



December 24, 2024

*Christmas Eve*

5:30pm

*+ indicates you are invited to stand  
**Bold print** indicates congregation in unison*

LAS POSADAS

Greeting and Explanation of Las Posadas

Carla Pratt Keyes

Prelude

*Silent Night*

Wilbur Held

Lighting of the Christ Candle

One: Tonight we light the center candle, the Christ candle, which symbolizes the hope, peace, joy, and love that Jesus brought into the world.

**All: HOPE draws us out of our despair. PEACE guides our feet towards justice. JOY is rooted in God's goodness. And LOVE binds us with God, our fellow humans, and all creation.**

One: For a child has been born for us, a son given to us, and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace. Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace to all on earth.

**All: The season for watching and waiting is over. Open our hearts this Christmas Eve to receive you joyfully, for Christ is God's gift to the world. Blessed be the name of the Lord. Amen**

+Hymn 137 *He Came Down*

Prayer

Scripture

Micah 5:2-5a (CEB)

As for you, Bethlehem of Ephrathah, though you are the least significant of Judah's forces, one who is to be a ruler in Israel on my behalf will come out from you.

His origin is from remote times, from ancient days.

Therefore, he will give them up until the time when she who is in labor gives birth.

The rest of his kin will return to the people of Israel.

He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD,

in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.

They will dwell secure, because he will surely become great throughout the earth; he will become one of peace.

Hymn 121 (*sing seated*) *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

In those days Caesar Augustus declared that everyone throughout the empire should be enrolled in the tax lists. This first enrollment occurred when Quirinius governed Syria. Everyone went to their own cities to be enrolled. Since Joseph belonged to David’s house and family line, he went up from the city of Nazareth in Galilee to David’s city, called Bethlehem, in Judea. He went to be enrolled together with Mary, who was promised to him in marriage and who was pregnant. While they were there, the time came for Mary to have her baby. She gave birth to her firstborn child, a son, wrapped him snugly, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the guestroom.

THE JOURNEY

*Children meet Carla in the chancel.*

**Sung Response** (sing seated)

tune: traditional Puerto Rican carol, words: Doug Brown

From a dis-tant home, some shel-ter they are seek - ing, They are tired and cold from  
 long and pain-ful trek - king. Lis-ten! At the door, we hear an an-xious  
 knock - ing. Should we let them in or send them a - way walk - ing.

ARRIVAL AT INN #1

Children: We are tired from our long journey. We are hungry and cold and far from home.  
 Will you help us, please! May we stay with you?

**Congregation: Who has come to our door so late at night? Who asks for a place to stay?  
 Sorry, but our inn is already full! We have no room for you tonight.  
 Try someplace else!  
Sung Response**

*“Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking;  
 if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and eat with you, and you with me.” - Rev. 3:20*

ARRIVAL AT INN #2

Children: We are tired from our long journey. We are hungry and cold and far from home.  
 Will you help us, please! May we stay with you?

**Congregation: Who has come to our door so late at night? Who asks for a place to stay?  
 We only have room for family and friends here, and we don’t know you.  
 Leave us alone! Let us sleep!  
Sung Response**

*“He was in the world and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to his own people, but they did not accept him. But to all who received him and believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God” - John 1:10-12*

### ARRIVAL AT INN #3

Children: We are tired from our long journey. We are hungry and cold and far from home.  
Will you help us, please! May we stay with you?

**Congregation: Who has come to our door so late at night? Who asks for a place to stay?  
This inn is expensive, and you don't look like you have enough money to pay!  
Sorry, we can't help you.  
Sung Response**

*"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.  
You shall love your neighbor as yourself." - Matthew 22:37, 39*

### ARRIVAL AT INN #4

Children: We are tired from our long journey. We are hungry and cold and far from home.  
Will you help us, please! May we stay with you?

**Congregation: Enter, Mary and Joseph! Enter, holy pilgrims!  
We will gladly give you lodging.  
There is room in our home and room in our hearts.**

*Children return to the chancel with Carla.*

Hymn 115 (sing seated) *Away in a Manger*

Luke 2:8-20 (CEB)

Nearby shepherds were living in the fields, guarding their sheep at night. The Lord's angel stood before them, the Lord's glory shone around them, and they were terrified.

