



December 24, 2024

Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols

9:00pm

+ indicates you are invited to stand
Bold print indicates congregation in unison

Prelude

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice
Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow

J.S. Bach
William Farley Smith

Lighting of the Christ Candle

One: Tonight we light the center candle, the Christ candle, which symbolizes the hope, peace, joy, and love that Jesus brought into the world.

All: HOPE draws us out of our despair. PEACE guides our feet towards justice. JOY is rooted in God's goodness. And LOVE binds us with God, our fellow humans, and all creation.

One: For a child has been born for us, a son given to us, and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace. Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace to all on earth.

All: The season for watching and waiting is over. Open our hearts this Christmas Eve to receive you joyfully, for Christ is God's gift to the world. Blessed be the name of the Lord. Amen

+Hymn 133 *O Come, All Ye Faithful*

REFLECTIONS

Carla Pratt Keyes

Belonging, Beloved, Delightful

from *The Book of Belonging: Bible Stories for Kind & Contemplative Kids*, by Mariko Clark

THE FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 11:1-4a, 6-9

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see or decide by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge for the poor and decide with equity for the oppressed of the earth.

The wolf shall live with the lamb; the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the lion will feed together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Hymn 123 (*sing seated*) *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*, verses 1, 3 and 4

THE SECOND LESSON: Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and shouting. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. God will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. God will come and save you." Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be opened; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Hymn 384 (*sing seated*) *Soon and Very Soon*, verses 1 - 3

THE THIRD LESSON: Matthew 1:1-17

An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Aram, and Aram the father of Aminadab, and Aminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of King David.

And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Salathiel, and Salathiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, who bore Jesus, who is called the Messiah.

So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations.

Hymn 108 (*sing seated*) *Of the Father's Love Begotten*, verses 1 and 4

THE FOURTH LESSON: Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Anthem

I Saw Three Ships

trad. English, arr. Andy Brooke

*I saw three ships come sailing in on Christmas Day, on Christmas Day
I saw three ships come sailing in on Christmas Day in the morning.
And what was in those ships all three?
Our Saviour Christ and his Lady...
And all the bells on Earth shall ring...
And all the angels in Heaven shall sing...then let us all rejoice again.*

THE FIFTH LESSON: 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 pregnant from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce 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 become pregnant and give birth to 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 given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

Hymn 110 (*sing seated*) *Love Has Come*, verses 1 and 3

THE SIXTH LESSON: Luke 1:46-55

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for God has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant. Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is God's name; indeed, God's mercy is for those who fear God from generation to generation. God has shown strength with God's arm and has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. God has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly; God has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty. God has come to the aid of God's child Israel, in remembrance of God's mercy, according to the promise God made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

+Hymn 100 *Canticle of the Turning*, verses 1, 3 and 4

THE SEVENTH LESSON: Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Caesar 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 in the guest room.

Hymn 121 (*sing seated*) *O Little Town of Bethlehem*, verses 1 and 4

THE EIGHTH LESSON: Luke 2:8-20

Now in that same 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 God 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, and 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, just as it had been told them.

Hymn 113 (*sing seated*) *Angels We Have Heard on High*, verse 1

THE NINTH LESSON: Matthew 2:1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet: 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah, for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.' "

Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

+Hymn 145 *What Child Is This*

+Affirmation of Faith

from John 1

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. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of any human will, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.

+Response **(all sing)**

***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.***

Invitation to the Lord's Table

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving and the Lord's Prayer

One: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them to the Lord.

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

All: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

One: It is right to praise you and rejoice in you, our God and Savior, for you have looked with favor upon your servants. You have seen the proud deserving to be scattered and the desperate needing to be carried, and to all of us you have shown such mercy! Now even those who walk in darkness can see glimmers of your light, for the yoke of their burden you have broken. A child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rest upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

With angels and saints through the ages we rejoice at the good news of this day – the Savior born, the Christ revealed, the child around whom strangers gathered to worship that long-ago night in Bethlehem. Today we gather at this table; hungry people in search of food, lonely people in search of company, thoughtful people in search of meaning, We praise you, God, for the astonishing news that you are with us and for us and hold nothing back from us, not even your own self. We praise you for Jesus - lowly in a manger, yet radiant with heavenly light. He came to make your blessings flow in every heart and every place. More powerful than sin and evil, stronger even than death is Christ's love for us.

