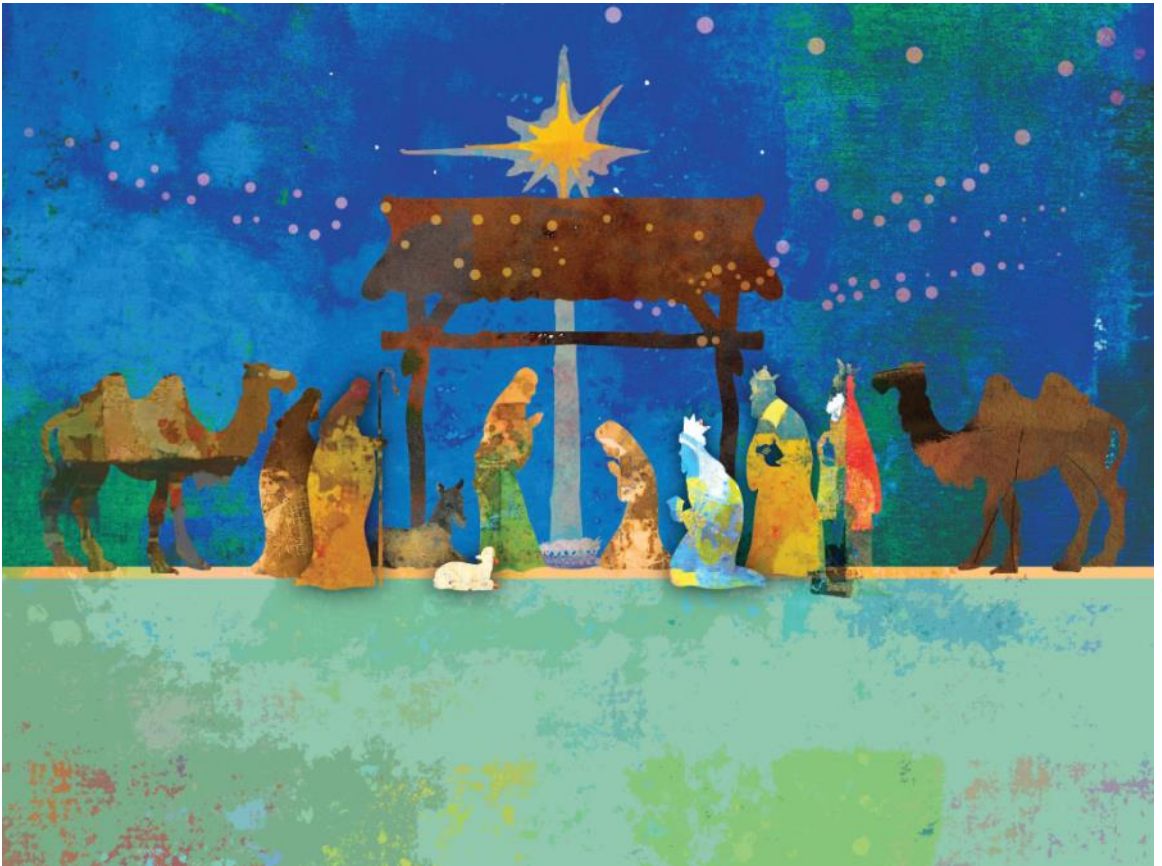


Christmas Eve A Service of Light



December 24, 2022 • 7pm

fpcro 

First Presbyterian Church
of Royal Oak

529 Hendrie Boulevard
Royal Oak, MI 48067
Phone (248) 541-0108
www.fpcro.org

Please silence all devices

PRELUDE

“Improvisation on the Chant *Puer Nobis Est*”
(*A Child Is Born For Us*)

Everett Titcomb
©1938 B.F. Wood Music Co.

“Carol”

Craig Phillips
© 2014 Oxford University Press

“Go, Tell It on the Mountain”

Aaron David Miller
©2014 Oxford University Press

“La Nativité”

(*The Manger, The Angels, The Shepherds, The Holy Family*)

Jean Langlais
©1936 Herelle & Cie.

GREETING

*CALL TO WORSHIP

One: 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. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Rejoice, for God is with us—Emmanuel.

All: In the darkness of our world God’s holy light shines.

One: There is reason to hope, to love, to laugh, to live.

All: God is truly with us. We are not alone! Thanks be to God!

