



December 24, 2023
Christmas Eve
Candlelight Service 8:00pm

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December 24, 2023 — 8 p.m.

*The * indicates points in the service where you are invited to stand, if that is comfortable for you. If it is better for you to remain seated, feel free to do so.*

*All are invited to join in speaking when **Bolded** words appear.*

You are invited to join in the responses and sing the hymns.

Gathering

Prelude	<i>Carols of Joy and Wonder</i>	Steven Scott
	<i>O Little Town of Bethlehem</i>	Richard Ellsasser
	<i>On a Quiet Christmas Night</i>	Michael Ryan
	Memorial Ringers	
	<i>Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming</i>	Albin C. Whitworth
	<i>Love Came Down at Christmas</i>	Arnold Sherman
	Memorial Ringers	

Call to Worship

One: There is room for you here. If you're weary and worn, or hopeful and patient.

All: If you're tired and lost, or wrapped up in hope.

One: If you're new to this place, or have been here before.

All: Come in, come in. There is room for you here.

One: The angels are singing,

All: "Be not afraid."

One: The angels are singing,

All: "Good news and great joy!"

One: So come in, come in!

All: There is room for all of us here.

Lighting the Christ Candle

The Miller Family
Matthew, Heidi, Hayley, Jacob, Thomas and Ryan

Opening Prayer (in unison)

Loving Christ, scripture tells us that you were born in a stable because there was no room in the inn. There was no room in the inn for a woman in need, no room in the inn for an innocent baby. Forgive us. We should have learned our lesson by now, but just as others turned their backs on you, we continue to turn our backs on one another. Teach us how to make room for one another. Teach us how to make room for you. Carve out space in our hearts to love as you love, for we do not want to build hostility here. We want to build your promised day. Guide us forward. With hope and honesty we pray, Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness

One: So repeat these words of hope after me:

One: Unto us a child is born.

All: Unto us a child is born.

One: Unto us grace is given.

All: Unto us grace is given.

One: May this good news change the very fabric of our lives.

All: Christ has made room for all of us. Amen.

*Carol

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!**

Welcome and a Christmas Reading

Christmas Carol

Paul Laurence Dunbar

Lessons and Carols

Scripture:

Isaiah 9:2-7

Jennifer Calvelli

Hymn (seated)

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. (refrain) Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come
to thee, O Israel.**

**O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind; bid envy, strife
and discord cease; fill the whole world with heaven's peace. (refrain).**

Scripture:

Luke 2:1-7

Kay Hoge

Anthem

The Star Still Shines

Lloyd Larson

Rejoice, give thanks in joyous praise, lift up your voice and sing. The prophecies have been fulfilled in Christ, the newborn King! The star that shone o'er Bethlehem so many years ago still shines today to light the way. Come, worship Christ, the Lord! 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 out of darkness we have light, which made the angels sing this night; "Glory to God and peace to men, now and forevermore."

Scripture: Luke 2:8-14 Robert Sheneman

Anthem *Sleep, Little Holy Child* Mark L. Williams

Sleep, little holy child, sleep, little precious child, sleep, little wondrous child, sleep. Still, still, still, Jesus rests his head so still. A star shines brightly o'er the manger, keeping him safely free from danger. Still, still, still, Jesus sleeps this night so still. Peace, peace, peace, he slumbers deep in peace while angels all around are singing songs of praise and heavens are ringing. Peace, peace, peace, he slumbers deep in peace.

Margaret Sheneman, flute

Scripture: Luke 2:15-20 Rev. Amy E. S. Lincoln

Anthem *Kneel With the Shepherds* Patti Drennan

Come with the shepherds this silent, holy night. Follow the guiding star, a beam of heaven's light. Walk with the shepherds to where the Christ Child lay. God in a manger asleep on the hay. Kneel with the shepherds, kneel before the King. Look to the heavens where angel voices sing, "Glory in the highest and peace to all on earth." Kneel with the shepherds, behold the Savior's birth. Stay with the shepherds who gaze into the stall. Witness the miracle who brings his love for all

Christmas Reflection *At the Intersection of Weary and Joyful* Rev. Amy E. S. Lincoln

*Affirmation of Faith (in unison)

We believe in a God who makes room for us — who opens the door, pulls up a seat, puts the kettle on, and says, "Tell me everything." We believe that God not only treats us this way but also makes room for our neighbors, for strangers, and for our enemies. Jesus modeled this kind of room-making love when he said, "Let the children come to me," and, "Let me wash your feet," so we try to follow suit. In a world of closed doors, we believe in saying, "There is room for you here."

Responding to God's Word

Offering and Christmas Joy Offering

We invite you to consider giving out of gratitude to God either as we pass the offering plate or by placing your offering in the wooden box hanging on the wall at each exit, scanning the QR code in your pew and/or giving online through the church website at www.flemingtonpres.org, or mailing a check to the church office at 10 East Main Street, Flemington, NJ 08822. We give thanks for your generosity, allowing our mission and ministry together to continue.

Christmas Prayer and the Lord's Prayer (in unison)

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Christ is the Light of the World

Sharing the Light of Christ

Rev. Amy Lincoln

Ushers will carry the flame lit from the Christ Candle to those sitting at the end of each pew. Each person will pass the flame from candle to candle, being careful to keep the lit candles upright. The Chancel Choir will sing "O Holy Night" as the flame is passed. When all have received the light, we will stand for the Christmas Litany and sing "Silent Night."

*Christmas Litany

Leader: In the beginning and in the darkness, God spoke.

All: Let there be light.

Leader: In the beginning was the Word. And the Word came and dwelt among us.
And the Word was the light of all peoples.

All: Let there be light.

Leader: We light our candles, knowing that the One who is the source and promise of all light is the One whose birth we celebrate.

All: Let there be light.

Leader: We are here to seek a little light by which we can see, by which we can live, by which we can love.

All: Let there be light.

Leader: We need to know that we are part of something greater than the flicker of our own little candles. We long to be assured that the light of Christ is with us in every moment.

All: Let there be light.

Leader: So, we light our candles in gratitude for the love and light that shine through the babe born in Bethlehem who became the Redeemer of us all.

All: Let there be light.

Leader: May we be so emboldened as to share the love of God with a world longing for light and hope, purpose, and love. May our actions and generosity shine in a world under the shadow of despair.

All: Let there be light.

Leader: We join the chorus of those whose carols have echoed through the years— "O come to us, abide in us, our Lord, Emmanuel."

All: Let there be light.

*Carol

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, heavenly hosts sing "Alleluia: Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is
born!"

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.

(extinguish candles after singing the carol)

Going into God's World With Joy

*Blessing and Benediction

*Carol

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 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, re-
peat the sounding joy.

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, won-
ders of his love.

Postlude

Repeat the Sounding Joy
Memorial Ringers

Sandra Eithum

Rev. Amy E. S. Lincoln, Pastor
Cindy Hall, Office Manager
Jennifer Miller, Youth Coordinator

J. Jay Smith, Director of Music/Organist
Margaret Sheneman, Director of Handbells
Marion Barry, Sexton
Scott Cleary, audio/video engineer

Christmas Joy Offering

Each year during the Advent and Christmas season, we turn our eyes to Bethlehem and celebrate the wondrous gift of Jesus Christ, our Savior. By giving to the Christmas Joy Offering, you honor this gift by providing assistance to current and retired church workers in their time of need and developing our future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. Please give generously.

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