

Countryside Community Church WORSHIP



Surrogacy ~ Oil paint, charcoal and copper leaf on canvas ~ Hannah Garrity ~ A Sanctified Art LLC ~ sanctifiedart.org

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

December 24, 2024

Order of Worship ~ Candlelight Service
Christmas Eve, 7 p.m. December 24, 2024

† Indicates those places where those who are able are invited to stand.
Text in **bold** indicates places where the congregation is invited to join in response.

Gathering

PRELUDE

WELCOME

Rev. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas

†GATHERING SONG

Hymn #148 *O Come, All Ye Faithful*

†CALL TO WORSHIP & LIGHTING OF ADVENT CANDLE

Irene and Maggie Jones

One: Like the shepherds, we come to the stable,
uncertain of what we have heard and seen,

Many: longing to hear a word of peace and joy.

One: Like the wise ones, we have journeys to make,
gifts to offer, and hope in our hearts,

Many: that this world can change for the better.

One: Here, in the stillness of a winter's night,
we gather to share the light of Christ,
a light that shines in the nightfall.

We gather in the wonder of this night

Many: to share our joy and thanks for new life.

- Lighting of the Advent Wreath - Candles of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love, and Christ Candle -

One: Advent, the season of preparing, is nearly over.

Our waiting is nearly finished.

Now is a time of fulfillment and celebration.

Many: In the darkness of night, we give thanks for light.

One: We light a candle of hope:

hope for ourselves, and for God's beloved world.

We light a candle of peace:

peace in our hearts, and on earth.

We light a candle of joy:

joy to the world, and within our whole being.

We light a candle of love:

the promise of God's love for us, and for all creation.

And now the hour has come and the season is fulfilled.

Many: We light the Christ candle,

the light of the world, the light of possibility. Amen.

✠PASSING THE PEACE

Rev. Sarah Rentzel Jones

Even as the heavens opened and angels spoke, the first word they sang was 'Peace.' Even as confused shepherds came from their hills and flocks, uncertain but hopeful, they greeted each other with 'Peace.'

In the midst of our preparations and excitement, we take a moment to greet one another with a word of peace: peace in this place, peace in our homes, peace in this world..."

One: The Peace of God be With You

Many: And also with you.

✠HYMN OF RESPONSE

Hymn #128 *One Candle Is Lit* (vs. 5)

Hearing the Word

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

Children are invited to the chancel for a Christmas Eve lesson with Heather.

FIRST LESSON: Psalm 96

Reader: Pam Kregg

O sing to the Lord a new song;
sing to the Lord, all the earth.
Sing to the Lord; bless his name;
tell of his salvation from day to day.
Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous works among all the peoples.
For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised;
he is to be revered above all gods.
For all the gods of the peoples are idols,
but the Lord made the heavens.
Honor and majesty are before him;
strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.
Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples,
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.
Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;
bring an offering, and come into his courts.
Worship the Lord in holy splendor;
tremble before him, all the earth.
Say among the nations, "The Lord is king!
The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved.
He will judge the peoples with equity."
Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;
let the sea roar and all that fills it;
let the field exult and everything in it.
Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy
before the Lord, for he is coming,
for he is coming to judge the earth.
He will judge the world with righteousness
and the peoples with his truth.

SECOND LESSON: Luke 2:1-20

Rev. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas

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. 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 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, 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.

MESSAGE*How Does a Weary World Rejoice? We Make Room**Responding to the Word***PASTORAL PRAYER & THE LORD'S PRAYER**

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your 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.

MUSICAL REFLECTION

O Holy Night
C4 Choir and congregation as invited

Adolphe Adam arr. Jay Rouse

SHARING OUR GIFTS

Rev. Sarah Rentzel Jones

The Social Justice and Outreach Board has designated the Food Bank for the Heartland as the recipient of December's Box donations as well as our special Christmas offering.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (unison)

With these gifts, dear God,

**accept the praise and thanksgiving of our hearts,
which rejoice in your goodness and love.**

**Let our gifts point to your presence in the world,
and further your dream for the world
through Jesus, Emmanuel, God-with-us. Amen.**

Sharing the Light of Christ, and the Love of God

The lighting of candles is a common tradition on Christmas Eve. We will pass the light from the front of the congregation (starting from the Christ candle) throughout the sanctuary while the introduction of *Silent Night* plays quietly. As the light is shared from hand to hand, candle to candle, we also share God's love with each other and as the Church become the light of Christ that shines in the dark.

(Please light your candle from your neighbors and then allow the next person to do the same.

Please use care in handling lit candles to prevent wax dripping on the pews, carpet, and slate floors.

Baskets are available in the Foyer to deposit candles after the service.

There are battery operated candles for those who desire it. Please wave your hands and an usher will bring you a candle.)

One: May the light of Christ live in your hearts.

May the life of Christ shine through you as light to the world.

May the love of Christ be born within you this night.

Many: Christ is born! Emmanuel! God is with us. Amen.

†SENDING HYMN

Hymn #145 *Silent Night, Holy Night*

BLESSING AND BENEDICTION

From this house to yours,
may you share in the gifts of this season.
May love, the promise of generations, attend you.
Joy, the gift of life together, fill you.
Peace, the desire of neighbor and nations, find you.
Hope, the horizon of faith, sustain you.
And in the midst of a weary world,
may you rejoice --for the light has come!
Emmanuel, God is with us!
Merry Christmas!

POSTLUDE

C4 Choir: Adam Witte, director - Alex Ritter, organ and piano

Christmas Eve Flowers

The altar flowers were given by Cathy and Rick MacInnes,
along with their daughters and sons-in-law - Alissa and Beau and Amy and Dan -
in loving memory of Charles "Mac" MacInnes.

Countryside Christmas Offering





How does a weary world rejoice? We Make Room

There is Room

The world may feel like one long stretch of night,
like an endless winter, or a hovering rain cloud.

And life may feel like walking into the wind,
an uphill climb in every direction,

but we can still open the door.

We can't calm every storm,
but we can turn on the porch lights.

We can add chairs to the table.

We can keep clean sheets on the guest bed, just
in case.

We can hold the elevator,
and learn pronouns.

We can tell stories of belonging,
and take turns listening.

We can learn each other's names,
and plant trees for our children.

We can study privilege
and advocate for mental health.

We can insist,
every single day,
in a million different ways:

there is room,

there is room,

there is room for you here.

We can't calm every storm,
but we can turn on the porch lights.