



Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship

Service of the Word and Sacrament

December 24, 2020

7:00 p.m.

Please SILENCE ALL Personal Electronic Devices Before Worship.

We Gather as God’s People

Welcome to our virtual Christmas Eve Worship Service.

Take a moment to quiet yourself as we prepare ourselves for worship.

The Prelude Music

A Christmas Medley
“In the Bleak Midwinter”

Marian Korth—piano
Mare Stewart—flute

The Christmas Welcome and Instructions

For our virtual Christmas Eve Service Candlelight and Communion Service, we invite you to have a candle for each person and some form of bread and a beverage to represent the cup. While we are unable to be together in-person, we hope we can still share in this meaningful, holy night as we celebrate the in-breaking of God’s Love Incarnate through the birth of Jesus.

The Christmas Poem

“CHRISTMAS COMES” – A poem by Ann Weems (adapted for 2020)

Christmas comes every time we see God in other persons.

The human and the holy meet in Bethlehem

or in Times Square,

or virtually over Social Media or Zoom

For Christmas comes like a golden storm on its way

to Jerusalem—

Determinedly, inevitably...

Even now it comes

In the face of hatred, racial injustice, gun violence and warring—

No atrocity too terrible to stop it,

No Herod strong enough,

No hurt deep enough,

No curse shocking enough,

No pandemic deadly enough,

No disaster shattering enough—

For someone on earth will see the star,

Someone will hear the angel voices,

Someone will run to Bethlehem,

Someone will know peace and goodwill:

The Christ will be born!

The Special Music “Still, Still, Still” Becky Lepore—piano, Mike Riess (Slide Show)

The Call to Worship [Responsive] Rev. Scott Marrese-Wheeler

One: The peace of God be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**

One: When we wait in the night in the hush that only stars can hold as they bend towards the coming of the light; when we wait in the night laboring with anticipation of what midnight shall bring; when we wait in the night listening to the cadence of minutes beat in rhythm with the birth of hope; may we hold our collective breaths with the angelic host as they clutch their restless alleluias, for God is on the way: the mother is laboring, the father pacing, the stable readying, the word is waiting, the light is sliding and the promise is breaking through. When we wait in the longing for midnight in expectation of Good News may we choose to wait together and find we have moved to the edge of our seats, for in such anticipation it is the only place for the Word to be born among us.

The Carol “O Come, All Ye Faithful” Marian Korth—piano

The Lighting of the Christ Candle

One: 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 to “Let it be,” to do things God’s way rather than our own, and to follow the vulnerable baby born in a manger. Our circle of Advent candles is lit; now tonight we light the center candle, reminding us that Christ is the Light of the world, the center of our lives, the shining beacon of hope and peace for all the world. Christ is born anew! Hallelujah!

The Christmas Prayer

One: Thank you, Scandalous God, For giving yourself to the world, Not in the powerful and extraordinary, But in weakness and the familiar: In a baby; in bread and wine. Thank you for offering, at journey’s end, a new beginning; For setting, in the poverty of a stable, The richest jewel of your love; For revealing, in a particular place, Your light for all nations. Thank you For bringing us to Bethlehem, House of Bread, Where the empty are filled, And the filled are emptied; Where the poor find riches, And the rich recognize their poverty; Where all who kneel and hold out their hands are unstintingly fed. Amen.

The Special Music “Lo, How a Rose Is Blooming” Norbert “Nib” Studelska—guitar

The Story of Christ’s Birth in the Gospel of Matthew 1:18-25

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill

what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

The Carol

"Away in a Manger"

Marian Korth—piano

The Story of Christ's Birth in the Gospel of Luke 2:1-20

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see--I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

The Christmas Poem

"WHERE WILL WE FIND OUR 'SILENT NIGHT'" – by Maren Tirabassi

In the story behind the carol
We sing while lighting little candles,
It was Christmas Eve and Joseph Mohr,
Pastor at St. Nicolas,
Gave lyrics to Franz Gruber,
Grade school teacher and musician,
And asked for music
That could be played on a guitar
Because they could not use the organ.
(Diagnoses vary from flood-damage
To the nibbling of mice.)

All this year of coronavirus

We have been finding new ways
To tell a story we know is true -
Picking on a guitar
What cannot resonate in organ chords.

Yet it was the organ mender,
Karl Mauracher,
Who took the new carol down the mountain
To share with the whole world.

We too, will blend
Old traditions and new gifts.

In spite of silent nights, Silent Night,
Is a song of the heart
Undaunted by flood, mice or virus.

The Special Music

“Silent Night”

Norbert “Nib” Studelska, Jr.—guitar

The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper

The Invitation to Communion

Friends, tonight with the various forms of bread and cup we are about to share, we are joined to the people throughout history, across the world, physically and virtually, who have come to this table to share this meal in search of life anew. The in-breaking of God’s Love born into our world and lives, is also experienced in this bread and cup which is for everyone - for the hungry, for the lost, for those who search and those who are found, for those who question, and those who know peace. Friends, at Christ’s table, there is a place for everyone and food enough for all.

The Special Music

“Ave Maria”

Norbert “Nib” Studelska, Jr.

