



Christmas Eve Family Service
December 24, 2023
4:00 p.m. Worship

Our Mission is to share the life, love and joy of Jesus Christ with others

St. Peter's Staff

Pastor: The Rev. Jonathan Suloff
Office Administrator: Lisa Zinar
Music Director: Ya-Jhu Yang

Nursery School Director: Christine Caputo
Sexton: Derrick Hudson

**Phone: 610-828-3098 Email: office.splh@gmail.com
www.StPetersLafayetteHill.org**

**ST. PETER'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
3025 CHURCH ROAD
LAFAYETTE HILL, PENNSYLVANIA**

Phone: 610-828-3098 Fax: 610-828-3232 www.StPetersLafayetteHill.org

Christmas Eve

December 24, 2023

Prelude:

“Wexford Carol”

Traditional Irish carol

Welcome:

Please Stand

CHRISTMAS GREETING

Pastor: Merry Christmas!

Assembly: **Merry Christmas!**

Pastor: Jesus is born!

Assembly: **Born in Bethlehem!**

Pastor: Born for all children!

Assembly: **Let us see the child of Bethlehem!**

THE CONFESSION

Pastor: Gathered in the name of Jesus, let us confess our sin against God and our neighbor.

Please Kneel or be Seated

(Silence for reflection and self-examination.)

Pastor: Most merciful God,

Assembly: **We confess that often we find darkness more comfortable than light. We confess that we find your good news frightening and unsettling, especially when we consider its demands as well as its promises. We confess that Christmas has become more to us than the birthday of the Christ, partly because we do not want a Christ-Child in our lives or in our world. Forgive us, break us, bend us, remake us. Give us the courage to lay ourselves open to the wonder and healing of your coming. Be born again into our world, be born again into our hearts and lives. Hear now our silent and personal confessions as we prepare ourselves for your nativity.**

Pastor: The true light that enlightens all has come into the world. That light shines on in the darkness, and the darkness has never been able to put it out. This is the good news: God has heard our confession. God has forgiven our sin.

Assembly: **Thanks be to God! Amen**

Please Stand

Opening Hymn:

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant! O
2 The high - est, most ho - ly, light of light e - ter - nal,
3 Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,
4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py morn - ing;

come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem;
born of a vir - gin, a mor - tal he comes;
sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heav - en a - bove!
Je - sus, to thee be - glo - ry giv'n!

come and be - hold him, born the king of an - gels;
Son of the Fa - ther now in flesh ap - pear - ing!
Glo - ry to God in the high - est;
Word of the Fa - ther, now in flesh ap - pear - ing;

Refrain
Ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus, ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus,
O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him,

ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus Do - mi - num,
O come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord!

Pastor: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the Communion of the the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Assembly: **And also with you.**

Please be seated

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Choir:

“The Wonder of Christmas”

J. Raney

Pastor: During Advent, we have journeyed in faith toward God’s wondrous gift.

Assembly: **O come, let us adore Him.**

Pastor: During Advent, we stood in awe of God’s saving grace.

Assembly: **O come, let us adore Him.**

Pastor: During Advent, we recalled the promise of God’s spoken word.

Assembly: **O come, let us adore Him.**

Pastor: During Advent, we waited for the time of God’s glorious arrival.

Assembly: **O come, let us adore Him.**

Pastor: Tonight our waiting is over, our eyes are open, and the gift is given.

Assembly: **O come, let us adore Him.**

Pastor: Tonight we light all the candles. The first candle reminds us to recapture the wonder of the season. In the midst of repeated refrains and familiar stories, Advent is a time to be awed by the God who came to restore our world. The second candle calls us to remember the promises of old, that from the dawn of creation all things have unfolded according to God’s redemptive plan. The third candle calls us to listen to the God who still speaks to us today. Advent is a time to hear afresh the joy of God’s reconciling love that beckons us homeward. The fourth candle calls us to reawaken our sense of expectation and behold the miraculous in our day and time. Tonight we light the Christ candle, rejoicing in the Good News of the holy birth, the hope of humanity and the light of the world.

The candles of Advent are lit



Congregation:

JOEL RANEY



There is won - der in the hope of the birth of a
King, there is won - der in the sound of the an - gels as they
sing. O — come, O come, Em - man - u -
el, and join us here.

Pastor: Let us pray. Let us pray. Gracious God, thank you for guiding us throughout this season of wonder. We stand amazed at the promise now fulfilled and awed by your humble birth. Help us receive, again, the joy and wonder of the greatest gift offered to the world. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, our newborn King.

