

One: Loving God, we are forgetful people.
We confess that we want reconciliation to be quick and easy.

All: Remind us of the long walk to Bethlehem.

One: We are tempted to overlook the outcasts in our society.

All: Remind us of the shepherds and their faithful witness.

One: We expect that you will move in us, and we don't feel compelled to seek you out.

All: Remind us of the magi—the way they searched for you, and the gifts they brought.

One: We get caught up in the business of our days.

All: Remind us of Mary and how she treasured sacred moments in her heart.

One: We wake up thinking only of ourselves.

All: Remind us of the daily choice we have to open our doors to people in need.

One: We lose our way and forget you.

All: Remind us to look for your guiding light.

One: We are a forgetful people.

All: Forgive us, we pray. Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness

+ Gloria (Hymn 117, verse 6)

***All glory be to God on high, and to the earth be peace;
good will to all from highest heaven begin and never cease!***

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture

Luke 2:1-20 [CEB]

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.

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.

One: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

All: Thanks be to God.

Reflections

Carla Pratt Keyes

MARY

Hymn 107 *Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn* verses 1-2 (sing seated)

JOSEPH

Hymn 123 *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear* verses 1, 3, and 4 (sing seated)

THE WEARY ROAD

Hymn 144 *In the Bleak Midwinter* verses 1-2 (sing seated)

ANGELS

+ Hymn 136 *Go, Tell It on the Mountain*

PONDERING THE GIFT

Hymn 145 *What Child Is This* (sing seated)

+Affirmation of Faith

from John 1

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 any human will, 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.

+Response *(all sing)*

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.***

Offering



*Tonight any monetary gifts 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.*

Anthem

Wexford Carol

trad. Irish, arr. Dale Warland

*Good people all, this Christmas time, consider well and bear in mind
What our good God for us has done, in sending His belovèd Son.
With Mary holy we should pray to God with love this Christmas Day;
In Bethlehem upon that morn there was a blessed Messiah born.
The night before that happy tide, the noble Virgin and her guide
Were long time seeking up and down to find a lodging in the town.
But mark how all things came to pass: from ev'ry door repell'd, alas!
As long foretold, their refuge all was but an humble ox's stall.
Near Bethlehem did shepherds keep their flocks of lambs and feeding sheep;
To whom God's angels did appear, which put the shepherds in great fear.
"Prepare and go," the angels said, "To Bethlehem, be not afraid;
For there you'll find, this happy morn, a princely babe, sweet Jesus born."
With thankful heart and joyful mind, the shepherds went the babe to find,
And as God's angel had foretold, they did our Savior Christ behold.
Within a manger he was laid, and by his side the Virgin maid,
Attending on the Lord of Life, who came on earth to end all strife.*

+Response

Doxology

Old Hundredth

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

Praise Christ, all people here below;

Praise Holy Spirit evermore.

Praise Triune God, whom we adore.

Invitation to the Lord's Table

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving and the Lord's Prayer

[Katherine Hawker, Andy James, and Kate Compston, adapted]

One: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them to the Lord.

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

All: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

One: God, we thank you that you have been at work in our world from the beginning.

You made all things and called them good.

You claimed your people Israel, freed them from the bondage of Egypt,
and journeyed with them through the wilderness to the promised land.

When they strayed and sinned, you sent prophets to call your people back to you.

Then in the fullness of time you sent your son, Jesus, Emmanuel, your Word in flesh appearing.

We gather around your table to celebrate his birth.

And we remember so many stories shared around tables;

tables where the bread is broken and the cup is poured out,

tables where families gather and generations share, tables where stories are retold and refined.

Gathered here, around your table,

we remember the scandalous story of you giving yourself to the world,

not in the powerful and extraordinary, but in weakness and the familiar: in a baby, in bread and wine.

We thank you for offering at a journey's end a new beginning.

We praise you for setting in the poverty of a stable the richest jewel of your love.

We bless you for revealing in a particular place your light for all nations.

Thank you for bringing us to Bethlehem, House of Bread,

where the empty are filled, and the filled are emptied;

where the poor find riches, and the rich recognize their poverty;

where all who kneel and hold out their hands are unstintingly fed.

And as we, tonight, hold out our hands to you, we pray:

All: Come, holy Spirit, come.

Bless this bread and bless this fruit of the vine.

Bless all of us in our eating and drinking

that our eyes might be opened,

that we may recognize the Spirit rising in our midst

indeed, in one another. Come, holy Spirit, come. Amen.

Communion of the People

(Bread is gluten-free and vegan with honey.)

One at a time or in family groups, please come forward.

Servers have used hand sanitizer.

Please hold your hand flat to receive the bread and take a cup from the tray.

You can consume those elements once you've returned to your pew

or while seated briefly on a front pew.

Please return to your seat by a side aisle.

If you cannot easily come forward, we will happily bring the elements to your pew.

After others have been served, please raise your hand to signal us.

Music during Communion

Lullaby of Mary and The Angels

trad. Dutch, arr. Walter Ehret

"Sleep, my little one, sleep, my dearest one," sings the Virgin Mother mild;

Sing sweetest songs to the dear baby Jesus, make heavenly sounds to the honeysweet child.

Close your little eyes, cover your little hands, ever sharper the cold wind blows.

Sing on, sweet Mary, to dear baby Jesus, sing beautiful songs to the heavenly Rose.

Sleep, my hope and my tenderest comfort, sweetly sleep, oh child of my heart!

Blessings on both of you, Mother and Infant, so gentle, so humble, so holy Thou art!

Jessie Cooke, soprano

-E.K. Jorgensen

Prayer after Communion and the Lord's Prayer

**All: 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.**

The Candle Lighting

*The candles will be lighted, beginning with the person on the inside aisle.
To keep the wax from dripping, please light your candle from that of your neighbor
and hold your candle upright after it is lighted.
During the singing of the final verse, please hold your candle aloft,
extinguishing it upon completion of the carol.*

Hymn 119 (seated)

**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!"**

**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!"**

**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!"**

Charge and Blessing

The Peace

One: The peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also with you.

As we prepare to go out into the world, let us greet one another in Christ's name.

Postlude

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

J.S. Bach

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.

WORSHIP LEADERS: Our director of music is Doug Brown. Lighting the Advent wreath tonight are Mickie Chapman and Bonnie Neighbour.

POINSETTIAS - Thanks to everyone who purchased a poinsettia to decorate our chancel. If you would like to take your poinsettia home tonight, please do! Any poinsettias not retrieved at the end of tonight's service will be donated to local group homes and/or homebound members of GPPC.

HEARING ASSISTANCE DEVICES are available in the Narthex. Please see an usher.

PLEASE TAKE THE PAPER BULLETIN YOU HAVE USED home for reference and/or recycling. Thank you!!

PLEASE JOIN US ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31 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.

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