



**HIGHLANDS UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT
AND
COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE**

DECEMBER 24, 2016

8:00 P.M.

HIGHLANDS UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

"CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT COMMUNION SERVICE"

8 P.M. -- Dec. 24, 2016

GATHERING MUSIC OF CHRISTMAS

PRELUDE

"O Come, O Come Immanuel"
"Gentle Mary Laid Her Child"
Highlands Handbell Choir

WELCOME AND GATHERING

Animals came to prepare your bed.

Come, Lord Jesus, Come!

Shepherds stood guard, marveled and said:

Come, Lord Jesus, Come!

Angels sang to calm your cries.

Come, Lord Jesus, Come!

And all the world gave one great sigh:

Ah, Lord Jesus, you have come!

So the Lord of Hope, the Prince of Peace, the giver of Joy, the King of Love;

came down and crept in beside us.

O come let us adore him.

*LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

The Loerop and Sorrells Family

Sisters and brothers, come this holy night; and let us worship in the increasing light of God's love as we pray:

All: "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."

PRELUDE TO 'JOY TO THE WORLD'

Highlands Handbell Choir

*CAROL OF CHRISTMAS JOY NO. 40 Joy To The World"

*- If comfortable, please stand



***CHRISTMAS PRAYER OF INVOCATION AND FORGIVENESS**

We come to Bethlehem to see tonight. To see a starlit sky. To hear that multitude of angels sing. To see shepherds quake and a baby in a manger in a crude dwelling. Let us pray:

“On this holy night we gather because we can hardly contain our joy at the news of our Savior’s birth. Our Advent expectation and anticipation take the form of a star shining in the night sky. We await, with anxious breath the declaration “It’s Christmas!” Even as we wait we express our sorrow in our sinful sadness and look to this one, born a child and yet a king, to forgive and save us. Amen.”

God loves us this much. Enough to become one of us so that in him we might be saved. Amen.

***THE KYRIE** (TUNE: Infant Holy, Infant Lowly)

**"Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy. Christ have mercy, Christ have mercy upon us.
God, the Lord, the Savior gave us, Jesus Christ is born to save us.
Lord, have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy on us."**

A TIME WITH THE YOUNG CHURCH

“The Little Drummer Boy”

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

**Luke 2:1-20
Matthew 2:1-2, 8-12**

CAROL

**“Mary’s Boy Child”
solo, Linda Hall**

CHRISTMAS EVE MEDITATION

“This Will Be A Sign”



***AFFIRMATION OF OUR FAITH (Unison)**

"We embrace the wide eyed wonder.

We embrace the giddy anticipation.

We embrace the story of a baby's birth in child like faith.

We embrace the good news the angels proclaimed:

Fear not, Do not be afraid Mary, Joseph, Shepherds, Sleeping Babe...

Do not be afraid you who hope, believe, wish that –

that with our God all things are possible;

that even now, unto us a child is born!

Hark! A Herald Angel proclaims to the world:

(Sung) 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 God-head 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!"

**SHARING OUR OFFERINGS, COMMUNION AND THE LIGHT
OF THE WORLD**

WELCOME TO THE TABLE

No longer in a stable, we find the love of God here, this night, on this table.

With humble shepherds of old, with Wise men giving ourselves as gold,

We come to worship, to eat, to drink, and in this place we seek that link,

That binds us to our God above, full born this night in such great love.

GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift not only our hearts, but our souls, our minds and our strength to God.

