



CHRISTMAS

BEGINS WITH

Christ



Fairfield
Presbyterian
PC Church
PCA

**A Christmas Eve Celebration
of
Lessons and Songs
Christmas Eve, 2024**

Prelude

Welcome

Prayer of Invocation and Adoration

Instrumental Introit

Sing We the Song of Emmanuel

Lighting of the Advent Candle

Four Sundays ago we lit the **Prophecy candle** and remembered those who first spoke the promise of the coming Christ child.

🕯️ Three Sundays ago we lit the **Bethlehem candle**, a symbol of the preparations being made to receive and cradle the Christ child.

🕯️🕯️ Two Sundays ago we lit the **Shepherds' candle**, remembering the first in a long line of people who joyfully shared the good news of the Savior's birth.

🕯️🕯️🕯️ This morning we lit the **Angels' candle**, and were reminded of the hope fulfilled in the first coming of our Savior and of our continuing hope as we anticipate his coming again.

🕯️🕯️🕯️🕯️ Tonight the Advent season ends. We wait no longer. That great event for which we waited has happened. God's promise of a Redeemer is fulfilled. Christ Jesus is born. We light the **Christ candle** with praise to our God who brings joy to the world.

***Song – Joy to the World –**

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Joy to the world! The Lord is come:
let earth receive her King;

let every heart prepare him room,
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and nature sing
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

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.

Lesson 1 – Genesis 3:8-15

God tells sinful Adam he has lost his life in Paradise, but that a Redeemer would come in the seed of the woman

And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" ¹⁰ And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." ¹¹ He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" ¹² The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." ¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." ¹⁴ The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. ¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

Song – Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

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Let all mortal flesh keep silence,

and with fear and trembling stand;
ponder nothing earthly minded,
for with blessing in his hand
Christ our Lord to earth descendeth,
our full homage to demand.

Rank on rank the host of heaven
spreads its vanguard on the way.
As the Light of Light descendeth
from the realms of endless day,
that the pow'rs of hell may vanish,
as the darkness clears away.

Lesson 2— Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

The prophet foretells the coming of the Savior

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined....For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.⁷ Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Song — Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus, 196

Come, Thou long expected Jesus
Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us,
Let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel's Strength and Consolation,
Hope of all the earth Thou art;

* Indicates Stand if able

Dear Desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.

Born Thy people to deliver,
Born a child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever,
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.
By Thine own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all sufficient merit,
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.

Lesson 3 — Matthew 1:18-23

The Prophet's words come to pass

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²²All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: ²³"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).

Song – O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

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O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here,
until the Son of God appear.

Refrain:
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, O come, thou Lord of might,
who to thy tribes, on Sinai's height,
in ancient times didst give the law
in cloud and majesty and awe. **[Refrain]**

Lesson 4 — Luke 1:26-35

The angel Gabriel salutes the virgin Mary

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" ²⁹ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴ And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵ And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy - the Son of God.

Song – Special Music

Labor of Love

It was not a silent night
There was blood on the ground
You could hear a woman cry
In the alleyway that night
On the streets of David's town

* Indicates Stand if able

And the stable was not clean
And the cobblestones were cold
And little Mary full of grace
With the tears upon her face
Had no mother's hand to hold

Chorus

*It was a labor of pain
It was a cold sky above
But for the girl
On the ground in the dark
With every beat of her beautiful heart
It was a labor of love*

Noble Joseph by her side
Callused hands and weary eyes
There were no midwives to be found
On the streets of David's town
In the middle of the night

So he held her and he prayed
Shafts of moonlight on his face
But the baby in her womb
He was the Maker of the moon
He was the Author of the faith
That could make the mountains move

*It was a labor of pain
It was a cold sky above
But for the girl
On the ground in the dark
With every beat of her beautiful heart
It was a labor of love*

For little Mary full of grace

With the tears upon her face
It was a labor of love

Andrew Peterson

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Lesson 5 — Luke 2:1-5

The Birth of Jesus according to Luke

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

Song – What Child is This?

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1 What child is this, who, laid to rest,
on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
haste, haste to bring him laud,
the babe, the son of Mary.

2 Why lies he in such mean estate,
where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here
the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear, shall pierce him through;
the cross be borne for me, for you:
hail, hail the Word made flesh,
the babe, the son of Mary.

Lesson 6 — Luke 2:6-14

The Shepherds Hear the Good News from the angels

⁶And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. ⁸And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. ¹⁰And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

Song – Joy Has Dawned

Verse 1

Joy has dawned upon the world
Promised from creation
God's salvation now unfurled
Hope for ev'ry nation
Not with fanfares from above
Not with scenes of glory
But a humble gift of love
Jesus born of Mary

Verse 2

Sounds of wonder fill the sky
With the songs of angels
As the mighty Prince of Life
Shelters in a stable
Hands that set each star in place
Shaped the earth in darkness

Cling now to a mother's breast
Vulnerable and helpless

Verse 3

Shepherds bow before the Lamb
Gazing at the glory
Gifts of men from distant lands
Prophecy the story
Gold a King is born today
Incense God is with us
Myrrh His death will make a way
By His blood He'll win us

Verse 4

Son of Adam Son of heav'n
Given as a ransom
Reconciling God and man
Christ our mighty Champion
What a Savior what a Friend
What a glorious mystery
Once a babe in Bethlehem
Now the Lord of history

Glo – ri – a in excelsis Deo
Glo – ri – a in excelsis De - o!

