



First Presbyterian

CHURCH OF EASTON



A Service for the Worship of God

December 25, 2022

Christmas Day

**Indicates an invitation to rise in body and/or spirit as you are able.*

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP GOD

TOWER BELLS

PRELUDE

Of the Father's Love Begotten (Hymn 309)

Matthew Weston

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

In the name of our God, Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit:
we lift our voices with the angels in the heavens:

Alleluia! Our God is now here!

In the name of our God, Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit:
we lift our voices with the shepherds in the fields:

Alleluia! Our God is now here! Amen.

*HYMN 28 (V.1-3)

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

Good Christian friends, rejoice
With heart, and soul, and voice;
Give ye heed to what we say:
Jesus Christ is born today;
Ox and ass before Him bow,
And He is in the manger now.
Christ is born today!
Christ is born today!

Good Christian friends, rejoice
With heart, and soul, and voice;
Now ye hear of endless bliss:
Jesus Christ was born for this!
He hath opened heaven's door,
And we are blest forevermore.
Christ was born for this!
Christ was born for this!

Good Christian friends, rejoice
With heart, and soul, and voice;
Now ye need not fear the grave:
Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all
To gain the everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save!
Christ was born to save!

WE CELEBRATE THE BIRTH OF JESUS WITH MARY

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 1:26-45

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end." "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail." "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!"

REFLECTION

PRAYER *(in unison)*

**Faithful God, you chose Mary, full of grace,
to be the mother of our Sovereign and Savior, Jesus Christ.
Fill us with your grace, that we may understand your ways,
rejoice in your love, and embrace your will. Amen.**

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!

Why lies he in such mean estate
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here
The silent Word is pleading.
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, one to all, 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!

WE CELEBRATE THE BIRTH OF JESUS WITH JOSEPH

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 1:18-24

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 fulfil 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.

REFLECTION

I see the hands of Joseph.
Back and forth along bare wood they move.
There is worry in those working hands,
sorting out confusing thoughts with every stroke.
“How can this be, my beautiful Mary now with child?”
Rough with deep splinters, these hands,
small, painful splinters like tiny crosses
embedded deeply in this choice to stay with her.
He could have closed his hands to her,
said, “No” and let her go to stoning.
But, dear Joseph opened both his heart and hands
to this mother and her child.
Preparing in these days before
with working hands
and wood pressed tight between them.
It is these rough hands that will open
and be the first to hold the Child.

PRAYER (*in unison*)

**Faithful God, you chose Joseph, full of compassion
to parent our Sovereign and Savior, Jesus Christ, as his earthly father.
Fill us too with your kindness, that we may exhibit your wisdom,
make choices which reflect your love,
and embrace your call to do what is right even in difficult situations. Amen.**

*HYMN 23 (V.1-3)

Angels We Have Heard on High

Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o’er the plains,
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains.

Gloria in excelsis Deo;
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heavenly song?

Gloria in excelsis Deo;
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

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

Gloria in excelsis Deo;
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

WE CELEBRATE ANGELS AND SHEPHERDS

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 2:4-20

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. 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." 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 up 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.

REFLECTION

PRAYER *(in unison)*

**Faithful God, you chose angels and shepherds
To announce the birth of our Sovereign and Savior, Jesus Christ.
Remind us that we are also called to be witnesses to the coming of Christ,
when we feel shiny and heavenly like your angels,
and when we feel dusty and tired like working shepherds.
Help us to find our voice, to speak up about your love and your desire
for a good and welcoming world.
Help us to sing the good news of Jesus! Amen.**

*HYMN 29 (V. 1-3)

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

Refrain:

Go, tell it on the mountain
Over the hills and everywhere;
Go, tell it on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born!

While shepherds kept their watching
O'er silent flocks by night,
Behold through out the heavens
There shone a holy light.

Refrain

The shepherds feared and trembled
When lo! above the earth,
Rang out the angel chorus
That hailed our Savior's birth.

Refrain

Down in a lowly manger
The humble Christ was born,
And God sent us salvation
That blessed Christmas morn.

Refrain

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice (Hymn 28)

Matthew Weston

The flowers on the communion table are given by Jason and Andrew Lesonick.

~*~*~

Worship Leaders

Rev. Stefanie Muntzel

Gloria Snyder, Organist

Elizabeth Campbell, Chancel Choir Director

Caitlin Omaboe-Mensah, Liturgist

Tech Support: Jacob Van Norman, Bill Bartlett, Rich Linnell, Pat Koefoed, Luke McGloughlin

* Music reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE. All rights reserved. License #A-719535

The Hands of Joseph, written by Catherine Alder, can be found in its entirety on *Journey with Jesus*,
<http://www.journeywithjesus.net>.

*Each Sunday we sing hymns taken from the blue hymnal provided for you in the pew where you are seated.
Though we print the lyrics to the hymns in the bulletin, we encourage you to turn to the hymnal so you can also
read the accompanying music.*