This is the night your heart bursts open with Joy, this is the evening Grace pours out of heaven, this is the moment when you come to make all things new, ever-creating God. So on this night when heaven reaches down to caress creation with healing, we hear the angel choirs who sang your glory, and with your people in every time and place, hear the good news which is ours:

Choir: "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might, heav'n and earth are full of your glory, Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he, is he who comes in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest"



Holiness is who you are, God of Christmas, and blessings come in Jesus Christ, your Child of Grace. Finding no warm welcome at his birth, he knew the cold shoulder of friends at his death; born in the rude confines of a barn, he knew the suffering of your children; sent to be your Word made flesh, he calls us to follow him into your Kingdom; proclaimed by the prophet as our Prince of Peace, he died in the quagmire of human violence. By his death and resurrection, you have given new life to all creation. So, as we gather on this holiest of nights, Lamb of God, we proclaim that mystery we call faith:

All Sing: (Tune: What Child Is This)

“O Lamb of God, O Holy Child, who takes the sin of the world away; Have mercy on us, lamb so mild, the babe, the Son of Mary.

**This, this, is your body given, your precious blood,
the gift of heaven. Take, eat, for we are one in the babe,
the Son of Mary.”**

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

OUR OFFERING AND COMMUNION FELLOWSHIP

{We will come forward in families and/or small groups to commune together. As we share music, please come down the center aisle and back down the side aisles. We will gather with the Elders, wait for the elements and commune together. You are invited to use a pew envelope for your Christmas offering which will be received on the chancel steps.}

MUSIC DURING COMMUNION

Anthem “On Christmas Night All Christians Sing”

*“On Christmas night all Christians sing, To hear the news the angels bring;
News of great joy, news of great mirth, News of our merciful King's birth.*

*When sin departs before Thy grace, Then life and health come in its place;
Angels and men with joy may sing, All for to see the newborn King.*

*From out of darkness we have light, Which made the angels sing the night;
Glory to God and peace to men, Now and for evermore A-men.”*

Trio “When Mary Sang Her Lullaby” DeFord DeAn Winton, Cindy Sweeney, Nita Birge

*“Darkness fell o'er Bethlehem at last And hastened weary travelers to their rest
The empty streets all silent, All silent was the night,
All silent 'neath the star of stars aglow with heaven's light
Then Mary sang her lullaby of love And cradled in her arms the Holy Child
In that poor and lowly place Hallowed by his grace 'twas a lullaby to comfort all the world
Darkness fell o'er shepherds in the fields Till heaven's joyful tidings were revealed
The angels' song of glory Re-echoed o'er the plains
While in a stable, soft and low, a sweeter song remained
For Mary sang her lullaby of love And cradled in her arms the Holy Child
In that poor and lowly place Hallowed by his grace 'twas a lullaby to comfort all the world
When darkness falls and night besets my soul Her gentle song still sings of brighter hope
Above the voice of sorrow Beyond all bitter tears Echoes of that lullaby linger through the years
When Mary sang her lullaby of love And cradled in her arms the Holy Child
In that poor and lowly place Hallowed by his grace 'twas a lullaby to comfort all the world”*

CAROL NO. 27 "Gentle Mary Laid Her Child"

**Gentle Mary laid her child Lowly in a manger;
There He lay, the undefiled, To the world a stranger.
Such a babe in such a place, Can He be the Savior?
Ask the saved of all the race Who have found His favor.**

**Angels sang about His birth, Wise men sought and found Him;
Heaven's star shone brightly forth, Glory all around Him.
Shepherds saw the wondrous sight, Heard the angels singing;
All the plains were lit that night, All the hills were ringing.**

**Gentle Mary laid her child Lowly in a manger;
He is still the undefiled, But no more a stranger.
Son of God, of humble birth, Beautiful the story;
Praise His name in all the earth, Hail the King of glory!**

CAROL NO. 36 "In The Bleak Midwinter"

**"In the bleak midwinter, Frosty wind made moan, Earth stood hard as iron, Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, Snow on snow, In the bleak midwinter, long ago.**

**Our God, heaven cannot hold Him, Nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away when He comes to reign:
In the bleak midwinter A stable-place sufficed the Lord God incarnate, Jesus Christ.**

**Angels and archangels May have gathered there, Cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;
But His mother only, in her maiden bliss, Worshiped the beloved with a kiss.**

**What can I give Him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man, I would do my part; Yet what I can I give Him: Give my heart.**

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION (responsive)**

At the table we meet you once again, incarnate one.

