

A Festival of Lessons and Carols

The Eve of Christ's Birth 2019 6:00 p.m.



Prélude Carol Medley

arr. B. Thoreson

*The Bidding Prayer

*Processional Carol 140 Once in Royal David's City Cecil Alexander, 1848

*Call to Worship (responsive)

Come, all peoples of the earth, and rejoice!

Let us come to Bethlehem and see what God is doing!

Come, friends of God, and be amazed!

Let us come to the stable and see where God dwells.

Come, all who have long sought the presence and peace of God.

Let us come to the manger and see that God is alive among us.

Come, all who have known darkness.

Let us come to the Christ Child, and see the light of the world.

Let the whole creation sing for joy at the presence of God, who is coming.

God is coming indeed, to judge the earth with righteousness, and all people with love and truth. We come to worship and praise Emmanuel - God with us!

*Carol 133 O Come, All Ye Faithful John Francis Wade, 1740

*Christmas Eve Prayer (pray together)

Good and gracious God, on this holy night you gave us your Son, the Lord of the universe, wrapped in swaddling clothes, the Savior of all, lying in a manger. On this holy night draw us into the mystery of your love. Join our voices with the heavenly host that we may sing your glory on high. Give us a place among the shepherds that we may find the One for whom we have waited: Jesus Christ, the Messiah and Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen!

Lighting the Christ Candle

First Lesson Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

The people who walk in darkness receive the promise of the Messiah.

Carol 129 Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming German Carol, 15th c.

* All who are able are invited to stand.

Second Lesson Micah 5:2, 4-5a

The prophet Micah foretells the glory of Bethlehem.

*Carol 121 O Little Town of Bethlehem Phillips Brooks, 1868

Third Lesson Luke 1:26-38

The angel Gabriel appears to Mary, announcing that she will bear the holy child.

Carol 145 What Child Is This William Chatterton Dix, 1871

Fourth Lesson Luke 2:1-7

Joseph and Mary travel to Bethlehem, where Mary gives birth to Jesus.

Lamb of Christmas Ken Bible, French melody, 13th c.

Fifth Lesson Luke 2:8-14

Angels appear to shepherds in the fields, announcing the birth of the Messiah.

*Carol 113 Angels We Have Heard on High James Chadwick, 1860

Sixth Lesson Luke 2:15-20

The shepherds go to Bethlehem and return, praising God.

Gloria in excelsis Deo Antonio Vivaldi, 1715

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

Invitation to the Table

The peace of the Lord be with you!

And also with you!

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is truly right and our greatest joy to give you thanks and praise, O holy God, creator and ruler of the universe. You created light out of darkness and brought forth life on the earth. You formed us in your image and called us to love and serve you. In the fullness of time you sent your only Son Jesus Christ to be our Savior. In him, your Word, dwelling with you from all eternity, became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth, and we beheld your glory, Emmanuel! Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with the celestial choirs and with all the faithful of every time and place, who forever sing to the glory of your name:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!**

Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us, and upon these your gifts of bread and fruit of the vine, that the bread we break and the cup we bless may be the communion of the body and blood of Christ. By your Spirit make us one with Christ, that we may be one with all who share this feast, united in ministry in every place. With voices united, we are bold to pray:

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.

Words of Institution & Communion of God’s People

O Holy Night J. Dwight & A. Adams

Prayer after Communion (pray together)

Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit, to give ourselves for others as you gave Christ for us. In his name we pray. Amen.

*Carol 122 *Silent Night, Holy Night* Joseph Mohr, 1818
Share the light of Christ as you light your neighbor’s candle; extinguish your candle after the reading of the Seventh Lesson. Place candles in the basket on your way out of the sanctuary.

*Seventh Lesson John 1:1-5, 9-14, 16
The Word of God becomes flesh and lives among us, full of grace and truth.

*Carol 134 *Joy to the World!* Isaac Watts, 1719

*Benediction (responsive)
Having traveled to Bethlehem together and having beheld the child, born a king, and having worshiped him, let us pray using the words of Simeon, a righteous man who looked forward to the consolation of Israel and who beheld the Messiah’s coming:

Lord, let your servants now depart in peace, according to your word; for our eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of your people Israel. Let us go in peace and in joy!

*Postlude

Worship Leaders

Brad Thoreson, organist; FPC Chancel Choir; Ashley Everhart, soloist
Elders Rosa Stanley and David Cooley, communion assistants
The Revs. Lisa and Roy Martin