

Lake Oconee Presbyterian Church
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
December 24, 2023

Welcome & Announcements: Travis Skillingstad

The Prelude: Amy Reber

Silent Night/Clair de Lune

Franz Gruber/Claude Debussy, arranged by Linda McKechnie

Call to Worship: Isaiah 9:2-7

Invocation

*Carol 208

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;

Chorus

O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord.

God of God, Light of Light;
Lo, he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Very God, begotten, not created; *(chorus)*

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above:
Glory to God in the highest; *(chorus)*

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be all glory giv'n;
Word of the Father, late in flesh appearing; *(chorus)*

First Lesson: Ken & Susan Atkins

Genesis 3:8-15 (ESV)

⁸ *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."*

Carol 194 (vs. 1, 3, and 5)

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.*

(Chorus)

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!*

O come, thou Rod of Jesse, free
Thine own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell thy people save,
And give them vict'ry o'er the grave. *(chorus)*

O come, thou Key of David, come
And open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery. *(chorus)*

Second Lesson: Dick & Terri Forrester

Micah 5:1-5 (ESV)

*Now muster your troops, O daughter of troops;
siege is laid against us;
with a rod they strike the judge of Israel
on the cheek.*

² *But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,
who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to be ruler in Israel,
whose coming forth is from of old,
from ancient days.*

³ *Therefore he shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labor has given birth;
then the rest of his brothers shall return
to the people of Israel.*

⁴ *And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.
And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great
to the ends of the earth.*

⁵ *And he shall be their peace.
When the Assyrian comes into our land
and treads in our palaces,*

*then we will raise against him seven shepherds
and eight princes of men;*

Carol 201

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 streets shineth
The everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary;
And gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together
Proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing to God the King,
And peace to men on earth.

How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming,
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him still,
The dear Christ enters in.

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.

Third Lesson: Bob & Cornealia Patton

Luke 2:1-7 (ESV)

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴ And 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, ⁵ to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. ⁶ And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷ And 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.

Carol 213

What Child Is This

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.

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.

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;
Come, peasant, king, to own him;
The King of kings salvation brings,
Let loving hearts enthrone him.
Raise, raise the song on high,
The virgin sings her lullaby:
Joy, joy for Christ is born,
The babe, the son of Mary.

Fourth Lesson: Mike & Whitney Palombo

Luke 2:8-21 (ESV)

⁸ And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³ And 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!"*

¹⁵ When 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." ¹⁶ And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷ And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰ And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

²¹ And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

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 th'angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Chorus

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 th'incarnate Deity,
Pleased as man with men to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel. (*Chorus*)

Hail, the heav'n born Prince of Peace!
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Ris'n with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that men no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth. (*Chorus*)

Fifth Lesson: Russ & Jan Murray

John 1:1-5; 10-14 (ESV)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴ In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Carol 195

Joy to the World! The Lord Is Come
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.

Joy to the earth! the Savior reigns:
Let men their 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, wonders of his love.

Special Music: presented by Jewell Morrison

Joseph's Lullaby

By Mark Lowery

Christmas Eve Homily: Luke 1:39-56, Pastor Jeff Birch

Choral Anthem: presented by the Chancel Choir

I Give My Song

By Joseph Martin

**Carol 210 (Lighting of the Candles)

**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!

*Benediction

Postlude: Mrs. Amy Reber

**We will turn off all candles at the conclusion of the hymn "Silent Night." Please place your candle in the basket by the exit doors as you leave. We thank you for coming and hope that you will have a Christ filled Christmas.

*Denotes congregation please stand.

All songs covered by CCLI license #1257045



Rev. Jeffrey Birch, Senior Pastor
Rev. Mike Palombo, Assistant Pastor
Mr. Travis Skillingstad, Youth Director
Mrs. Ellen Skillingstad, Children's Ministry Director
Mrs. Amy Reber, Choir Director & Pianist

The joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the perseverance of the magi, the obedience of Joseph and Mary, and the peace of the Christ child be yours this Christmas. And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always. Amen.



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