*CAROL #182

“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.”**

THE COMING OF JESUS IS ANNOUNCED

Matthew 1:18-25

CAROL #169, vs. 1-2 “The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came”
 *“The angel Gabriel from heaven came, his
 wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame, “All
 hail,” said he, “O lowly maiden Mary,”
 Most highly favored Mary, gloria!”*

*“For know a blessed mother you shall be, all
 generations praise continually, your
 Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,”
 Most highly favored Mary, gloria!”*

Music Arr. ©1955, Ren. 1983 E.H. Freeman

— Lighting of the Gabriel candle —

THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Luke 2:1-5

CAROL #180, v. 1 “O Little Town of Bethlehem”
 *“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 street shineth the ever-lasting light.
 The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.”*

— Lighting of the Mary and Joseph candles —

JESUS IS BORN

Luke 2:6-7

ANTHEM

“Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day”

*arr. John Rutter;
adapt. Dale Warland*

~Chancel Choir

*“Tomorrow shall be my dancing day: I would my true love did so chance to hear the legend of my play,
to call my true love to my dance: **REFRAIN: Sing O my love; this have I done for my true love.**
Then was I born of a virgin pure, of her I took fleshly substance; thus was I knit to man’s nature, to call
my true love to my dance: **REFRAIN.** In a manger laid and wrapped I was, so very poor, this was my
chance, betwixt an ox and a silly poor ass, to call my true love to my dance: **REFRAIN.** Tomorrow shall
be my dancing day, I would my true love did so chance to hear the legend of my play, to call my true love
to my dance: **REFRAIN.**”*

©1974 Oxford University Press

— Lighting of the Jesus candle —

JESUS' BIRTH IS ANNOUNCED TO THE SHEPHERDS

Luke 2:9-14

CAROL #191, v. 1

“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 men, from heaven’s all gracious King.
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.”*

— Lighting of the angel candles —

THE SHEPHERDS FIND THE BABY JESUS

Luke 2:15-18

CAROL #229 v. 1-2

“The First Noel”

*“The first noel the angels did say was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay.
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep on a cold winter’s night that was so deep.
Noel, noel, noel, noel. Born is the King of Israel”*

— Lighting of the shepherd candles —

MESSAGE

Rev. Emma Nickel

OFFERING OUR LIVES AND GIFTS TO GOD

Offering plates are located by the side aisle doors and in the basket in the narthex. Place gifts there when you depart at the end of the service. Loose offerings and those designated “Christmas Joy” will go to the Presbyterian Church (USA) Christmas Joy Offering. These gifts provide assistance to current and retired church workers and their families in their time of need, and develop our future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

OFFERTORY

“Sussex Carol”

arr. Elaine Hagenberg

~Chancel Choir

“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. Then why should men on earth be sad, since our Redeemer made us glad; when from our sin he set us free, all for to gain our liberty. When sin departs before his grace then life and health come in its place; angels and men with joy may sing, all for to see the newborn king. All out of darkness we have light, which made the angels sing this night, ‘Glory to God in highest heaven, now and for evermore,’ Amen!”

CHRISTMAS PRAYER and THE LORD'S PRAYER

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE and PASSING THE LIGHT **John 1:1-2, 4-5**

The DeVantier Family

One: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. ... 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. Rejoice! God's light has shined upon all of creation. We light the Christ Candle as a sign of good news for all people:

All: God's Messiah has come!

One: Share in the joy of God's new redemption song for our broken world.

All: Alleluia! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

One: Christ, the light of the world, gives each one of us light so that we too may shine with gratitude, hope, and love. Receive the light that comes to you, which is drawn from Christ's light. Share the light and reflect the love of Christ into the world.

*CAROL #186

"Silent Night! Holy 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."***

*CHRISTMAS BLESSING¹

*EXTINGUISHING OF CANDLES *(all blow out candles you are holding)*

*CAROL #179

"Joy to the World!"

***"Joy to the world! The Lord is come: let earth receive her King;
let every heart prepare Him room, and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven and nature sing."***

***“Joy to the world! The Savior reigns: let us our songs employ;
while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.”***

***“No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow; far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.”***

***“He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness, and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love, and wonders, and wonders of his love.”***

***BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE

“Hark! the Herald Angels Sing”

David Willcocks
©1995 Oxford University Press

**Indicates please stand as you are able.*

Readers: Kay Rediers, Jim Demerath, Megan Hanks, Steve Kucharski

**Adapted from a service prepared by Rev. Kathie S Wilkinson/Mt. Sylvan UMC, Copyright ©2009 Kathie Wilkinson.
1 By Kate Bowler from the forthcoming book *The Lives We Actually Have: 100 Blessing for Imperfect Days*.*

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Christmas Day Worship

Worship at 10:30 am. We'll tell the Christmas story through favorite carols.

FPCRO's New Podcast

FPCRO's new podcast *Forging Faith: when spirituality and life collide* launches in mid-January on our website and on Apple podcasts, Spotify, Stitcher, and iHeartRadio. Listen to conversations that show how faith is shaped and stretched amid the challenges life deals us.

