



Westminster

Presbyterian Church, PCA

Christmas Eve, December 24, 2023

A Service of Lessons and Carols

WPC exists to develop in ourselves and others a passion for the glory of God and the preeminence of Christ in all of life and in all the world, as revealed in the infallible, inerrant Word of God alone.

*** CALL TO WORSHIP**

Oh sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth!
Sing to the LORD, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day.
(*Psalm 96:1-2*)

*** OPENING CAROL #195**

“Joy to the World” (v. 1, 3, 4)

Joy to the world! The Lord is come: let earth receive her King;
Let ev'ry 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.

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.

*** PRAYER OF INVOCATION**

THE FIRST LESSON — THE FALL OF MAN AND THE FIRST PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL

GENESIS 3:1-15

REV. CHAD WATKINS

“Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. 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. But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, ‘Where are you?’ And he said, ‘I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.’ He said, ‘Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?’ The man said, ‘The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.’ 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.’”

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. 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.’”

* **THE CAROL #193**

“Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence”

Let all mortal flesh keep silence, and with fear and trembling stand;
ponder nothing earthly minded, for with blessing in his hand,
Christ our God to earth de-scend-eth, our full homage to demand.

King of kings, yet born of Mary, as of old on earth he stood,
Lord of lords, in human vesture, in the body and the blood,
he will give to all the faithful his own self for heav’n-ly food.

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.

At his feet the six-winged seraph; cherubim, with sleepless eye,
veil their faces to the presence, as with ceaseless voice they cry,
“Al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia, Lord Most High!”

THE SECOND LESSON — THE MESSIAH TO BE BORN OF A VIRGIN AND HE SHALL REIGN

ISAIAH 7:10-14; 9:2, 6-7

MR. DARRIN LYON

“Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, ‘Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.’ But Ahaz said, ‘I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.’ And he said, ‘Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.’”

“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. 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.”

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear.
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.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Dayspring, from on high, and cheer us by thy drawing night;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death’s dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

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

THE THIRD LESSON — THE MESSIAH TO BE BORN IN BETHLEHEM

MICAH 5:2-5a

MR. GREG SMITH

“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 origin is from of old, from ancient days. 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. 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. And he shall be their peace.”

THE FOURTH LESSON — THE ANGEL GABRIEL GREETES THE VIRGIN MARY

LUKE 1:26-38

MR. JASON BELCHER

“In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin’s name was Mary. And he came to her and said, ‘Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!’ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. 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, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.’”

And Mary said to the angel, ‘How will this be, since I am a virgin?’ 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. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.’ and Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.’ And the angel departed from her.”

* **THE CAROL #201**

“O Little Town of Bethlehem” (v. 1-2, 4)

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.

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.

THE FIFTH LESSON — MATTHEW TELLS OF THE BIRTH OF JESUS

MATTHEW 1:18-25

REV. BRENT SADLER

“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. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But 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. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.’ All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: ‘Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel’ (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.”

THE SIXTH LESSON — LUKE RECORDS THE BIRTH OF JESUS

LUKE 2:1-7

MR. DARRIN LYON

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

* THE CAROL #211

“God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen”

God rest you merry, gentlemen, let nothing you dismay,
Remember Christ our Savior was born on Christmas day,
To save us all from Satan’s pow’r when we were gone astray;
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy, O tidings of comfort and joy.

From God our heav’nly Father, a blessed angel came;
and unto certain shepherds brought tidings of the same:
How that in Bethlehem was born the Son of God by name.
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy, O tidings of comfort and joy.

“Fear not, then,” said the angel, “let nothing you affright;
This day is born a Savior of a pure virgin bright,
To free all those who trust in him from Satan’s pow’r and might.”
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy, O tidings of comfort and joy.

The shepherds at those tidings re-joic-ed much in mind,
And left their flocks a-feeding, In tempest, storm, and wind:
And went to Bethlehem straight-way, the Son of God to find.
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy, O tidings of comfort and joy.

THE SEVENTH LESSON — ANGELS ANNOUNCE THE BIRTH OF JESUS TO THE SHEPHERDS

LUKE 2:8-16

MR. GREG SMITH

“And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. 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. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths 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, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!’

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.’ And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger.

* THE CAROL #214

“Angels We Have Heard on High”

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o’er the plains,
And the mountains in reply echo back their joyous strains.
Glo - - -ri-a in ex-cel-sis De-o, Glo - - -ri-a in ex-cel-sis De-o.

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
Say what may the tidings be, which inspire your heav’nly song?
Glo - - -ri-a in ex-cel-sis De-o, Glo - - -ri-a in ex-cel-sis De-o.

Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn King.
Glo - - -ri-a in ex-cel-sis De-o, Glo - - -ri-a in ex-cel-sis De-o.

THE EIGHTH LESSON — THE WISE MEN ARE LED BY THE STAR TO JESUS

MATTHEW 2:1-12

MR. JASON BELCHER

“Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, ‘Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.’ When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, ‘In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: ‘And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.’ Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, ‘Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.’ After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.”

* THE 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.

THE NINTH LESSON — THE WORD BECAME FLESH

JOHN 1:1-14

REV. BRENT SADLER

“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 were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

THE PRAYER — REV. CHAD WATKINS

READING OF SCRIPTURE

TITUS 3:3-7

For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

THE SERMON

“The Gift of God’s Goodness”

Rev. Chad Watkins

* **THE CAROL #210**

“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, 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 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!

THE BENEDICTION

“The LORD bless you and keep you;
the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;
the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.”
(Numbers 6:24-26)

VISITORS:

We are glad you are here with us today and trust you find us warm and friendly. We would love to have you join us for our worship services on Sunday. Our morning service begins at 10:15am and our evening at 5:30pm. If you would like to watch from home you can access the livestream by going to our website www.wpc-pca.com and click on livestream.