Assembly: **Amen.**

Pastor: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Assembly: **And also with you.**

Please stand



Hymn of Praise:

“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

1 Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, “Glo - ry to the new-born king;
2 Christ, by high - est heav’n a - dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord,
3 Hail the heav’n - born Prince of peace! Hail the Sun of righ - teous - ness!

peace on earth, and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled,”
late in time be - hold him come, off - spring of a vir - gin’s womb.
Light and life to all he brings, ris’n with heal - ing in his wings.

Joy - ful, all you na - tions, rise; join the tri - umph of the skies;
Veiled in flesh the God - head see! Hail, in - car - nate de - i - ty!
Mild he lays his glo - ry by, born that we no more may die,

with an - gel - ic hosts pro - claim, “Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!”
Pleased as man with us to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el!
born to raise each child of earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.

Refrain
Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, “Glo - ry to the new-born king!”

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

Assembly: **And also with you.**

Prayer of the Day:

Pastor: Let us pray.

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Assembly: **Amen.**

Please be seated

CHRISTMAS STORY WITH CAROLS

The story of Christmas begins with a young woman named Mary. Mary loved a man named Joseph. They were going to get married. One day God sent an angel named Gabriel to talk to Mary. At first Mary was scared, but the angel said, "Do not be afraid, Mary. God has a special surprise for you! You are going to have a little baby boy; his name will be Jesus." Mary was very surprised, indeed!

"How can this happen?" she asked the angel. The angel answered, "God's Holy Spirit will come to you and make it happen! Your little baby will be called the Son of God! All this will happen because nothing is impossible for God!" Mary said, "I am ready to serve God; I want it to happen just like you said it would." Then the angel left her.

Later, an angel also appeared to Joseph, while he was sleeping, so that he would also know the wonderful thing that God was doing.

While Mary was pregnant, Joseph had to take a trip to the city of Bethlehem. So Mary and Joseph went on a long journey; Mary rode on a donkey while Joseph walked.

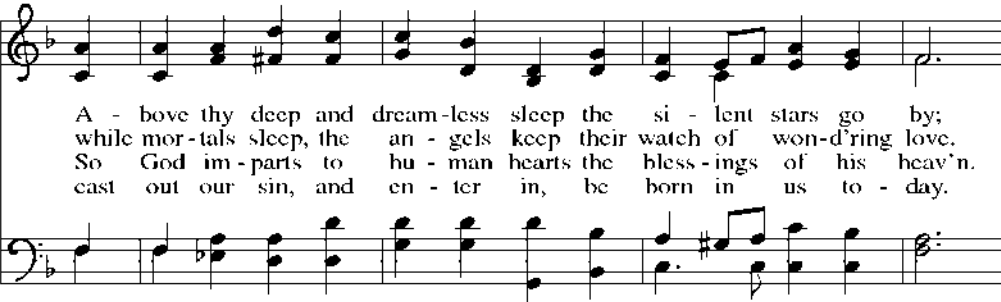


Hymn:

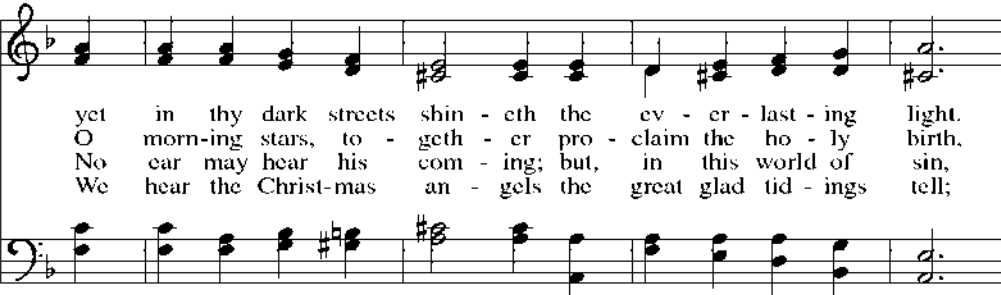
**“O Little Town Of Bethlehem
Verses 1 and 4 Only**




1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!
2 For Christ is born of Mar - y, and, gath - ered all a - bove
3 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is giv'n!
4 O ho - ly child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;



A - bove thy deep and dream - less sleep the si - lent stars go by;
while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - d'ring love.
So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heav'n.
cast out our sin, and en - ter in, be born in us to - day.



yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light.
O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth.
No ear may hear his com - ing; but, in this world of sin,
We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;



The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.
and prais - es sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!
where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.
oh, come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Im - man - u - el!

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835-1893
Music: S.T. LOUIS, Lewis H. Redner, 1831-1908

After their very long journey, Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem. The town was very crowded. Mary and Joseph were very tired, and it was almost time for their baby to be born. They looked for a place to stay, but there were no rooms available. They went from one inn to another. There was no room for them.

