

Christ United Methodist Church

December 24, 2014
A Family Christmas Eve, 9:00 PM

Prelude

Kathy Bame

THE PREPARATION

When God restores our fortune, our dreams will come true.

We will sing "Glory!" to our God; we will rejoice in our Savior's birth.

Our mouths shall be filled with laughter; joy shall chime from our lips.

God has made it clear: those who serve are God's children.

Then we will proclaim: look what the Lord has done.

So others will know beyond any doubt how the Holy One has blessed us with hope.

We wept, now we will cheer "Joy! Joy!" We were lost - now we will run home laughing.

For God has picked us up where we fell; God has kept the promises made so long ago.

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

For weeks we have listened to obscure messages from ancient prophets. In their words we have caught glimpses of the light that is promised. Now, though the wreath is ablaze and all the candles of anticipation have been lit, still there is one last prophecy to hear.

With eyes wide open, ears attuned and hearts unguarded, we gather around the wreath one last time, longing to receive the Word within the words.

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah, Chapter 9, verses 2 to 7.

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

This night these words are fulfilled in our hearing and in our living for the promise of God has come to us. Our lives are the manger in whom the Christ child is born. No longer do we seek light from another source; now the light burns in our hearts and we become love's lamp.

So, we light the candle at the center of our wreath and our faith. We light it in the name of the One who is the light, and, as Mary did so long ago, we name this light Jesus.

SPECIAL MUSIC Silent Night (arr. Bill Holcomb) Himelhan, Bame

FIRST LESSON: John's Prologue

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. (John 1:1-5)

CONGREGATIONAL CAROL "O Come All Ye Faithful" (Vs 1, 3) #234

SECOND LESSON: John the Baptist

I am 'the voice of one shouting in the desert: Get the road ready for the Lord; make a straight path for him to travel! Every valley must be filled up, every hill and mountain leveled off. The winding roads must be made straight, and the rough paths made smooth. All humankind will see God's salvation!' "I baptize you with water, but someone is coming who is much greater than I am. I am not good enough even to untie his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." (Matthew 3:3, 11)

CONGREGATIONAL CAROL "Joy to the World!" (Vs 1-2) #246

THIRD LESSON: Jesus is born

In those days a decree went out from Emperor 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 for them in the inn. (Luke 2:1-7)

CONGREGATIONAL CAROL "There's a Song in the Air" (Vs 1, 2, 4) #249

FOURTH LESSON: The Shepherds In that 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. (Luke 2:8-11)

CONGREGATIONAL CAROL The First Noel (Vs 1) #245

FIFTH LESSON: The Angels

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!” (Luke 2:12-14)

**CONGREGATIONAL CAROL “It Came upon the Midnight Clear”
(Vs 1, 2) #218 “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” (Vs 1, 3) #240**

SIXTH LESSON: The Shepherds go to see the child

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 the shepherds saw him, they told them what the angel had said about the child. All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said. Then, the shepherds went back to their fields, singing praises to God for all they had heard and seen.
(Luke 2:15-17, 18, 20)

**CONGREGATIONAL CAROL Away in a Manger #217
What Child is This? (Vs. 1, 2) #219**

SEVENTH LESSON: Mary ponders

But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart (Luke 2:19)

CONGREGATIONAL CAROL “Silent Night” (Vs. 1, 2, 4) #239

We will take time to light all the individual candles before we begin singing. The candle lighting will begin from one candle being lit from the altar then brought out to each row, from which all the candles in your row will be lit.

BENEDICTION

Eternal God, as you gave yourself in Jesus to redeem us from all selfishness, give yourself through us for the redemption of others; and send us forth into the world, as you brought Jesus into the world, to fashion for yourself a people jealous of their love for you and zealous in their service to neighbor.