

**Christmas Eve
Thursday, Dec. 24, 2015**

Scriptural Meditation

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.
Isaiah 9:6



First Presbyterian Church of Cape Girardeau

Gathering the Family of God~

The Peal of Our Church Bell

Welcome

Pastor Kim Nelson

Greeting One Another with the Peace of Christ

Carol with Congregation (remain seated) *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

#121

All: 1. **O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dream-less 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.**

Women: 2. For Christ is born of Mary; And gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep Their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together Proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing to God the King, And peace to all on earth!

Men: 3. How silently, how silently, The wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts The blessings of His heaven.
No ear may hear His coming, But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him, still the dear Christ enters in.

(1)

All: 4. **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!**



Lighting the Advent and Christmas Candles

After counting the weeks of Advent we have come to Christmas Eve.

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. (Isaiah 9:2)

(Four colored candles are lit first Hope, Peace, Joy and Love, and finally, the Christ candle)

The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. (John 1:9)

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory,

The glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

Advent Wreath Song

He Came Down (adapted from # 137)

All: v. 1) **He came down that we may have hope;**

He came down that we may have hope;

He came down that we may have hope,

Hal-le-lu-jah for-ever more.

v. 2) **He came down that we may have peace;**

He came down that we may have peace;

He came down that we may have peace,

Hal-le-lu-jah for-ever more.

v. 3) **He came down that we may have joy;**

He came down that we may have joy;

He came down that we may have joy,

Hal-le-lu-jah for-ever more.

(2)

v. 4) **He came down that we may have love;
He came down that we may have love;
He came down that we may have love,
Hal-le-lu-jah for-ever more.**

Text: Traditional Cameroon, Music: Traditional Cameroon; trans. & arr. by John Bell
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***Carol with Congregation** *O Come, All Ye Faithful* # 133

**All: 1) 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;**

Refrain:

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

2) **True God from true God, Light from light eternal,
Born of a Virgin, a mortal he comes
Very God, begotten, not created! (Refrain)**

3) **Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
Glory to God, all glory in the highest; (Refrain)**

4) **Yea, Lord we greet thee, born that happy morning,
Jesus, to thee be all glory given;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing; (Refrain)**

***Tonight let us share the joy and meaning of Christmas.
Let us hold this meaning of Christmas close to our hearts forevermore.***

Luke 1:26-35, 38

The angel Gabriel announces to Mary that she will be the mother of Jesus

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth. The angel appeared to Mary, a virgin who was engaged to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. "Greetings, most favored one!" said the angel. "The Lord is with you."

But she was deeply troubled by what the angel said, and wondered what this greeting might mean. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for God has been gracious to you. You shall conceive and bear a son, and you shall give him the name Jesus. He will be great; he will bear the title 'Son of the Most High'. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David, and he will be King over Israel forever. His reign shall have no end."

Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be? I am still a virgin." The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy child to be born will be called 'Son of God'."

Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; as you have spoken, so be it."
Then the angel left her.

Choir

On This Day

by Jonathan Willcocks

- 1) On this day earth shall ring with the song children sing to the Lord, Christ our King, born on earth to save us, him the Father gave us. *Ideo in excelsis Deo!*
- 2) His the doom, ours the mirth; when he came down to earth Bethlehem saw his birth; ox and ass beside him from the cold would hide him. *Ideo in excelsis Deo!*
- 3) God's bright star o'er his head, wise men three to him led; kneel they low by his bed, lay their gifts before him, praise him and adore him. *Ideo in excelsis Deo!*
- 4) On this day angels sing; with their song earth shall ring, praising Christ, heaven's King, born on earth to save us; peace and love he gave us. *Ideo in excelsis Deo!*

Luke 2:1-7

The Birth of Jesus

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Carol

Away in a Manger

115

- a. **Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
The Little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**
- b. **The cattle are lowing; the poor baby wakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.**
- c. **Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
And fit us for heaven to live with thee there.**



Luke 2:8-12

An angel greets the shepherds.