One innkeeper said, “There is no room in the inn, but I have a stable. You can stay there.” That night, Jesus was born in the stable. Mary wrapped the baby in strips of cloth and placed him in the manger.

Hymn:

“Away In A Manger”

1 A - way in a man-ger, no crib for his bed, the lit - tle Lord
 2 The cat - tle are low-ing; the ba - by a - wakes, but lit - tle Lord
 3 Be near me, Lord Je - sus; I ask you to stay close by me for -

Je - sus laid down his sweet head; the stars in the bright sky looked
 Je - sus, no cry - ing he makes. I love you, Lord Je - sus; look
 ev - er and love me, I pray. Bless all the dear chil - dren in

down where he lay, the lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.
 down from the sky and stay by my cra - dle till morn-ing is nigh.
 your ten - der care and fit us for heav-en, to live with you there.

Text: North American, 19th cent.
 Music: AWAY IN A MANGER, James R. Murray, 1841-1905

On the night that Jesus was born, there were sheep sleeping in the fields. Shepherds were watching over them. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared in front of them. The shepherds were very frightened, but the angel said, “Do not be afraid. I am bringing you good news. This is happy news for everyone. Today in Bethlehem, God’s Son was born. You can go see him. He is wrapped warm and snug in a manger!”

And then, suddenly, a whole bunch of angels appeared. They filled up the whole sky and they were all singing a beautiful song to God. They were singing “Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth!”

When the angels left, the shepherds said, “Let’s go find this baby!” They hurried to town and found the stable. They saw Mary and Joseph, and the new baby lying in the manger. The shepherds went back to their fields, thanking God. They told everyone what had happened. The people were amazed. Mary always remembered this special time.

Hymn:

“Go Tell It On The Mountain”

Refrain



Go tell it on the moun - tain, o - ver the hills and ev - 'ry - where;



go tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born!



- 1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,
- 2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when, lo, a - bove the earth,
- 3 Down in a lone - ly man - ger the hum - ble Christ was born;



Refrain



be - hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.
rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless - ed Christ - mas morn.



Message:

Pastor Suloff

Solo:

“Mary, Did You Know?”

- Mark Lowry

Please stand

The Apostles’ Creed:

I believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried.

He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession:

Pastor: Trusting in God’s good news of great joy for all people, we offer our prayers for ourselves, our neighbors, and the world God loves.

Please kneel or be seated

(The Prayers of the Church are said)

Pastor: Hear us, O God;

***Assembly:* Your mercy is great.**

Pastor: Abide with us, O God of mercy, and receive our prayers according to your abundant grace.

***Assembly:* Amen**

Please stand

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you.

***Assembly:* And also with you.**

Please Be Seated

Offering:

Musical Offering:

“O Holy Night”

- Adolphe Adam

Please Stand

Offering Hymn:

“What Child is This” (verse 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!

Offering Prayer:

Pastor: God of abundance,
receive and bless these gifts we have offered.
Join our hearts with the song of the angels,
and gather us at your table of celebration.
Strengthen us to share with all the world
the abundance of your grace upon grace,
poured out in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.

People: Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord
our God.

***People:* And also with you**

***People:* We lift them to the Lord.**

***People:* It is right to give God
thanks and praise.**



Pastor: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory, that, beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

“Angels We Have Heard on High” (verse 1)



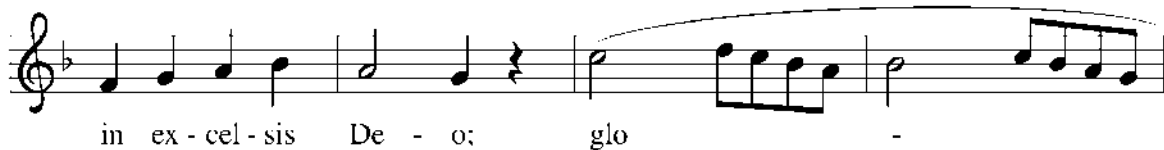
1 An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,
 2 Shep-herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?
 3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;



and the moun-tains in re - ply, ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.
 What the glad - some tid - ings be which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?
 come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born king.



