



Christmas Eve

Pollocksville Presbyterian Church Holy Communion & Candlelight Service

6:30 pm

December 24, 2023

Prelude

Welcome

*Call to Worship (*inspired by Isaiah 9*)

Leader: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.
Those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them light has
shined.

People: **We long for a light to guide us.**

Leader: You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy.

People: **We long for God's joy in our lives.**

Leader: For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; He is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of
Peace.

People: **He is named Emmanuel: God with us. In this tiny baby, this
vulnerable child, we find our light, our joy, our comfort.**

ALL: **Joy to the World! The Lord is come!**

*Gathering Prayer (*in unison*)

**Almighty God, turn out the lights in our busy lives, that in the
darkness Your stars may shine. Silence the chatter of our minds, that
we may hear the angels sing. Bring us to our knees that we may see
the Christ Child. Make hearts open mangers for Jesus to be born in
us. Come to us again, this night, as You make Your Word flesh in us,
AMEN**

*Hymn (revised words) "Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee/O Come All Ye Faithful"

Joyful, joyful, we adore You, God of glory, Lord of light;
Angels lifting praise before You sing thro' out this holy night.
In a manger lies a Baby Child of Mary, Son of God.
Voices joined in joyful chorus praise You for Your gift of love.
All your works declare Your glory; all creation joins to sing.
Praise resounds as earth rejoices in the birth of Christ, the King.
Shepherds kneel before the Infant. Trumpets sound and anthems raise
As with joy our hearts are lifted, joined in wonder, love and praise.
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!
O come, let us adore Him! O come, let us adore Him! O come, let us
adore Him Christ, the Lord!

*The Peace of Christ (Source – Don Moen)

Lord, make us instruments of Your peace
Where there is hatred, let Your love increase
Lord, make us instruments of Your peace
Walls of pride and prejudice shall cease
When we are Your instruments of peace.
The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

People: **And also with you.**

*Hymn "O Come, All Ye Faithful" (v. 2,3) #41

Reading of the Prophecy of Micah 5:2-5a

*Hymn "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" (v.1,3) # 9

Reading of the Preparation for the Messiah John 1:1-14

*Hymn "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" (1,3) #31

Reading of the Birth of Christ Luke 2:1-7

Special Music “Gesu Bambino” *Martens/Yon* ~ Jay Bender

Reading of the Announcement to the Shepherds Luke 2:8-20

Message “*Unwrapping the Presence*” ~ Pastor Ken Yearick

Pastoral Prayer

Call to Confession ~ Pastor Ken Yearick

This is the night we are reminded that God loves to be with us. Yet all too often – by our choices, our words, our silence – we choose not to be with God. Join me as we pray on this holy night to the One who was born to gift us with mercy and hope.

Unison Prayer for Forgiveness

This was going to be the year, God of silent nights, when we were going to give away more than we spent, but we didn't. This was going to be the season when we spent more time with others, but we filled our calendars with other things. This was going to be the Christmas when we wrote personal letters to friends and family, but spent too much energy filling out our to-do lists. This was going to be a truly holy season, but it just got too harried and hurried.

Forgive us O God, and draw us closer to the Baby born not into wealth and power, but into poverty and weakness; to the One who loves unconditionally and welcomes all; to the Child who gathers other children to him, to bless them and serve them; to the One who drew near to us, so we might be drawn to your heart – in the name of Jesus Christ, our Brother, and our Lord. Amen.

Moment of Silent Reflection

Assurance of God's Pardon

Leader: Into the valleys of our death, Jesus comes with life; into the shadows of our world, Jesus brings light; into the brokenness of our lives, Jesus brings forgiveness and peace.

People: **Thanks be to God for the gift of the Baby of Bethlehem, Who brings joy and peace to us in these moments of forgiveness and in all the days to come. Amen.**

*The Gloria Patri

*The Affirmation of Faith (Apostles' Creed)

*Hymn "Drawn by Your Light" (*Tune: Away in a Manger*)

In darkness we gather, God, drawn by your light,
your glorious presence that blesses the night,
the light and the deep peace that Jesus imparts,
the Spirit's bright radiance that burns in our hearts.

The light of Creation that made the first dawn,
the pillar of fire that led Israel on,
the star that led magi to where Jesus was
now draws us to worship with alleluias.

Your light shines so even the darkness is blessed
this night as we wait for the coming of Christ.
God, shine your light warmly in us by your grace,
that we may bear healing and justice and peace.

The Service of Holy Communion

The Invitation

The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving and the Lord's Prayer

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Eternal Lord...

The Words of Institution

The Communion of the People of God *(by Intinction)*

Please come down the aisle to the front of the sanctuary, departing by the side aisles. Please place your offerings and gifts in the offering plates before you share in communion.

Prayer of Dedication

~ Pastor Ken Yearick

*Hymn

“Joy to the World!”

#40

Charge and Benediction

~ Pastor Ken Yearick

Sharing the Light

The Christ Candle will be taken to the back of the sanctuary, at which time you are invited to light your individual candle, and recess outside to the ramp, steps, and sidewalk. Once assembled, we will conclude singing “Silent Night”.

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All hymns from The Presbyterian Hymnal

*Please rise in body or spirit

Bold: Congregation Speaks

***On behalf of the Staff and Session, we wish you a very
Blessed and Joyous Christmas.***



LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH – 2023

CHRISTMAS EVE: CHRIST

(Reader 1): In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth; and set lights in the sky – sun and moon and stars. By these stars, our ancestors chartered their journeys. By these stars, they knew God was with them. In the beginning, too, was the Word, and the Word, too, has come down from heaven to earth. By the Word made flesh, Christ our Savior, we know that God is with us.

(Reader2): Tonight, we light five candles to bring the fire of the stars down from heaven to earth, to nestle among the greens.

(Reader 1): This evening we light the Candle of Hope, (*Light last week's purple candle*) the Candle of Peace, (*Light last week's second purple candle*), the Candle of Joy (*light the pink candle*), the Candle of Love, (*Light a purple candle*) and the CHRIST Candle. Now our redemption draws near!!

(Reader 2): Our lives are a journey, and we do not always know the way. But we chart our path by the star of Christ. Even when faith burns low and its promises seem too good to be true, we set our face steadily towards the light.

(Reader 1): Listen to ancient words from Isaiah come true anew this night:

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them has light shined.... For a child is born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

And from Luke 2: Now, fear not, for there is good news of great joy for all people: to us is born this day in Bethlehem a Savior, the Messiah, the Lord.

(Reader 2): Let us pray:

Lord Jesus, as we search for signs of Christ's presence this week, help us to become the signs of Christ's presence that others are seeking. As these candles are but a glimpse of the light of the heavens, help us to be a glimpse of heaven on earth. Help us to shine like the stars in the world. AMEN