

Strawbridge United Methodist Church Candlelight Service (hybrid) - Wednesday, December 22, 2021 @7pm

*Serving: Amb Blango Ross, Jr, Rev Darrell Davis,
Min Kathy Duppins-Smallwood and Bruce Calvert, pianist*

CALL TO WORSHIP

Rejoice, for God is with us — Emmanuel.

In the darkness of our world shines God's holy light.

Now there is reason to hope, to love, to laugh, to live.

God is truly with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God!

HYMN OF PRAISE: 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.

True God of true God, Light from Light eternal.

Lo, He shuns not the virgin's womb.

Son of the Father, 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.

(alto/sopr voices)

Sing all ye citizens of heaven above!

Glory to God, all glory in the highest!

O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,

(all voices)

O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

See how the shepherds, summoned to His cradle,

(tenor/bass voices)

leaving their flocks, draw nigh to gaze.

We too would thither bend our joyful footsteps.

O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,

(all voices)

O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning,

Jesus, to Thee be all glory given.

Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing,

O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

OPENING PRAYER

Gracious God,

With joy and thanksgiving we gather as your people.

We have joined hearts to hear again the timeless story of Christ's birth.

In the excitement of this night, quiet our hearts

that we may know the peace and fullness of this holy time.

Shine, O Light, in the darkness of our world.

Sing, O angels, in the stillness of our hearts,

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those God favors."

This we pray in the name of the Child of Bethlehem. Amen.

The Prophecy of the Messiah

Isaiah 9:2-7

The Lighting of the Christ Candle

Reader One: This night, this night is a night to remember. A night when home broke in on us. A night when we were not forgotten or alone or abandoned. This night. This night is the night when here and there became one, when past and future combined in a breathless present. This is a night when we are home, in ourselves, in this family, in the God who loved us enough to walk beside us.

Reader Two: We gather in the night to proclaim the light. We shrug off despair and embrace hope. We set aside conflict and choose peace. We push away despair by claiming joy. We overcome hate by rising into love. Because this night we know, even in the shadows of our doubts, we know that we are loved. That's what it means to be home.

Reader Three: We light these candles, hoping to become the light, hoping to radiate light by how we live. We light these candles to create a space called home in this place, in our place, in inner places. We light these candles to declare that unto us a Savior is born, who is Christ the Lord. Welcomed home by angels singing and shepherds kneeling. Welcomed home by those like us who have worshiped for thousands of years. Welcomed home again tonight, right here, right now, in us.

All Readers: It's time to be home!

SPECIAL SELECTION

“O Holy Night”

Dawn Briscoe & William Allen, Sr

WORD PROCLAIMED

Scripture: **Luke 2:1-14 & Titus 2:11-14**

Minister Kathy Duppins-Smallwood

Daisy UMC

LIGHTING OF CANDELABRA

(After each reading, one candle is lighted on each candelabra during the song.)

The Coming of Jesus Is Announced to Mary

Luke 1:26-38

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

O come, O come, Emmanuel— and ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely ex-ile here, Until the Son of God— appear.
Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel, shall come to thee, O Israel!

The Coming of Jesus Is Announced to Joseph

Matthew 1:18-25

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

O come, thou Wisdom from— on high, And order all things far—and nigh;
To us the path of knowledge show— and cause us in her ways— to go.
Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel, shall come to thee, O Israel!

O Come, Desire of nations bind— all peoples in one heart and mind.
From dust Thou brought us forth— to life; deliver us from earthly strife.
Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel, shall come to thee, O Israel!

The Preparations for the Birth of Jesus

Luke 2:1-5

O Little Town of Bethlehem

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie,
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep, the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark street shineth, the everlasting Light.
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

Jesus is Born

Luke 2:6-7

O Little Town of Bethlehem

For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wond'ring Love.
O morning stars together, proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing to God the King, and peace to all on earth.

Jesus' Birth is Announced to the Shepherds

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
Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heaven's all gracious King.
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.

SPECIAL SELECTION

Brian Wilson, saxophonist

The Shepherds Find the Baby Jesus

Luke 2:15-18

The First Noel

The first noel the angels did say was to certain poor shepherds in fields as
they lay. In fields where they lay keeping their sheep on a cold winter's night
that was so deep. Noel, noel, noel, noel. Born is the King of Israel

The Wise Men Bring Their Gifts to Jesus

Matthew 2:1-11

The First Noel

And by the light of that same star, three wise men came from country far.
To seek for a king was their intent, and to follow the star wherever it went.
Noel, noel, noel, noel. Born is the King of Israel.

Then entered in the wise men three, full reverently upon the knee.
And offered there in His presence their gold and myrrh and frankincense.
Noel, noel, noel, noel. Born is the King of Israel.

We Offer the Gift of Ourselves and Treasures to God

Offertory and Prayer

Offertory Response

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.

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh, come, peasant, king, to own Him.
The King of Kings salvation brings. Let loving hearts enthrone Him.
This, this is Christ the King whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring him laud the Babe, the Son of Mary.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION and PARDON

Merciful God, we confess that often we find darkness more comfortable than light. We confess that we find Your good news frightening and unsettling, especially when we consider its demands as well as its promises. We confess that Christmas has become more to us than the birthday of the Christ, partly because we do not want a Christ-Child in our lives or in our world. Forgive us, break us, bend us, remake us. Give us the courage to lay ourselves open to the wonder and healing of your coming. Be born again into our world, be born again into our hearts and lives. Hear now our silent and personal confessions as we prepare ourselves for your nativity.

The true light that enlightens all has come into the world. That light shines on in the darkness, and the darkness has never been able to put it out. This is the good news: God has heard our confession. God has forgiven our sin.
Thanks be to God!

THE LIGHTING OF YOUR HOME CANDLE

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.

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

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

Hail the heaven born Prince of Peace! Hail the Son of Righteousness!
Life and light to all He brings, risen 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 us second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing, Glory to the newborn King.

BENEDICTION

Joy to the World

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.
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.

*Adapted from Rev Kathie S Wilkinson - Mt Sylvan UMC, Durham, NC; Copyright © 2009
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**“One Church, One People, One Ministry, and
Our Eyes are Watching God!”**

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