Glo - ri - a



in ex - cel - sis De - o; glo -



ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

Text: French carol; tr. H. E. Hemy. *The Crown of Jesus Music*, 1864
 Music: GLORIA. French carol

Words of Institution

Pastor: In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Pastor: Let us pray in confidence in the words our Savior gave us:
**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 trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us;
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever.
Amen.**

“Infant Holy, Infant Lowly” (verse 1)

*Infant holy, infant lowly,
for his bed a cattle stall;
oxen lowing, little knowing
Christ the child is Lord of all.
Swiftly winging, angels singing,
bells are ringing, tidings bringing:
Christ the child is Lord of all!
Christ the child is Lord of all!*



The Distribution:

All those who believe in the presence of the Lord at the table, are invited to share in the sacrament. If you would like to receive Communion or a blessing from the pastor please join the line in the middle aisle of the sanctuary, receive the bread, and then move to the chalice and dip your wafer in the wine. If you prefer to remain in your pew or are joining us for worship online please take the individual Communion Cup or the elements of your choosing and share them with one another and with the community. If young children are present who have not yet received their First Communion please bring them forward or take a moment and share a blessing with them. All are welcome at the table of the Lord.

Pastor: The body of Christ, given for you.

(At this time receive the bread, cracker, or that which you are using as the body of Christ)

Pastor: The blood of Christ, shed for you.

(At this time receive the wine, juice, water, or that which you are using as the blood of Christ)

Communion Music:



Please Stand

Pastor: May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Assembly: Amen

The Post-Communion Prayer:

Pastor: Let us pray: God of wonder, in Jesus we behold the light of the world come near. As you have come among us now, send us out in joy, hastening to share the good news of your love. We ask this in the name of Jesus, through the Spirit dwelling among us now and forever.

Assembly: Amen.

Post- Communion Hymn: “Good Christian Friends, Rejoice and Sing!” (verse 1)



- 1 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;
- 2 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;
- 3 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;



give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to - day;
now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!
now ye need not fear the grave; Je - sus Christ was born to save!



ox and ass be - fore him bow, and he is in the man - ger now.
He has o - pened heav - en's door, and we are blest for - ev - er - more.
Calls you one and calls you all to gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.



Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

CANDLE LIGHTING

Pastor: The Word was made flesh, and we beheld His glory.
Assembly: **Oh come, let us worship Him.**
Pastor: The people who walk in darkness have seen a great light.
Assembly: **The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**
Pastor: Those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness, on them light has shined.
Assembly: **We have beheld Christ's glory. Glory as of the only Son from the Father.**
Pastor: For unto us a child is born, to us a Son is given.
Assembly: **In Him was life, and the life was the light of humanity!**
Pastor: Today Christ is born! Today salvation has appeared!
Assembly: **Today the just exult and say, "Glory to God in the highest! Alleluia!"**

Pastor: 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 came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

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. From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

As Silent Night begins please take your "light stick", bend it until you hear it "crack". This will make it glow. Then hold it up like a candle and sing along!



“Silent Night”

Stil - le Nacht, hei - li - ge Nacht! Al - les schläft,
 1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm,
 2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake
 3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God.

ein - sam wacht nur das trau - te, hoch - hei - li - ge Paar.
 all is bright round yon vir - gin moth - er and child.
 at the sight; glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far,
 love's pure light ra - diant beams from your ho - ly face,

Hol - der Kna - be im lok - ki - gen Haar, schlaf in himm - li - scher
 Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and mild, sleep in heav - en - ly
 heav'n - ly hosts . . . sing, al - le - lu - ia! Christ, the Sav - ior, is
 with the dawn of re - deem - ing grace, Je - sus, Lord, at your

Ruh, schlaf in himm - li - scher Ruh.
 peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
 born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!
 birth, Je - sus, Lord, at your birth.

The Benediction

Pastor: May Christ, who by His incarnation
has filled us with grace and truth,
give you peace this Christmas and always.
Almighty God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you now and forever.

Assembly: Amen.



SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR CHRISTMAS EVE MUSICIANS!

4 PM Christmas Eve

Caroline Van Pelt
Sheridan Seyfried

8 PM Christmas Eve

Sarah Shoff
William Czartoryski
Kristen Kammerle Hyde
Andrew Kammerle

*Today's special music and musicians are given in loving memory of
Rachelle Shollenberger by her family.*

Closing Hymn:

“Joy To The World”

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re-
2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their
3 No more let sin and sor - row grow nor thorns in -
4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the

ceive her king; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him
songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings
na - tions prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous -

room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture
plains re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing
flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is
ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his
and heav'n and na - ture sing. and

sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
found, far as, far as the curse is found.
love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.
heav'n and na - ture sing.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748
Music: ANTIQUARIAN, English melody, 18th cent.; arr. Lowell Mason, 1792-1872

Pastor: Go in peace to share the life, love, and joy of Jesus with all.

Assembly: Thanks be to God.