Online Giving: Giving online is a fast and easy way to give at FPCRO. Through our PayPal page you may give a one-time gift, or you may set up recurring gifts using a debit/credit card, or your PayPal account. Thank you!



Our church is a Stephen Ministry church. Stephen Ministers are lay caregivers who are trained to provide high-quality confidential, Christ-centered care to people who are hurting.

“The Birth (Near Port William)” by Wendell Berry

They were into the lambing, up late.
Talking and smoking around their lantern,
they squatted in the barn door, left open
so the quiet of the winter night
diminished what they said. The chill
had begun to sink into their clothes.
Now and then they raised their hands
to breathe on them. The youngest one
yawned and shivered.

“Damn,” he said,
“I’d like to be asleep. I’d like to be
curled up in a warm nest like an old
groundhog, and sleep till spring.”

“When I was your age, Billy, it wasn’t
sleep I thought about,” Uncle Stanley said.
“Last few years here I’ve took to sleeping.”

And Raymond said: “To sleep till spring
you’d have to have a trust in things
the way animals do. Been a long time,
I reckon, since people felt safe enough
to sleep more than a night. You might
wake up someplace you didn’t go to sleep at.”

They hushed awhile, as if to let the dark
brood on what they had said. Behind them
a sheep stirred in the bedding and coughed.
It was getting close to midnight.

Later they would move back along the row
of penned ewes, making sure the newborn
lambs were well dried, and had sucked,
and then they would go home cold to bed.
The barn stood between the ridgetop
and the woods along the bluff. Below
was the valley floor and the river
they could not see. They could hear
the wind dragging its underside
through the bare branches of the woods.
And suddenly the wind began to carry
a low singing. They looked across

the lantern at each other’s eyes
and saw they all had heard. They stood,
their huge shadows rising up around them.
The night had changed. They were already
on their way — dry leaves underfoot
and mud under the leaves — to another barn
on down along the woods’ edge,
an old stripping room, where by the light
of the open stove door they saw the man,
and then the woman and the child
lying on a bed of straw on the dirt floor.

“Well, look a there,” the old man said.
“First time this ever happened here.”

And Billy, looking, and looking away,
said: “Howdy. Howdy. Bad night.”

And Raymond said: “There’s a first
time, they say, for everything.”

And that,
he thought, was as reassuring as anything
was likely to be, and as he needed it to be.
They did what they could. Not much.
They brought a piece of rug and some sacks
to ease the hard bed a little, and one
wedged three dollar bills into a crack
in the wall in a noticeable place.
And they stayed on, looking, looking away,
until finally the man said they were well
enough off, and should be left alone.
They went back to their sheep. For a while
longer they squatted by their lantern
and talked, tired, wanting sleep, yet stirred
by wonder — old Stanley too, though he
would not say so.

“Don’t make no difference,” he said
“They’ll have ’em anywhere. Looks like a man
would have a right to be born in bed, if not
die there, but he don’t.”

“But you heard
that singing in the wind,” Billy said.
“What about that?”

“Ghosts. They do that way.”
“Not that way.”

“Scared him, it did.”
The old man laughed. “We’ll have to hold
his damn hand for him, and lead him home.”

“It don’t even bother you,” Billy said.
“You go right on just the same. But you
heard.”

“Now that I’m old I sleep in the dark.
That ain’t what I used to do in it. I heard
something.”

“You heard a good deal more
than you’ll understand,” Raymond said,
“or him or me either.”

They looked at him.
He had, they knew, a talent for unreasonable
belief. He could believe in tomorrow
before it became today — a human enough
failing, and they were tolerant.

He said:
“It’s the old ground trying it again.
Solstice, seeding and birth — it never
gets enough. It wants the birth of a man
to bring together sky and earth, like a stalk
of corn. It’s not death that makes the dead
rise out of the ground, but something alive
straining up, rooted in darkness, like a vine.
That’s what you heard. If you’re in the right
mind
when it happens, it can come on you strong;
you might hear music passing on the wind,
or see a light where there wasn’t one before.”

“Well, how do you know if it amounts to
anything?”

“You don’t. It usually don’t. It would take
a long long time to ever know.”

But that night
and other nights afterwards, up late,
there was a feeling in them — familiar
to them, but always startling in its strength —
like the thought, on a winter night,
of the lambing ewes dry-bedded and fed,
and the thought of the wild creatures warm
asleep in their nests, deep underground.

Christmas Joy Offering

On Christmas Eve you can make a gift to the Christmas Joy Offering. This offering provides assistance to current and retired church workers and their families in their time of need, and develops our future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. This church-wide

Special Offering of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is one way we are a connectional church in the 21st century. It brings together the diversity of the PC (USA) to take faith-based action on shared concerns as we offer a collective witness to Jesus Christ’s love for the whole church



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