

Christmas Eve



CARMICHAEL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

*"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulders and his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."
-Isaiah 9:6*

December 24, 2024

5:00 p.m.

As you enter the Sanctuary, all children are encouraged to choose a figure from the nativity scene in the narthex.

At the designated times during the service, children may place their figures in the Bethlehem village at the front of the church.

PASTORAL WELCOME

(Childcare for children up to age 4 is available in Room 102)

Pastor Ivan N, Herman

PRELUDE

"I Wonder as I Wander"

Trina Spivack, Piano

Appalachian melody

arr. Molly Ijames

* CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor Keith L. DeVries

Pastor: Rejoice! I bring good news for all people.

People: Unto us a child is born. Alleluia!

Pastor: Tonight the angels sing on earth.

People: Glory to God in the highest!

* CAROL OF PRAISE

"O Come, All Ye Faithful"

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!

O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels; sing in exultation; sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!

Glory to God, all glory in the highest!

O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning; Jesus, to thee be all glory given;

Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing!

O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!

CONFESSION AND PARDON

Pastor: The angels proclaim good news for all. Let us confess the sins that keep us from glorifying and enjoying our God.

All: Gracious God, you call us to celebrate, yet we struggle to find hope in the suffering and despair of our world. What reason is there to rejoice? We turn from each other and from you, questioning the power of love in the face of the world's cruelty and hate. Comfort your people, sovereign God. Return us to the faith born this night. Save us from hopelessness. May the promise and possibility of every newborn child remind us of the salvation we have in Jesus Christ.

Silence

Pastor: The steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting. Know that you are forgiven and be at peace. (Psalm 103:17)

People: Amen.

The Christmas Story

Told in the Reading of Scripture and the Singing of Carols

LESSON ONE

Isaiah 9:2-6

CAROL

"It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"

It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth, to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heaven's all-gracious King":
the world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come, with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heavenly music floats o'er all the weary world:
above its sad and lowly plains they bend on hovering wing,
and ever o'er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.

Yet with the woes of sin and strife the world has suffered long;
beneath the heavenly hymn have rolled two thousand years of wrong;
and we at war on earth hear not the tidings that they bring;
O, hush the noise and cease the strife to hear the angels sing!

And you, beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow,
look now, for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing:
O, rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing.

For lo, the days are hastening on, by prophets seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold,
when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
and the whole world give back the song which now the angels sing.

CAROL

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"
(The animals are placed in the manger, except the camel and donkey.)

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
 Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
 Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
 The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary; and gathered all above,
 While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
 O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth!
 And praises sing to God the King, and peace to all on earth.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
 Cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
 We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
 O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!

SONG

"Wait for the Lord"

Jacques Berthier

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.
 Wait for the Lord; be strong; take heart!

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.
 Wait for the Lord; be strong; take heart!

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.
 Wait for the Lord; be strong; take heart!

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT AND CHRIST CANDLES

The Moborez Family

RESPONSIVE READING FROM THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Reader: "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.

People: 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.

Reader: 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."

Sanctuary Choir; Susan Herman, flute

*What child shall come this holy night and bring God's love forever?
Will all behold the shining light and sing with joy together?*

*This, this is Christ the King whom shepherds guard and angels sing
Haste, haste, to bring Him laud, the Babe, the Son of Mary (sing we noel, sing we noel)*

*What child shall come to set us free, the promise of salvation?
And bring for all eternity God's peace to all creation?
Emmanuel, the Lord and King! Emmanuel, rejoice and sing!*

*What child shall come this night to dwell? (sing we noel, sing we noel)
What child shall come this night to dwell? (sing we noel, sing we noel)
The Lord, Emmanuel*

CAROL

"Love Has Come"**(Mary, Joseph, and the donkey are placed.)**

Love has come: a light in the darkness!
Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it;
hear how their song of joy arises:
Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior!
Love! Love! Glory to God on high.

Love is born! Come, share in the wonder.
Love is God now asleep in the hay.
See the glow in the eyes of his mother;
what is the name her heart is saying?
Love! Love! Love is the name she whispers.
Love! Love! Jesus, Emmanuel.

