all He brings,  
 Ris'n with healing in His wings.  
 Mild He lays His glory by,  
 Born that man no more may die;  
 Born to raise the sons of earth,  
 Born to give them second birth.  
 Hark! the herald angels sing,  
 "Glory to the newborn King!"

Words: Charles Wesley (1707-1788), alt. Music: Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847);  
 adapt. William H. Cummings (1831-1915).

## READING FROM THE PROPHETS

Micah 4:8-10; 5:2-5a

<sup>4:8</sup>And you, O tower of the flock,  
hill of the daughter of Zion,  
to you shall it come,  
the former dominion shall come,  
kingship for the daughter of Jerusalem.

<sup>9</sup>Now why do you cry aloud?  
Is there no king in you?  
Has your counselor perished,  
that pain seized you like a woman in labor?

<sup>10</sup>Writhe and groan, O daughter of Zion,  
like a woman in labor,  
for now you shall go out from the city  
and dwell in the open country;  
you shall go to Babylon.  
There you shall be rescued;  
there the LORD will redeem you  
from the hand of your enemies.

<sup>5:2</sup>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.

<sup>3</sup>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.

<sup>4</sup>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.  
And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great  
to the ends of the earth.

<sup>5</sup>And he shall be their peace.

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

 **HYMN OF RESPONSE**

"Once in Royal David's City"

Once in royal David's city  
Stood a lowly cattle shed,  
Where a mother laid her baby  
In a manger for His bed:  
Mary was that mother mild,  
Jesus Christ, her little Child.

He came down to earth from heaven  
Who is God and Lord of all,  
And His shelter was a stable,  
And His cradle was a stall;  
With the poor, and mean, and lowly,  
Lived on earth our Savior, holy.

For He is our childhood's pattern,  
Day by day, like us He grew;  
He was little, weak, and helpless,  
Tears and smiles like us He knew,  
And He feels for our sadness,  
And He shares our gladness, too.

And our eyes at last shall see Him,  
Through His own redeeming love,  
For that Child, so dear and gentle,  
Is our Lord in heav'n above,  
And He leads His children on  
To the place where He is gone.

Words: Cecil Frances Alexander, 1848. Music: Henry J. Gauntlett, 1849.

## READINGS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

Job 38:4-11

“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?

Tell me, if you have understanding.

<sup>5</sup>Who determined its measurements—surely you know!

Or who stretched the line upon it?

<sup>6</sup>On what were its bases sunk,

or who laid its cornerstone,

<sup>7</sup>when the morning stars sang together

and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

<sup>8</sup>“Or who shut in the sea with doors

when it burst out from the womb,

<sup>9</sup>when I made clouds its garment

and thick darkness its swaddling band,

<sup>10</sup>and prescribed limits for it

and set bars and doors,

<sup>11</sup>and said, ‘Thus far shall you come, and no farther,

and here shall your proud waves be stayed’?

Job 39:9-12

“Is the wild ox willing to serve you?

Will he spend the night at your manger?

<sup>10</sup>Can you bind him in the furrow with ropes,

or will he harrow the valleys after you?

<sup>11</sup>Will you depend on him because his strength is great,

and will you leave to him your labor?

<sup>12</sup>Do you have faith in him that he will return your grain

and gather it to your threshing floor?

Isaiah 1:3

“The ox knows its owner,

and the donkey its master's crib,

but Israel does not know,

my people do not understand.”

This is the Word of the Lord.

*Thanks be to God.*

## CONFESSION OF SIN

*Almighty God,  
 Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
 Maker of all things,  
 Judge of all men;  
 We acknowledge with grief our many sins and our wickedness,  
 We have sinned by thought, word, and deed,  
 And we have done so against your divine majesty,  
 Justly provoking your anger and indignation against us.  
 We earnestly repent as we heartily grieve our many misdoings.  
 Have mercy upon us most merciful Father;  
 For the sake of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ,  
 Forgive us all that is past;  
 And grant that we may hereafter serve and please you  
 in newness of life,  
 To the honor and glory of your name;  
 Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## ✠ ASSURANCE OF PARDON

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

—Galatians 4:4-7

The almighty and merciful Lord grant you forgiveness of all your sins, true repentance, amendment of life, and the grace and consolation of His Holy Spirit.



