

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN



CHURCH IN GERMANTOWN

DECEMBER 24, 2019
CHRISTMAS EVE

ALIVE,
CELEBRATING
& SERVING
THE LIVING LORD!

***The mission of The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown
is to reflect the loving presence of Christ
as we serve others faithfully, worship God joyfully and share life together
in a diverse and generous community.***

In preparation for worship please take the opportunity to speak silently to God.
At the close of the service let us greet one another with cheerfulness.
Please be sure that your cell phone is turned off during worship.

December 24, 2019

Christmas Eve

*“There is never time in the future in which we will work out our salvation. The challenge is in the moment,
the time is always now” – James Baldwin*

ORDER OF EVENING WORSHIP AT 7:00 PM

GATHERING AS GOD’S FAMILY

Prelude: Three Christmas Carols:

Joel Raney

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

What Child Is This?

Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabella

The Linda M. Leube Memorial Concert Piano

Ted Barr and Tony Thurman, four-hand piano

Welcome and Announcements

Introit: *African Noel*

Victor C. Johnson

†*Lighting of the Advent Candle

Carolyn & Ernie Freeman and Ingrid Harris

Reader 1: Our time to wait* is over. Christmas is here. Our days of preparation* are completed. What has not been done will now have to be left undone. We have witnessed* to this very hour, this very night, and we hope that the world has heard the good news which we have spoken. We have decided on “acceptance,”* of doing things God’s way rather than our own, and to be satisfied with God’s will.

Reader 2: Listen to the words from the prophet Isaiah: *“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.” Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices, together they sing for joy; for in plain sight they see the return of the LORD to Zion. Break forth together into singing, you ruins of Jerusalem. The LORD has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.”*

Reader 3: Our circle of Advent candles is lit; now tonight we light* the central candle, reminding us that Christ is the light of the world, the center of our lives, the shining beacon of hope for all the universe. Christ is born. Praise God! Let us pray.

All: O Holy God, thank you that the time of waiting and preparing is over and that the light of Christ shines so very clearly tonight. May our joy be full and our hearts rejoice for the world shall never be the same again. Truth and justice and righteousness have come to free all from the bondage of sin. Thank you, God, for this holy night of nights! Amen.

(* = Lighting of the Advent candles)

*congregation standing;

†latecomers may be seated

CONFESSING OUR SINS TO GOD

Prayer of Confession

God of new beginnings, when our eyes become fixed on the glitz of the season, turn our gaze once more to the hills, where your messengers come bringing news of hope and peace; when our attention becomes trapped in bitter conflicts of the past, remind us once more, that you speak a freeing word to us through your Son. Free us from the surface trappings of this day, and refocus our hearts on the glory of Christ's birth, that we may be messengers of peace and children of your Spirit.

Silent Meditation

Assurance of Pardon

†*Congregational Response 579: *Gloria Patri*

**Glory be to the Father
And to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost,
As it was in the beginning, is now,
And ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen.**

†*Sharing the Peace of Christ

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

(As worshipers, we come from diverse experiences and points of view. We have different racial, educational, and economic backgrounds. Yet we are all one in Christ. We symbolize this as we exchange with one another, by words and gestures, signs of peace and reconciliation such as, "The peace of Christ be with you. And also with you.")

*Hymn 23: *Angels We Have Heard on High*

GLORIA

PROCLAIMING GOD'S WORD

Prayer for Illumination

Ernie Freeman

The First Lesson: Isaiah 52:7-10

Page 642 OT

Leader: God's Word is a lamp to our feet, and a light to our path.

People: Thanks be to God!

Anthem: *For Unto Us a Child Is Born* (from *Messiah*)

G.F. Handel

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given:

And the government shall be upon his shoulder and his name shall be called
Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)

The Chancel Choir

The Second Lesson: Luke 2:1-20

Page 54-55 NT

Leader: God, we thank you for your Word.

People: The story of your grace.

Sermon: **THE AWE-FUL TRUTH**

Rev. Rebecca Segers

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

A Time for Meditation on the Word

*Affirmation of Faith—The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of the People

The Lord's Prayer

Offering

Offertory: *How Majestic*

Oh Lord, our Lord how majestic is your name in all the earth. Oh Lord, we praise your name. Oh Lord, we magnify your name. Prince of Peace, Mighty God. How majestic is your name oh Lord. King of Kings, forever and ever. And Lord of Lords, hallelujah, hallelujah. And he shall reign forever and ever. How majestic is your name, oh Lord our Lord.

Oh Lord our God.

The Gospel Choir
Sara C. Blanford, director

*Congregational Response 592: *Doxology*

OLD HUNDREDTH

*Prayer of Dedication

*Hymn 60: *Silent Night, Holy Night*

STILLE NACHT

*Charge and Benediction

GOING FORTH IN GOD'S NAME

Postlude Anthem: *O Holy Night*

Adolphe Adam/arr. John West

O holy night! The stars are brightly shining; it is the night of the dear Savior's birth!
Long lay the world in sin and error pining till he appeared and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope the weary soul rejoices for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!
Fall on your knees! Oh, hear the angel voices! Oh, night divine when Christ was born!

Led by the light of faith serenely beaming, with glowing hearts by his cradle we stand.
So, led by light of a star sweetly gleaming, here came the wise men from the Orient land.

The King of kings lay thus in lowly manger, in all our trials born to be our friend.
He knows our need, he guardeth us from danger; behold your King! Before the lowly bend!

The Chancel Choir
Evelyn Santiago, soprano