Love has come and never will leave us!
Love is life everlasting and free.
Love is Jesus within and among us.
Love is the peace our hearts are seeking.
Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas.
Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

LESSON THREE

Luke 2:1-7

CAROL

"Away in a Manger"**(Jesus, the Christmas Star and other stars are placed.)**

Away in a manger, no crib for His bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the poor Baby wakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.
I love Thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky,
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
And fit us for heaven to live with Thee there.

CHRISTMAS PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Pastor: God of Advent blessings and Christmas hope, we welcome the Christ child anew, grateful for all the ways you are present to us and with us.

Silence

Pastor: As we read of angels appearing to the shepherds, proclaiming good news of great joy for all the people, we rejoice at the birth of our Savior. Christ gives us good reason to celebrate; the joy of Jesus' birth helps us resist despair, even in the face of harsh realities. We thank you, God, for the joys to be experienced this Christmas: the delight of children, the beauty of decorated homes and sanctuaries, the comfort of delicious food, the exchange of gifts. Fill our hearts with joy, so we may overflow with love for your people.

Silence

Pastor: Savior, you break into our lives this Christmas as the embodiment of good news for all people. Your love is all inclusive. Your table is wide and long and there is always room to pull up another chair. Your hospitality is inspiring. Help us love our neighbors as you love us. In a day full of discord and division, lead us in your path of peace and teach us to share your grace. Let us learn to welcome each other as our Savior welcomes every child, open to the possibilities that might be born through authentic, loving relationships.

Silence

Pastor: O Key of David, O Radiant Dawn, O Root of Jesse, O Emmanuel, hear our prayers for those in pain, those who grieve, those in need of healing and restoration. May all who suffer be assured of your extravagant grace and comforted by the hope that nothing shall separate them from your love. Hear our prayers for those who are weak and weary, those who stumble through their days unable to recognize the beauty and meaning of life. May those who are unemployed, those who are struggling financially, those suffering under the crushing weight of debt, find your way out of no way. Grant them options, God. Grant them hope.

Silence

Pastor: Emmanuel, as you come to us again this Christmas, may the light of your star illuminate the world with your grace and peace. May the miracle of your birth fill us with the faith necessary for the challenges ahead. May the hope of this precious day help us to hope every day.

Silence

Pastor: Finally, hear us now, as we pray the prayer Christ taught us by saying 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.

CHRISTMAS OFFERING AND PRAYER

OFFERTORY

"O, Holy Night"

Adolphe Adam

(in English, Spanish, and Arabic)

Noor Bitar, Beth Lindley, Ivan Herman, and Susan Herman

JOYFUL GOOD NEWS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Pastor Ivan N. Herman

CAROL

**“Angels from the Realms of Glory”
(Angels and shepherds are placed.)**

Angels, from the realms of glory, wing your flight o'er all the earth;
you, who sang creation's story, now proclaim Messiah's birth:
come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king!

Shepherds, in the fields abiding, watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing; yonder shines the infant light:
come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king!

Sages, leave your contemplations; brighter visions beam afar;
seek the great desire of nations; you have seen his natal star:
come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king!

All creation, join in praising God the Father, Spirit, Son,
evermore your voices raising to the eternal Three in One:
come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king!

LESSON FIVE

Luke 2:15-20

ANTHEM

**“O Jesu Sweet”
Sanctuary Choir**

Samuel Scheidt

*O Jesu sweet, O Jesu mild, O holy Babe, thou blessed Child
From heaven on high to earth come down, in Thee our peace, our joy is found,
O Jesu sweet O Jesus mild!*

*O Jesu sweet, O Jesu dear, Thy holy mother watches near, God's child Thou art!
O heaven blest, all hope, all life in Thee we rest.
O Jesu sweet, O Jesus mild!*

LESSON SIX

Matthew 2:1-11

CAROL

**“We Three Kings of Orient Are”
(The kings and camels are placed.)**

We three kings of Orient are, bearing gifts we traverse afar,
Field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star.
O star of wonder, star of night, Star with royal beauty bright;
Westward leading, still proceeding, Guide us to thy perfect light!
Born a King on Bethlehem's plain, gold I bring to crown Him again,
King forever, ceasing never over us all to reign.