## OFFERTORY

*For our Christmas Eve offering, we have an opportunity to give to the Ministerial Relief Fund. In accordance with James 1:27, the PCA began the Ministerial Relief Fund to aid in the financial stress of the widows of our pastors and missionaries. If you would like to contribute to this fund, please use the designated envelopes in your pew.*

"Joy Has Dawned"

*Congregational Hymn | 12:00 p.m.*

Joy has dawned upon the world, Promised from creation;  
God's salvation now unfurled, Hope for every nation.  
Not with fanfares from above, Not with scenes of glory,  
But a humble gift of love: Jesus, born of Mary.

Sounds of wonder fill the sky With the songs of angels,  
As the mighty Prince of Life Shelters in a stable.  
Hands that set each star in place, Shaped the earth in darkness,  
Cling now to a mother's breast, Vuln'erable and helpless.

Shepherds bow before the Lamb, Gazing at the glory;  
Gifts of men from distant lands Prophecy a story.  
Gold, a King is born today, Incense, God is with us;  
Myrrh, His death will make a way And by His blood He'll win us.

Son of Adam, Son of Heav'n, Given as a ransom,  
Reconciling God and man—Christ our mighty Champion!  
What a Savior, what a Friend, What a glorious mystery;  
Once a babe in Bethlehem, Now the Lord of hist'ry.

Words and Music: CCLI Song # 4408246. Keith Getty, Stuart Townend. © 2004 Thankyou Music (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing). CCLI License # 147209.

"Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"

*Instrumental | 4:30 and 6:00 p.m.*

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

**READING FROM THE GOSPELS**

Luke 2:1-20

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>And all went to be registered, each to his own town. <sup>4</sup>And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, <sup>5</sup>to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. <sup>6</sup>And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. <sup>7</sup>And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

<sup>8</sup>And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. <sup>10</sup>And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. <sup>11</sup>for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup>And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup>"Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

<sup>15</sup>When 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." <sup>16</sup>And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. <sup>17</sup>And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. <sup>18</sup>And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. <sup>20</sup>And 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 MEDLEY**

"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.

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.

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

 "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"

It came upon the midnight clear,  
That glorious song of old;  
From angels bending near the earth  
To touch their harps of gold:  
"Peace on the earth good will to men,  
From heaven's all gracious King,"  
The world in solemn stillness lay,  
To hear the angels sing.

And ye, beneath life's crushing load,  
Whose forms are bending low,  
Who toil along the climbing way  
With painful steps and slow,  
Look now! For glad and golden hours  
Come swiftly on the wing.  
O rest beside the weary road,  
And hear the angels sing!

Words: Edmund H. Sears, 1849. Music: Richard Storrs Willis, 1850.

## ☒ "What Child is This?"

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?  
This, this is Christ the King,  
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
Haste, haste to bring him laud,  
The babe, the son of Mary.

Why lies he in such mean estate,  
Where ox and ass are feeding?  
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here  
The silent Word is pleading;  
Nails, spear, shall pierce him through,  
The cross be borne for me, for you;  
Hail, hail the Word made flesh,  
The babe, the Son of Mary.

Words: William C. Dix (1837-1898). Music: traditional English melody, 16th century.

## ☒ LIGHTING OF THE CHURCH

"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, ca. 1816. Stanzas 1 & 3 translated from German to English  
 by John F. Young, 1863. Music: Franz X. Gruber, ca. 1820.

## ☒ BENEDICTION

JOIN US FOR GATHERED WORSHIP

CHRISTMASTIDE  
December 26 | 10:30 a.m.

EPIPHANY SUNDAY  
January 2 | 10:30 a.m.

*There will be no Sunday School on these days.*