The angel said, "Don't be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people. Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord. This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great assembly of the heavenly forces was with the angel praising God. They said, "Glory to God in heaven, and on earth peace among those whom God favors."

When the angels returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go right now to Bethlehem and see what's happened. Let's confirm what the Lord has revealed to us." They went quickly and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. When they saw this, they reported what they had been told about this child. Everyone who heard it was amazed at what the shepherds told them. Mary committed these things to memory and considered them carefully. The shepherds returned home, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. Everything happened just as they had been told.

+Hymn 113 *Angels We Have Heard on High*

#### Prayer

One: God of small things, you came among us as a tiny and vulnerable baby,  
open to all who met you.

**All: Teach us to care for the hurt and tender places in our hearts and in the hearts of others;  
help us to nurture your compassion in our world.**

One: We thank you for the love you have shared with us in Jesus Christ, the Light of the world.  
We pray for everyone who needs your light.  
We pray for public leaders, community organizers, police officers,  
and all who are charged with seeking the common good.

**All: Shine upon them and give them peace.**

One: We pray for people who work in hospitals, hotels, restaurants, airports, and bus stations –  
all who work and watch this night;

**All: Shine upon them and give them peace.**

One: We pray for people who are sick and dying, cold and hungry, lonely and grieving,  
in prison, at war, and far from home.

**All: Shine upon them and give them peace.**

One: We pray for families and friends –  
those who are with us, those who are far from us, those who need your guidance,  
and those in our memories, who now live with you;

**All: Shine upon them and give them peace.**

One: We pray for ourselves.

Let there be peace enough in our hearts and minds to receive your good news in light, in word,  
in song, and in the faces of others.

Help us to treasure the blessings of Christmas, and use us to do your work in the world,  
for the sake of Jesus Christ.

**All: Amen.**

+Hymn 134 Joy to the World

+Charge and Blessing

+ The Peace

One: The peace of Christ be with you.

**All: And also with you.**

Postlude

God Rest, Ye Merry

Wilbur Held

OFFERING TO SUPPORT OUR PASTOR'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Many times neighbors and travelers come through our doors needing assistance. Often we refer them to organizations like Area Congregations Together in Service (ACTS) which GPPC supports financially. ACTS case managers work with clients to assess needs, craft budgets, and offer help with rent, mortgage, and utilities. Occasionally we offer direct assistance: a night in a hotel, a bus ticket, a tank of gas, an electric bill, medicine, a meal. Your gift to the Pastor's Discretionary Fund will enable us to keep making such gifts.



*Tonight anything put into the designated wall boxes  
beside each door at the back of the Sanctuary  
will be contributed to the Pastor's Discretionary Fund.*

*Monetary gifts and pledges to GPPC may also be given online at  
<https://www.ginterparkpc.org/giving>, or by using the QR Code to the left.  
Use the drop-down menu to contribute to the Pastor's Discretionary Fund.*

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9:00pm CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT COMMUNION

You are welcome to join us again at 9:00 tonight  
for a quiet service of scripture, hymns, prayer, and communion.

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ADVENT CANDLES are being lit tonight by Michelle, Scott, Mai, and Gabe Owens.

POINSETTIAS - Thanks to everyone who purchased a poinsettia to decorate our chancel. If you would like to take your poinsettia home tonight, please return after tonight's 9:00pm Candlelight Service to do so.

HEARING ASSISTANCE DEVICES are available in the Narthex. Please see today's greeter or an usher.

PLEASE JOIN US ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29 AT 11:00AM FOR BRUNCH CHURCH. Jesus Christ's first bed was a manger – a place you typically find food. Still we meet God incarnate at the place we share a meal. We will look for God in one another as we share the Lord's Supper: a feast of bread and cup, eggs and fruit, fellowship, scripture, and prayer around tables in the Fellowship Hall.

ANNOUNCEMENTS about events in the life of GPPC are available through a weekly e-newsletter. If you would like to be added to the distribution, please contact Karen Mitscherlich at [ginterparkpc@gmail.com](mailto:ginterparkpc@gmail.com).

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