**For us the babe of Bethlehem has become the bread of life,
the cup of salvation.**

This night of starlight and candle glow and angels singing and shepherds rushing;
Fills us with your love.

May we, this night and always, share the wonder and the love.

Now, as we sing of that Silent, Holy night, bless us once again.

Help us, with the shepherds, to go and announce your presence here.

Alleluia, Amen!



***CAROL AND SHARING OF THE LIGHT NO. 60**

"Silent Night, Holy Night"

(As the worship leader passes you the light, please turn to face the back of the sanctuary.)

**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.**

***BLESSING AND BENEDICTION BEFORE THE NIGHT**

(Baskets for extinguished candles are outside)



Silent Night, Holy Night

WELCOME!! We welcome all who worship with us on this Christmas Eve! We hope that the joy and light of Christmas will be yours on this Holy Night! A Huge thanks tonight all who are providing special music for our service.

OUR CHRISTMAS OFFERING will be received tonight as we come forward for Communion. We appreciate your offerings this night as we, like the Wise Men of old, bring our gifts to the Christ Child. A basket is in front of the chancel steps and 'pew envelopes' are available for your use. Thank you for your gifts for the work of Christ church in the world.

SHARING THE LORD'S SUPPER: In the Presbyterian Church the table is open to all who profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. We invite you to join us in communion. Tonight we will commune by coming forward in small groups which may be families and friends or however you like. Two (2) stations of Elders will hold the bread and the cup. The method of communion is to gather your entire group with the elders, they will then offer each the bread. When **all** have bread, you will be invited to dip your bread into a cup and commune with the words, 'this is Christ's body and blood given for you.' After your entire group has communed we request that you return to your pew down the side aisles. If anyone would rather be served in the pew please indicate this to an elder who is ushering.

After all have been served the Pastor will bring to your pew light from the Christ candle as we sing "Silent Night". You are invited to turn and share the light with others. As we sing you are invited to turn and face the exit as the pastor passes by your pew. We will face the world with the light of Christ in our hands, and after the benediction will extinguish our candles and go out into the world filled with joy and with the light of Christ in our hearts. (Parents please help your children with their candle. A basket is outside the door for your extinguished candle.)

Christmas Sunday Worship: Please join us tomorrow morning at 10 a.m. for our Christmas Sunday worship and Fellowship. Let us remember the reason we share in this joyful celebration of our faith.

A BLESSED CHRISTMAS TO ALL! It is our greatest hope that this service has been a blessing to you and yours and that your Christmas Day will be one of hope filled wonder, grace and peace!

Why Do We Celebrate Communion On Christmas Eve?

"THE CROSS IN THE MANGER"

*If there is no cross in the manger, there is no Christmas.
If the Babe doesn't become an Adult, there is no Bethlehem star.
If there is no commitment in us, there are no Wise Men searching.
If we offer no cup of water, there is no gold, no frankincense, no myrrh.
If there is no praising God's name, there are no angels singing.
If there is no spirit of alleluia, there are no shepherds watching.
If there is no standing up, no speaking out, no risk,
there is no Herod, no flight into Egypt.
If there is no room in our inn, then "Merry Christmas" mocks the Christ Child.
and the Holy Family is just a holiday card, and God will loathe our feasts and festivals.
or if there is no reconciliation, we cannot call Christ "Prince of Peace".
If there is no goodwill towards others, it can all be packed away in boxes for another year.
If there is no forgiveness in us, there is no cause for celebration.
If we cannot go even now unto Golgotha, there is no Christmas in us.
If Christmas is not now, If Christ is not born into the everyday present,
then what is all the noise about?"*

Ann Weems, [Kneeling in Bethlehem](#) (Westminster John Knox Press)