

Please take a moment to sign the attendance pads located at the end of the pews.
This simple action helps us to offer better guest and member care.

* Please stand if you can do so comfortably.

PRELUDE

"Comfort, Comfort Now My People"
Variations on "I Saw Three Ships"
"Joy to the World"

Lynn Jacobs
setting, Aaron Shows
Jason D. Payne
arr. Aaron Shows

PROCESSION of the LIGHT from BETHLEHEM

Pastor Lawrence Bartel

One: In a season of darkness,
when the time was right,
God sent the Light of the World.

All: **So he, the Light of the Word,
the Prince of Peace,
the Lord of Love,
came and was born among us.**

God of creation, shaper of seas and stars,
of planets and people.
Emmanuel, God is here with us.

God, born in Bethlehem,
gurgling, crying, laid in a manger
Emmanuel, God is here with us.

God of the cosmos,
dancing in the candle flame,
Emmanuel, God is here with us.

God, Emmanuel, amongst us, within us
**We gather in this sacred moment to tell
again the good news of great joy –
Born this night is a Savior, the Messiah,
who is Christ the Lord!**

* INVOCATION and WELCOME

Light looked down
and saw darkness.
"I will go there," said Light.

Peace looked down
and saw war.
"I will go there," said Peace.

Love looked down
and saw hatred.
"I will go there," said Love.

**So
the Lord of Light
the Prince of Peace
the King of Love
came down
and crept in
beside us.**

On this holiest of nights,
**we come, joining the shepherds
who are stunned by wonder.**

On this most silent night,
**we come, our hopes and dreams
joining those of Mary and Joseph.**

On this night of carols and candlelight,
**we come, our glad songs joining
with the choirs of angels over us.**

* **PROCESSIONAL CAROL** "O Come, All Ye Faithful" (vs. 1, 3-4)

#133

LIGHTING of the ADVENT CANDLES and CHRIST CANDLE

Members of the King / Staley Family

We are a people of hope.
**Our hearts are full of anticipation for the
coming of our beloved Christ Child.
So we kindle this first candle and name it hope.**

We are a people who chose to be a peaceful
presence in this midst of a frantic season.
**So we kindle the second candle as an
act of faith in a world of distraction and conflict.
We call this candle peace.**

A whisper of prayer encircles the earth
like a sounding of angel-song.
**For the joy of God is on the way:
the mother is laboring, the father pacing
the light of new world is dawning as
we kindle the candle of joy.**

Tonight we choose to wait together for God's great love and find we have moved to the edge of our seats.

In this sacred story we encounter the eternal truth that everyone and everything is one and it all belongs in God.

**What you do to the other, you do to yourself;
how you love yourself is how you love your neighbor;
how you love the Lord is how you love yourself;
how you love yourself is how you love the Lord.
With the deepest gratitude that God so loved the world
we kindle the candle of love.**

Tonight is the night for which we have all been waiting.

With the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, our lives will be forever changed. We will be transformed by his ministry and message.

We kindle, this Christ Candle to represent that Emmanuel, God-with-us, is truly the center of our lives.

The Beginning

A READING *Isaiah 60:1-3* Scott Parkinson

*** CAROL** "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear" (vs. 1, 2 & 5) #123

Mary's Story

A READING *Luke 1:26-38* Candace Crist

CHOIR "A Virgin Most Pure" English folk carol
arr. Michael Larkin

Joseph's Story

A READING *Matthew 1:18-25* Thomas Payne

*** CAROL** "The First Nowell" (vs. 1 & 2) #147

The Birth of Christ

A READING *Luke 2:1-7* Carol Klumb

CHOIR "Jesus, Jesus, Rest Your Head" American folk song
arr. Kevin Robison

The Story of the Angels

A READING *Luke 2:8-14* Buzz Green

*** CAROL** "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" (vs. 1 & 3) #119

The Story of the Shepherds

A READING *Luke 2:15-20* Ellen Buerk

CHOIR "Lully, Lullay" traditional English carol
arr. Douglas E. Wagner

The Tree of Life and The Light of the World

A READING *Revelation 22:1-5* Deanna Roberts

CHOIR "Jesus Christ the Apple Tree" early American song
arr. Douglas E. Wagner

The Gifts We Offer

OFFERING Christmas Joy Offering

OFFERTORY "I Wonder as I Wander" Appalachian carol
Kent Peterson, soloist arr. Larry Moore

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

*** CAROL** "Joy to the World" (vs. 1, 2 & 4) #134

The Light of Christ Fills Our Hearts

*** A READING** *John 1:1-5* Scott Shriver

*** DISTRIBUTION of the LIGHT**

(After the light is passed to you, pass it to the person next to you. **Please do not tip the lighted candle.**)

*** CAROL** "Silent Night" (vs. 1-3) #122

(With each verse, as the congregation proceeds through the hymn, the candle is held a little higher)

**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.**

BLESSING

Go now to your homes, receive and celebrate God's love
that heals the world through the Child of the manger
and the Christ of the cross.

Live in the light of this silent night's joy.

The candles have been lit – light in the darkest night.

**The carols have been sung –
lifting hearts with angels heavenward.**

**The story has been told –
we will live it, now, every day:**

this hope, this peace,

this joy, this love,

given to the world

through Jesus, the Christ,

God with us, Emmanuel.

Alleluia! Amen.



The Christmas Joy Offering has been a Presbyterian tradition for over seventy-five years. The Christmas Joy Offering will be distributed to the Presbyterian Church Board of Pensions for its assistance programs for retired missionaries / church workers in need and also to develop our future leaders at Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges. Please place your gift in the Christmas Joy Offering envelope. Checks may be payable to Oxford Presbyterian Church with the notation: Christmas Joy Offering. Thank you for your generosity!



**Thank you to our Chancel Choir and Guest Singer
for your musical contribution to our service.**

Chancel Choir Roster: Carol Burkhalter, Deb Davidson, Pam Deahl, Judy Fisher, Katya Fisher, Joe Foltz, Paula Foltz, Michael Irwin, Jack Liles, Leonard Lunsford*, Susan Maxfield, Dick Munson, Mary Jane Roberts, Becky Rudolph, Joe Simpson, Karen Simpson, Diane Young

*guest singer

Oxford Presbyterian Church

A Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols

December 24, 2017 – 7:00 p.m.



John 1:1-5

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.