



# Christmas Eve

## December 24th, 2020

*"Joy is the infallible sign of the presence of God."  
–Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, 20th century theologian*

### Gathering in God's Presence

"Yet as I read the birth stories about Jesus I cannot help but conclude that, though the world may be tilted toward the rich and powerful, God is tilted toward the underdog." –Philip Yancey

**Prelude:** *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming* 16th Century German  
Larry Pullin, violin; Kate Lane, cello

### Call to Worship:

- ❖ Leader (Sue): Though darkness has fallen, we are preparing for a great light.
- ❖ **People (Janet): The light of Christ is coming into the world.**
- ❖ Leader: The world is full of darkness and shadows, of anger and bitterness and hate. The light of Christ is coming to drive them out.
- ❖ **People: The Light of the World is born in our midst to give light to every person.**
- ❖ Leader: Let the Light start shining in your heart tonight, in the midst of the darkness, and shine in you forevermore. Let us worship God!

**Hymn of Praise:** *O Come, All Ye Faithful* 18th century English melody

1. 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;

2. Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,  
Sing all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God, all glory in the highest;

**REFRAIN**

**REFRAIN:** O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
Christ, the Lord!

4. Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning,  
Jesus, to Thee be all glory given;  
Word of the Maker, now in flesh appearing;

**REFRAIN**

## Invocation:

- ❖ **People (Janet): O Holy One, on this Holy Night, in this Holy Space, let us be your Holy People, waiting for the birth of our Holy Savior. Let us hear the stories of old with new ears. Awaken the past in our midst so that our present will be changed by Christ's birth. Give Yourself once more to the world in the infant's cries, and move our hearts to love Him. Amen**

## Lighting of the Candle



### ***One Candle is Lit***

Kirkpatrick

Come, listen, the sounds of God-  
with-us ring clear,  
And signs of a cross in the  
distance appear.  
The Word once made flesh, yet  
the Word ever near.  
One candle is lit for the Christ-  
birthday here.  
(Kirkpatrick/Parrott)

### **Readers: Sue Stenzel and Janet Renovetz**

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

Janet: **Those who dwelt in the land of deep shadow, upon them has a light shone.**

Sue: Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given.

Janet: **The government shall be upon his shoulders;**

Sue: He shall be called Wonderful counselor, Prince of Peace!

Janet: **On this holy night, a light shines through the darkness.**

Sue: It is the Light of Christ, come once more to shine light on His people.

## Readings

### **First Reading (Sue)      Luke 2: 1-7**

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem, the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

### ***Once in Royal David's City***

Gauntlett

1. Once in royal David's city stood a lowly cattle shed,  
Where a mother laid her baby in a manger for a bed:  
Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ her little child.
  
2. Jesus came to earth from heaven, who is God and Head of all,  
Sheltered in a rustic stable, cradled in a common stall;  
With the poor and meek and lowly lived on earth our Savior holy.
  
3. And through all this wondrous childhood Jesus honored and obeyed,  
Loved and watched the tender mother whose strong arms a cradle made.  
So, like Jesus, we should be serving God obediently.
  
4. Jesus is our childhood's pattern, daily like us lived and grew,  
Jesus, little, weak, and helpless, tears and smiles and comfort knew.  
Jesus felt the pain of sadness, and the joyous lift of gladness.

### **Second Reading (Janet)      Luke 2: 8-14**

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom His favor rests."

***Angels We Have Heard on High*** Traditional French carol  
(Transl. from the French st. 1-3, "Crown of Jesus Music II," 1862; alt.; St. 4, "Carols Old and Carols New," Boston, 1916; alt.)

1. Angels we have heard on high  
sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
And the mountains in reply  
echo back their joyous strains.

**REFRAIN: Gloria in excelsis Deo,  
Gloria in excelsis Deo.**

2. Shepherds, why this jubilee?  
Why your joyous strains prolong?  
Say what may the tidings be,  
which inspire your heavenly song.

**REFRAIN**

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

**REFRAIN**

4. See the babe in manger laid  
whom the choirs of angels praise;  
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid,  
while our hearts in love we raise.

**REFRAIN**

**Third Reading (Pastor Allan)      Luke 2: 15-20**

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

***What Child Is This*** English traditional melody

1. 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, the angels sing, is Christ, God's holy offering;  
Haste, haste your praise to bring the babe, the child of Mary!
  
2. Why lies the Child in manger bare where ox and ass are feeding?  
Give heed, draw near; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.  
Nails, spear shall pierce him through  
the cross be borne for me, for you;  
Hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the child of Mary!
  
3. Bring gifts of incense, gold, and myrrh; come, join in jubilation;  
The Holy Child, though meek and mild,  
has come with God's salvation.  
Raise, raise the song on high, the mother sings her lullaby;  
Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the child of Mary!  
(Donald Swift, 1983; alt.)

**Sermon:**                    ***A Strange Way To Save The World***  
Pastor Allan Lane

**Choir Anthem:** ***Grace in a Cradle (from Emmanuel, Hope of Our Hearts)*** Chisum/Gordon  
Diane Gressley, soloist

**Christmas Offering**

**The Invitation:**

Leader (Sue): We give you thanks, O God, for all those you have called to serve you over the years, who have given so faithfully of their time and talents to you. Now, in this offering, we give so their burden may be lightened.

**[BrecksvilleUCC.org/giving](http://BrecksvilleUCC.org/giving)**

**Offertory Hymn:**            *In the Bleak Midwinter*            Holst

4. What can I offer, poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.  
If I were a wise one, I would do my part;  
but what can I offer: all my heart.  
(Christina G. Rossetti, 1872; alt.)

## **Prayer of Dedication:**

**People (Janet):** Your yoke, O Christ, is easy, and your burden is light. We dedicate these offerings to you to keep the burden light of those who have borne the yoke of Christian service with you. Amen

## **Holy Communion**



- The Thanksgiving
- Prayer of Consecration
- Words of Institution
- The Invitation
- Receiving the Bread and Cup

## **Prayer Of Thanksgiving:**

**People (Janet):** You came first in the stable, O Holy One, and now you have come in the bread and the wine. In all things we thank you for your presence in the world for our sake. Amen