All: When we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope.

One: Eternal God, by your Holy Spirit, make us agents of your healing love. In word and deed may we display your glory and tell out your good news. Encourage us, like Jesus, to bind up the brokenhearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, and comfort all who mourn. Help us to cultivate peace among your people. Strengthen us to serve you gladly. And fashion us strangers gathered here into a community so unified and joyous that it will draw others near to praise and partake of you, too. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, who makes us bold to pray together:

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Communion of the People

(Bread is gluten-free and vegan with honey.)

*Please hold your hand flat to receive the bread and take a cup from the tray,
then return to your seat by a side aisle.*

If you cannot easily come forward, we will happily bring the elements to your pew.

After others have been served, please raise your hand to signal us.

Music during Communion

*O Holy Night
Jessie Cooke, soprano*

Adolphe Adam

Prayer after Communion

**Welcome, welcome, Jesus Christ our infant savior,
baby who makes every birth holy.**

**May we, who like the shepherds have witnessed in the stable a new kind of love
return to our work with joy.**

**May we, for whom the heavens have opened to proclaim that God is with us,
go out to be instruments of your peace, day by day. Amen.**

The Candle Lighting

*The candles will be lighted, beginning with the person on the inside aisle.
To keep the wax from dripping, please light your candle from that of your neighbor
and hold your candle upright after it is lighted.*

*During the singing of the final verse, please hold your candle aloft,
extinguishing it upon completion of the carol.*

Hymn 119 (*sing seated*)

**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 the angelic host 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 the virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail the incarnate deity,
pleased in flesh with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"**

**Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"**

Charge and Blessing

+ The Peace

One: The peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also with you.

Postlude

Nun lob, mein' Seel', den Herren (variation 2)

Michael Praetorius

OFFERING TO SUPPORT OUR PASTOR'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Many times neighbors and travelers come through our doors needing assistance. Often we refer them to organizations like Area Congregations Together in Service (ACTS) which GPPC supports financially. ACTS case managers work with clients to assess needs, craft budgets, and offer help with rent, mortgage, and utilities. Occasionally we offer direct assistance: a night in a hotel, a bus ticket, a tank of gas, an electric bill, medicine, a meal. Your gift to the Pastor's Discretionary Fund will enable us to keep making such gifts.



*Tonight any monetary gifts put into the designated wall boxes
beside each door at the back of the Sanctuary
will be contributed to the Pastor's Discretionary Fund.
Monetary gifts and pledges to GPPC may also be given online at
<https://www.ginterparkpc.org/giving>, or by using the QR Code to the left.
Use the drop-down menu to contribute to the Pastor's Discretionary Fund.*

WORSHIP LEADERS: Our director of music is Doug Brown. Lighting the Advent Wreath tonight are Alicia and Wesley Neumann.

POINSETTIAS - Thanks to everyone who purchased a poinsettia to decorate our chancel. If you would like to take your poinsettia home tonight, please do!

HEARING ASSISTANCE DEVICES are available in the Narthex. Please see an usher.

PLEASE JOIN US ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29 AT 11:00AM FOR BRUNCH CHURCH. Jesus Christ's first bed was a manger – a place you typically find food. Still we meet God incarnate at the place we share a meal. We will look for God in one another as we share the Lord's Supper: a feast of bread and cup, eggs and fruit, fellowship, scripture, and prayer around tables in the Fellowship Hall.

ANNOUNCEMENTS about events in the life of GPPC are available through a weekly e-newsletter. If you would like to be added to the distribution, please contact Karen Mitscherlich at ginterparkpc@gmail.com.

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