There were some shepherds in that part of the country, keeping watch through the night over their flocks, when suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone over them. They were terrified, but the angel said, "Do not be afraid; I have good news for you. There is great joy coming to all the people" to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. And this is your sign: the baby will be lying wrapped in little strips of cloth, in a manger."

Carol with Congregation *On Christmas Night All Christians Sing* # 112

Solo: On Christmas night all Christians sing, to hear the news the angels bring:
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.

**All: Then why should we on earth be sad, since our Redeemer made us glad;
Then why should we on earth be sad, since our Redeemer made us glad,
When from our sin he set us free, all for to gain our liberty.**

Solo: When sin departs before his grace, then life and health come in its place;
When sin departs before his grace, then life and health comes in its place;
Heaven and earth with joy may sing, all for to see the newborn King.

**All: All out of darkness we have light, which made the angels sing this night;
all out of darkness we have light, which made the angels sing this night.
"Glory to God in highest heaven; peace on earth and good will. Amen!"**



Luke 2:13-14

Many angels sing praises to God.

All at once there was with the angel a great host of heavenly angels, singing praises to God: "Glory to God in highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom God favors."

Carol

Angels We Have Heard on High

#113

**All: 1. Angels we have heard on high, Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply Echoing their joyous strains.**

Refrain: Glo-ri-a in excelsis Deo! Glo-ri-a in excelsis Deo!

**2. Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be Which inspire your heavenly song?**

(Refrain)

**3. Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn King.** (Refrain)

Luke 2:15-16

The shepherds go to Bethlehem.

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Come, we must go straight to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." So they ran and found their way to Mary and Joseph. As was told them, the baby was lying in a manger.

Solo

O Holy Night

composed by Adolphe Adam

Kate Broeckling, soloist



Matthew 2:1-2

The wise men search for the new king.

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."

Choir

What Child is This?

arr. Jonathan Willcocks

(Text: William Chatterton Dix 1837-1898, Music/Tune: English Ballad/*Greensleeves*)

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!

3) 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!

Matthew 2:7

Herod and the wise men.

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."

Carol *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear* (remain seated) #123

- v. 1) 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 all, from heaven’s all-gracious King.”
The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.
- v. 2) Still through the cloven skies they come, with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heavenly music floats o’er all the weary world:
above its sad and lowly plains they bend on hovering wing:
and ever o’er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.
- v.3) Yet with the woes of sin and strife the world has suffered long,
beneath the angel strain have rolled two thousand years of wrong;
and we, at war on earth hear not the tidings which they bring;
O hush the noise, and cease the strife, and hear the angels sing.
- v. 4) And you, beneath life’s crushing load, whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow,
Look now! For glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing;
O rest beside the weary road and hear the angels sing.
- v. 5) For lo! The days are hastening on, by prophets seen of old,
when with the ever circling years shall come the time foretold,
when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
and the whole world give back the song which now the angels sing.

Matthew 2:9-11

The wise men are led by the star to Jesus.

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.

Carol with Congregation *Joy to the World* #134

- All: 1) 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.
- 2) Joy to the earth! The Savior reigns; Let all their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
- 3) 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.

- 4) 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.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1719, Music: attributed to G. F. Handel, 1742, Public Domain

Christmas Message

Pastor Kim Nelson

Sharing of Our Gifts

*God of light, author of salvation, you have given us a gift beyond price—
the gift of your own child, the gift of everlasting life.*

*We join the angels and shepherds this night
to celebrate our great joy as we offer you our gifts—
gifts of our deepest love and thankfulness. Amen.*

Offering

Prayer of Dedication

Offertory Duet *Before the Marvel of this Night* (page 125) Carl Schalk
Peter & Jodi Durow, soloists

Reflection and Meditation

*Like the Wise Men and Shepherds over 2000 years ago
we pause to remember the Child sleeping in the night
and his eternal promise of Goodness and Light.*

Carol with Congregation *Silent Night* # 122

**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!**



One Solitary Life

For over eight decades millions have been inspired by the Christmas message originally expressed in 1926 by Dr. James Allen Francis who wrote:

He was born in an obscure village, the son of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village, where he worked in a carpenter's shop until he was thirty. Then for three years he became a wandering preacher.

