

*Mifflin Avenue
&
South Avenue
United Methodist Churches*



DECEMBER 24, 2020

7:30 pm

On this night of nights, the church bids you welcome as we gather in expectation and gratitude for the gift of the Christ Child, who came that we may have life. This night, no one is a stranger. All are joined together as one family through the miracle of the birth of one small baby. We come from different walks of life as we gather in this place on this most holy night. Some of us come from various faith traditions, and others of us were born and raised in these very churches.

However we come, we come knowing we are loved by God. Let us approach the manger as the shepherds, who came to see this wondrous thing of which they had been told. Let us come to the manger with the steadfastness of Joseph who heeded the words of the angel and obeyed his Lord. Let us come to the manger with the love of Mary who responded to extraordinary words with absolute faith and certainty. Let us come to the manger like the three wise men, who left their lives and followed the star.

CENTERING

PRELUDE

“Canon”

J. Pachelbel

(As the prelude begins, you are invited to center yourself for worship)

CHRISTMAS GREETING AND PROCLAMATION

Pastor: On this divine and holy night, we gather with our hearts full of hope and anticipation as the bells ring out throughout the world, announcing the birth of a Savior. Listen! Hear the bells ring, announcing that “unto us a child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government will be on his shoulder. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.”

THE BELLS RING OUT

Pastor: Tonight is the night to travel around a manger to see the face of God in a tiny little baby. Let us share our joy and excitement at being present when God reaches down to touch the earth. May your hearts be one as we come to worship the Christ Child on this most holy night.

PRAISING

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN:

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

No. 234, vs. 1 & 3

***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;***

***Refrain: 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 heave above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest;***

Sing Refrain

“Angels from the Realms of Glory”

No. 220, vs. 1 & 2

***Angels from the realms of glory,
wing your flight o’er all the earth;
ye who sang creation’s story
now proclaim Messiah’s birth.***

***Refrain: Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the new born King.***

***Shepherds, in the field abiding,
watching o’er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing;
yonder shines the infant light:***

Sing Refrain

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: In the silence of this night,

People: **may we hear the songs of the angels.**

Pastor: In the holiness of this night,

People: **may we humble ourselves to visit the manger.**

Pastor: In the serenity of this night.“

People: **may we spread peace through the world.**

Pastor: In the brightness of this night,
People: **may we see the One who comes to us.**

OPENING PRAYER

God of us all, we come as your faithful to Bethlehem on this silent night. We come to gather around the manger and see for ourselves this wondrous thing of which we have heard. We come to worship the baby, born to be king. Make us worthy to receive your gift of grace, O God. And let us go from this place a people renewed in our faith, to give your gift of love and peace to each person we meet, as it was given to us so long ago. Amen.

INTROIT

“O Holy Night”
Dean Patterson, soloist

Adophe Adam

LIGHTING THE ADVENT AND CHRIST CANDLES

Pastor: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;

People: those who lived in a land of deep darkness, on them light has shined.

Pastor: Our Advent journey is now complete. The darkness is gone. The Light of the World is here!

People: Our hope has been met. Our hearts have found peace. Our joy has been made perfect. The love of God has come to live among us. And so, tonight, we light the candle of Christ.

Pastor: The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all. The long-awaited Christ has come! The birth of Jesus was God’s way of saying to humankind, “Do not be afraid, for I am with you.”

People: Celebrating the birth of our Savior, we light this candle. Together, we will shine with the radiant light of Christ!

BLESSING

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

HYMN

“There’s a Song in the Air”

No. 249, v. 1

*There’s a song in the air!
There’s a star in the sky!
There’s a mother’s deep prayer
and a baby’s low cry!
And the star rains its fire
while the beautiful sing,
for the manger of Bethlehem
cradles a King!*

PRAYER

On this night of nights, O God, prepare our hearts for the coming of your light. As the lights of hope, peace, joy, love and the light of Christ burn brightly, we take a deep breath, knowing you are as close to us as the air we breathe. We rejoice in knowing we are never alone. Amen.

HYMN:

“There’s a Song in the Air”

No. 249, v. 4

*We rejoice in the light,
and we echo the song
that comes down through the night
from the heavenly throng.
Ay! We shout to the lovely
Evangel they bring,
and we greet in his cradle
Our Savior and King.*

**The Word Proclaims The Birth of Jesus
The Christmas Story in Word and Song**

Pastor: In many and various ways God spoke to his People of old by the prophets.

People: But now in these last days God has spoken to us by His Son.

Pastor: Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.