O star of wonder, star of night, Star with royal beauty bright;
Westward leading, still proceeding, Guide us to thy perfect light!

Frankincense to offer have I: incense owns a Deity nigh;
Prayer and praising we are raising, worshiping God Most High.

O star of wonder, star of night, Star with royal beauty bright;
Westward leading, still proceeding, Guide us to thy perfect light!

Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume breathes a life of gathering gloom;
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying, sealed in the stone-cold tomb.

O star of wonder, star of night, Star with royal beauty bright;
Westward leading, still proceeding, Guide us to thy perfect light!

Glorious now behold Him arise, King and God and Sacrifice;
Alleluia, alleluia sounds through the earth and skies.

O star of wonder, star of night, Star with royal beauty bright;
Westward leading, still proceeding, Guide us to thy perfect light!

LITANY FOR LIGHTING CANDLES

Pastor: In the beginning and in the midst of darkness, God spoke.

People: Let there be light.

Pastor: In the beginning was the Word. And the Word came and dwelt among us. And the Word was the light of all peoples.

People: Let there be light.

Pastor: We light our candles, knowing that the One who is the source and promise of all light is the One whose birth we celebrate.

People: Let there be light.

Pastor: We need to know that we are part of something greater than the flicker of our own little candles. We long to be assured that the light of Christ is with us in every moment.

People: Let there be light.

Pastor: So we light our candles in gratitude for the love and light that shine through the babe born in Bethlehem who became the Redeemer of us all.

People: Let there be light.

Pastor: May we be bold to share the love of God with a world longing for light and hope, purpose, and love. May our actions and generosity shine bright.

People: Let there be light.

Jesus is the light of the world. As His followers, we are called to receive His light and carry Him into the darkness of today.

Watch the light change as each of us receives the light of Christ.

CAROL

"Silent Night"

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.

BENEDICTION

* CONGREGATION LEAVES IN SILENCE

* Please stand if you are able.

Christmas Eve 2024

Instructions for Lighting Your Candle

As we reflect upon the light of God's love which is revealed to us in the birth of Jesus Christ, we light candles to remind us that God's love brings light in the darkness. Tonight, just prior to singing "Silent Night," all of the lights in the Sanctuary will be turned off. **When Pastor Keith and Pastor Ivan turn on their candles, you are invited to turn on your candle using the switch at the bottom symbolizing how the light of God's love comes into the world.** Please turn off your candle following the benediction and place it in a basket as you exit.

Silent Night, Holy Night

This Christmas hymn was originally written by Joseph Mohr for a Christmas festival at St. Nicholas Church, Oberndorf, near Salzburg, Austria. The story is told that the organ was not functioning the day of the service and Mohr decided to write a new hymn that would not require organ accompaniment. He took it to his friend, Franz Xaver Gruber, and asked him to write a suitable tune. The two sang the new hymn as Gruber accompanied on the guitar. The village choir joined in, repeating the last line of each stanza in four-part harmony. As we sing this hymn tonight, may we lift our voices in prayerful praise with those who have been singing this hymn since 1831.

Special Thanks

We extend our gratitude to our excellent musicians and audio/visual technicians for their dedication and hard work and for sharing their gifts with us during the season of Advent and Christmas. We especially thank CPC's Director of Music Keith Atwater, Pianist Trina Spivack, and the Sanctuary Choir as they lead us in singing and praise this evening.

Please Join Us for Worship

If you do not already have a church home, we invite you to call Carmichael Presbyterian your church home. ALL are welcome to worship on Sundays at 10:00 a.m. in-person or online via YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/@carmichaelpres>).

Call to Worship from Feasting on the Word Worship Companion, © Westminster John Knox Press 2013.
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CARMICHAEL
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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