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Lesson 7 — Luke 2:15-16

The Shepherds go to Bethlehem

¹⁵When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger.

Special Music – Noel, He is Born

A Christmas Meditation

***Song – Glorious Light**

Glorious light! see the dawn of Salvation:
Angels in white fill the skies with their wondrous song;
Awakening earth with news of His birth;
Join the hymn of the highest heavens!

Long has the world fought the song of the angels.
Heavenly music is drowned by a warring world;
Yet hope burns a light, that shatters the night;
Turn your heart to the call of glory!

Glory to God in the highest!
Peace to men on earth.
Come and adore Him with wonder -
Christ Lord of Heaven and earth.

There is a day all creation has longed for -
When all of time has been spent and the Lord returns;
His song we'll repeat as heaven completes;
Promised peace that will fill the nations!

Glory to God in the Highest
Peace to men on earth.
Come and adore Him with wonder -
Christ Lord of Heaven and earth.

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***Lighting of the Candles**

***Song – 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,
heav'nly 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 your birth!
Jesus, Lord, at your 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!

Come On Ring Those Bells

Verse 1

Ev'rybody likes to take a holiday
Ev'rybody likes to take a rest
Spending time together with the family
Sharing lots of love and happiness

Chorus

Come on ring those bells
Light the Christmas tree
Jesus is the King
Born for you and me

Come on ring those bells
Ev'rybody say
Jesus we remember this Your birthday

Verse 2

Celebrations come because of something good
Celebrations we love to recall
Mary had a baby boy in Bethlehem
The greatest celebration of them all

Benediction

CANDY CANE

A Candy maker in Indiana wanted to make a candy that would be a witness, so he made the Christmas Candy Cane. He incorporated several symbols for the birth, ministry and death of Jesus Christ.

He began with a stick of pure white, hard candy. White to symbolize the Virgin Birth and the sinless nature of Jesus, and hard to symbolize the Solid Rock, the foundation of the Church and firmness of the promises of God.

The candy maker made the candy in the form of a “J” to represent the precious name of Jesus, who came to earth as our Savior. It could also represent the staff of the “Good Shepherd” with which He reaches down into the ditches of the world to lift out the fallen lambs who, like all sheep, have gone astray.

Thinking that the candy was somewhat plain, the candy maker stained it with red stripes. He used three small stripes to show the stripes of scourging Jesus received by which we are healed. The large red stripe was for the blood shed by Christ on the cross so that we could have the promises of eternal life. Unfortunately, the candy became known as a Candy Cane, a meaningless decoration

seen at Christmas time. But the meaning is still there for those who “have eyes to see and ears to hear.” May this symbol be used by many to witness to the Wonder of Jesus and His Great Love that came down at Christmas and remains the ultimate and dominant force in the universe today.



Family Fun Christmas Quiz

- When Joseph and Mary traveled to Bethlehem,
 - They both rode on a donkey
 - Joseph walked, Mary rode
 - They both walked, the donkey carried their bags
 - We don't know how they got there
- What was the hometown of Joseph?
 - Johannesburg
 - Jerusalem
 - Nazareth
 - Bethlehem
- When they got to the inn, the inn keeper said,
 - We have no more rooms here
 - We have no rooms but you can use the stable
 - We have no rooms but the Hyatt has some vacancies
 - We don't know what he said
- When Jesus was born, he was put in a manger. A manger is:
 - A stable
 - A plastic child carrier
 - A food box for animals
 - None of the above
- Where Jesus was born there were also:
 - Cows only
 - Cows and sheep
 - Cows, sheep and pigs
 - We don't know
- When the shepherds saw a "heavenly host" they were looking at:
 - An angelic choir
 - An unusual electrical storm
 - An army from heaven
 - A friendly inn keeper
- How many wise men were there?
 - 3
 - 13
 - 30
 - We don't know
- What gifts did they bring to then newborn king?
- The wise men came from the east
 - On camels
 - In chariots
 - On a sled pulled by a reindeer
 - None of the above
- The wise men were:
 - From the orient
 - From Baghdad
 - From Mardi Gras
 - None of the above

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SAINT NICHOLAS



The real story of St. Nick is an elaboration of the Dutch custom brought to America by early settlers of New Amsterdam (later named New York by British) Santa Claus was actually a real man. He lived about 400 years after Jesus. He loved Jesus. Nicholas was a Bishop of Myra (in modern Turkey) ca. AD 350.

Bishop Nicholas had a friend who had three daughters, but they could not get married because their father did not have the money for their dowries. So late one night, in secret, Bishop Nicholas threw three bags of gold into their living room. The bags landed in socks that were drying by the fireplace (thus the tradition of stockings hung by the fireplace). Legends were built up around his kindness to children and giving them gifts.

Later the Roman Catholic Church made him a “Saint,” thus Saint Nicholas. Santa Clause is the American pronunciation of *Sinter Klaas*, the Dutch form of Saint Nicholas.

The Santa Claus that we know **today** in America is a result of Clement Moore’s poem, *The Night Before Christmas*, written in the mid 1800’s. This description of Santa Claus was expanded upon by Coca-Cola in a campaign in the early 1900s. Though some regard, he is NOT what Christmas is about. Let us always remember the real **reason for the season. Christ our Savior is born!**



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