HYMN "Angels We Have Heard on High" No. 238, v. 3

**"Come to Bethlehem and see
Christ whose birth the angels sing;
Come adore on bended knee,
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.**

**Refrain: Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, in excelsis, Deo!**

THE STORY AS TOLD BY THE ANGEL GABRIEL

FIRST LESSON Luke 1:26-35
LESSON RESPONSE "O Little Town of Bethlehem" No. 230, vs. 1 & 2

THE STORY AS TOLD BY MARY

SECOND LESSON Luke 1:46-56
LESSON RESPONSE "Tell Out My Soul" No. 200, vs 1 & 4

**Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!
Unnumbered blessings give my spirit
voice, tender to me, the promise of God's word;
in God my Savior shall my heart rejoice.**

**Tell out, my soul, the glories of God's word!
Firm is the promise and God's mercy
sure. Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
to children's children and forever more!**

THIRD LESSON "The Promise to Joseph" Matthew 1:18-21
LESSON RESPONSE "Joseph's Song" Michael Card
Glenn Matteson, soloist

THE BIRTH IN THE MANGER

FOURTH LESSON Luke 2:1-7
LESSON RESPONSE: "Away in a Manger" No. 217, vs. 1 & 3

***Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay,
the Little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.***

*Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask thee to stay
close by me forever, and love me, I pray;
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
and fit us for heaven to live with thee there.*

THE STORY AS TOLD BY THE ANGELS

FIFTH LESSON
LESSON RESPONSE

Luke 2:8-14

“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:*

THE STORY AS TOLD BY THE SHEPHERDS

SIXTH LESSON
LESSON RESPONSE:

Luke 2:15-20
No. 238, v. 2

“Angels We Have Heard on High”

*Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heavenly song?*

Refrain:

*Gloria, in excelsis, Deo!
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!*

BEHOLD THE KING OF GLORY

SEVENTH LESSON

John 1:1-5, 9-14

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

CHRISTMAS MEDITATION

Where Are You Christmas?

**Our Christmas Response
Celebrating Our Gifts—We are Accountable**

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

Come now and kneel before the Christ child. Bring all that you are and all that you have. Offer your gifts in wonder and surprise and awe. Offer your gifts in joy and delight.

THE LORD'S OFFERING

HYMN OF OFFERING

“Sweet Little Jesus Boy”
Deborah Webb, soloist

Traditional

OFFERTORY DEDICATION (A Christmas Offering Hymn to the tune of “It Came Upon A Midnight Clear”)

*Our Christmas offering we present to you, oh newborn one!
Bless it, we pray, and all the love we have for You, God's Son.
Our world is deeply needing gifts that only You can bring,
Help us, your people, heal the world. That all Your praise may sing. Amen*

OFFERING PRAYER

There are so many things to be thankful for tonight, God. Receive these tokens of our gratitude for your love incarnate in the babe of Bethlehem. May they become God-with-us for all the world. May they breathe magic back into a world that needs a sense of wonder and joy. Amen.

THE LIGHT OF CHRIST FILLS OUR HEARTS

Pastor: Arise, shine, dear people, for our Light has come!

People: Christ is the World's true light, on our paths and in our lives.

Pastor: Receive the light and let its warmth and glow be in your hearts this night.

People: The glory of the Lord shines around us on this night.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE LIGHT

The pastor now gives light to the Ushers; they in turn, will give light to the first person in each pew. Each person shall pass the light to the next person. The lighted candle is never tilted, but always held upright, when giving light to another. When all candles are lit, the congregation shall rise and sing "Silent Night".

HYMN

"Silent Night, Holy Night"

No. 239

*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, heavenly 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!*

*PRAYER FOR LIGHT

Lord Christ, you came into our world to meet us where we live. As we hold our candles, make your bright light shine upon us in the darkened corners where we wait for your arrival. Dispel gloom and anger, fear and hatred, that your pure radiance may become the beacon burning in our hearts, illuminating those about us. Thank you for the gift of your Son, the gift of pure love and grace. Lord, make us yours forever. In your name, we pray. Amen.

(Please extinguish your candle by blowing it gently. Be sure to hold it upright until the wax hardens. Thank you!)

SENDING

*BENEDICTION

Pastor: A child has been born for us.

People: God's grace has been given to us.

Pastor: From a stable in Bethlehem, our savior has come. We have seen the glory of the Lord

People: revealed in the face of the Christ child. We can hardly contain our amazement.

Pastor: Tell the world. Treasure the story. Ponder it in your heart.

People: We will glorify and praise God for all we have heard and seen!

Pastor: Rejoice! Rejoice! Christ has come!

People: Amen!

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE:

“Let There Be Peace on Earth”

No. 431

* RECESSIONAL HYMN

“Joy to the World”

No. 246, all verses

*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 world, 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 invest 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.*

POSTLUDE

“Swiss Noel”

L C. Daquin

Worship is Finished—Service Begins



MIFFLIN AVENUE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

905 Mifflin Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15221

SOUTH AVENUE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

733 South Avenue
Wilkinsburg, Pennsylvania 15221