He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family or owned a house. He didn't go to college. He never visited a big city. He never travelled two hundred miles from the place where he was born. He did none of those things one usually associates with greatness.

He had no credentials but himself. He was only thirty-three when the tide of public opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. He was turned over to his enemies and went through a mockery of a trial. He was executed by the state. While he was dying, his executioners gambled for his clothing, the only property he had on earth. When he was dead he was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Twenty centuries have come and gone, and today he is the central figure of the human race and the leader of mankind's progress. All the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat, all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man on this earth as much as that *One Solitary Life*.

- All:**
1. **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 the angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!" Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King."**
 2. **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 Godhead see; Hail the incarnate Deity, Pleased in flesh with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel. Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"**
 3. **Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the sun of righteousness! Light and life to all he brings, Risen with healing in His wings. Mild He lays His glory by, Born that we no more may die, Born to raise us from the earth, Born to give us second birth. Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"**

Benediction *Deep Peace* Pastor Kim Nelson
An Irish Blessing

Postlude

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*Please stand, if you are able.
 Electronic aid for the hearing impaired is available from the usher.
 Music printed and recorded for congregational use only under CCLI # 11373529

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We deeply appreciate the many participants in our First Presbyterian Music Ministry program throughout the year. We are pleased to acknowledge:
Children's Choir—Emma Broeckling, Ben Broeckling, Jonah Durow, Nadia Durow, Jacob Harrison, Katherine Harrison, Maybry Shaver

Adult Choir—Will Bahn, Dave Bengston, Stephanie Bengston, Kate Broeckling, Ed Burford, Jean Cairns, Jodi Durow, Peter Durow, Lea Hecht, Harvey Hecht, Peg Hirschburg, Pete Hirschburg, Lizbe Knotte, Riley Kurré+, Alex Mitchell, Sheri Mitchell, Brittany Moleski+, Christopher Morgan+, Pastor Kim Nelson, Rebecca Nelson, Trevor Roberts, Judy Rueseler, Kendall Staggs+, Nate Thomas+, Janna Tuck, Elisa Williamson+, Brucee Woods. (+denotes SEMO Choral Scholar Student)

Handbell Ringers—Kate Broeckling, Jean Cairns, Peter Durow, Julie Harrison, Katherine Harrison, Lea Hecht, Rebecca Nelson, Sheri Mitchell, and Elisa Williamson+

Participating Lay Readers (in order)
 Kate Broeckling, Phil Shaver and Joanna Shaver.

Candlelight Carols

Let us now share the Good News and let our light shine to all.

Please join us for more carols outside in front of the church (weather permitting).

Candles (or glowsticks) are distributed by the ushers at the front door.

Carol # 56 *The First Nowell*

All: 1. **The first Nowell the angel did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay a-keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.**

Refrain: **Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel.**

2. **They looked up and saw a star
Shining in the East beyond them far,
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night.**

Text: English Carol, 17th Century, Music: English Carol, from Sandys' *Christmas Carols*, 1833. Public Domain.

Carol *Go Tell It on the Mountain* **#136**

All—Refrain: **Go, tell it on the mountain, Over the hills and everywhere;
Go, tell it on them mountain That Jesus Christ is born!**

1. **While shepherds kept their watching O'er silent flocks by night,
Behold throughout the heavens There shone a holy light. (Refrain)**
2. **The shepherds feared and trembled When lo! Above the earth,
Rang out the angel chorus That hailed our Savior's birth. (Refrain)**
3. **Down in a lowly manger The humble Christ was born,
And God sent us salvation That blessed Christmas morn. (Refrain)**

Text and Music: African-American Spiritual, Public Domain.