The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

One: The Lord be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**

One: O come, our Shelter-n-Place, be a manger for everyone. O come, Essential Word, worker of creation in the beginning, now in the prison, the hospital or nursing home, grocery store, delivery truck, meatpacking plant - come and rub temples, and soothe tears from the cheeks or those who are trying so hard not to touch their own faces. O come, zooming of hope. O come, bear-in-the-window tenderness. O come, graduation parade joy. O come, pan-lover of us all - come to the Wuhan province, to Italy, to London, to Haiti, to New York City, Florida, Texas, Brazil, to places that never made the news. O come even to our little town and our virtual gathering around this table. Come to the saging ones, holding their last gift of myrrh, to the children with pediatric multi-symptom inflammatory syndrome, come to those who grieve friends, family, a small business or a wonderful job, a home, a fragile mental balance, trust in the future. Come to Black people in America, suffering a disease spread by particles of injustice, for year after year after year, COVID-1619. Come with incarnation, come as

Emmanuel, God-with-us in a manger, in our homes, over Facebook-live or YouTube, and in these common elements of bread or cracker, pretzel or Christmas cookie and a cup of egg nog or wine, coffee or Baileys. Come, and remind us of their sacredness and the sacredness of all our lives, broken and blessed by you. Amen.

Many: Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread and Sharing of the Cup

(You are invited to have your own piece of bread and juice. You may also substitute bread with a cracker, pastry or even a cookie. For juice, you may substitute it with coffee, tea, milk, or water. This is a symbolic sacramental meal we are eating together while physically apart.)

The Prayer after Communion [In Unison]

Great God, as you came at night when all was still, so enter our lives this night. Illuminate our paths with the light of Christ's presence, that we may clearly see the way before us, the truth to speak, and the life to live for him, our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

The Celebration of God's Light

(We invite you as we listen to the beloved Carol, "Silent Night", to light your candle(s) at home, and join in singing of "Silent Night" knowing we are joined in spirit, singing together if only virtually).

The Scripture **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.

The Carol

"Silent Night"

Marian Korth – piano

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.

Silent night, holy night! Wondrous star, lend Thy light;

With the angels let us sing, Alleluia to our King;

Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born.

(Please extinguish your light following the Christmas Blessing.)

The Closing Response and Christmas Blessing

One: Friends, may the Mysterious God, who confounds our expectations, meeting us where we least expected; May the Child of the manger, who heals our pain, and shares our human weakness; May the Source of life, birth of God within our own experience be with us on our journey this Christmas season, throughout the coming year. Go in the peace of Emmanuel. And all

Many: Amen.

The Carol

“Joy to the World”

The Briddell Family

**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.**

**Joy to the world! The Savior reigns:
Let us our songs employ; While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**

**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.**

Postlude



If you wish to share a special offering, offering plates are placed at the entrance to the Sanctuary. **About Our Christmas Eve Special Offering:** The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) reflects God’s gift to us, through the Christmas Joy Offering. With generous gifts from people like you, the money is used to support church ministers and other church workers who have retired and our in need of financial help, whether due to declining health or a catastrophic event, such as Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico. It also supports new leaders called by God for our Church and world through leadership development programs for people of color and education at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. The generosity of Presbyterians means a brighter future and enhanced opportunities to use their talents and skills to serve God, the Church and the world for years to come.

The liturgy this evening is from: ~ in Prayers for Christmas, posted on the Christian Aid website: <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/>; Communion Prayer ~ Adapted from Maren Tirabassi’s “O Antiphon for Advent in the Pandemic” in her book “Christmas Eve at the Epsom Circle McDonald’s and Other Poems.

Oakland-Cambridge Presbyterian Church is committed to using language in such a way that all members of the community of faith may recognize themselves to be included, addressed, and equally cherished before God. Seeking to bear witness to the whole world, the church struggles to use language which is faithful to the biblical truth and which neither purposefully nor inadvertently excludes people because of gender, color, or other circumstance in life. (Book of Order, W-1.2006)

- WELCOME to all who are visiting with us tonight! MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL!
- Our musician tonight is Marian Korth.
- Thank you to our office administrator, Ruth Poole, for coordinating the printing of this bulletin.
- Pastor Scott will be on vacation from December 25-January 4.
- The church office will be closed December 24-27 and December 29-January 3. Ruth can be reached by the church email office@ocpchurch.com
- Our next worship is a joint service with FPC Oregon on December 27.

Church Schedule

Worship Service: 10:00 a.m. Sunday

Communion: First Sunday of each month

Telephone/Fax: 608-423-3001

Email: Office@OCPChurch.com or Pastor@OCPChurch.com

Web: www.OCPChurch.com

Mailing Address: 313 E. Main St., Cambridge, WI 53523-9629



Visit us on Facebook: Oakland-Cambridge Presbyterian Church

SESSION (Meets the second Sunday of each month.)

Class of 2020: Ann Febock, Renée Roland Johnson,

Class of 2021: Melanie Rumpf

Class of 2022: Joe Leto, Mike Stitz

BOARD OF DEACONS (Meets the third Sunday of each month.)

Class of 2020: Randy Johnson, Judy Pearson

Class of 2021: Judy Schroeder, Cheryl Stitz

Class of 2022: Cheryl Bettenhausen

CHURCH STAFF

Music—

Accompanists: Karen Brunk, Marian Korth, Emily Rausch,
Angie Williams

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