



*In the 1970s, Mafa Christians in North Cameroon wanted to have pictures of the Gospel using their own cultural resonances. With the help of French missionaries they acted out the scenes, and sketches of the plays were worked up by French artists and given back to them – and to the world. More than six million copies have been distributed to date to eighty-three countries.*

December 24, 2025

Christmas Eve

9:00pm

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

Prelude

*From Heaven Above  
 From Heaven Above*

J.S. Bach  
 Ernst Pepping

Lighting of the Christ Candle

[Liturgy by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | [sanctifiedart.org](https://sanctifiedart.org), adapted]

One: In a fearful world, where do you see the presence of God?

**All: We see God's fingerprints all around us. We see God in the beauty of the stars.  
 We see God in the love of this community. We see God in the dreams we hold for a better world.**

One: You are right. Even in a fearful world, God is here. God is all around us.

On this holy night, we light the Christ Candle as a reminder that God became human in Jesus,  
 and God keeps appearing to us on earth.

May this flicker of light help us remember that even in a fearful world, God's love is all around us.

**All: Thanks be to God for a love like that! Amen.**

+Hymn 133 O Come, All Ye Faithful

### Confession of Sin and Pain

**God of angel choruses, you set the stars in the sky, but often we do not see them.  
You send people to tell the good news, but often we do not believe them.  
You bring love into this world, but often we fail to receive it and share it.  
Quiet the fear in us – fear that works to rationalize, minimize, and distract  
from the good things you put forth in the world.  
Tune our hearts back to your song.  
With hope we pray, Amen.**

### Words of Forgiveness and Healing

One: Family of faith, when the angels arrived in the field that night, the shepherds were afraid.

But the angels said:

**All: “Do not be afraid. I am bringing you good news of great joy for all people.”  
This good news is love freely given, grace radically extended, welcome abundantly offered.**

One: Friends, we are seen, loved, welcomed, forgiven, called, and sent to serve.

**All: Thanks be to God for a love like that.**

+ Gloria (Hymn 117, verse 6) from *While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks*

***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

**PROPHECY:** Isaiah 11:1-4a, 6-9

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see or decide by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge for the poor and decide with equity for the oppressed of the earth.

The wolf shall live with the lamb; the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the lion will feed together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Hymn 129 (sing seated)      *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming*

**INCARNATION:** Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Hymn 92 (sing seated)      *While We Are Waiting, Come*

**PROCLAMATION:** Luke 1:46-55

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for God has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant. Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is God's name; indeed, God's mercy is for those who fear God from generation to generation. God has shown strength with God's arm and has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. God has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly; God has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty. God has come to the aid of God's child Israel, in remembrance of God's mercy, according to the promise God made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

+Hymn 100     *Canticle of the Turning* (verses 1, 2 & 3)

**BIRTH AND CELEBRATION:** Luke 2:1-20 (NRSVUE)

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room.

Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom God favors!"

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them, and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.

Meditation

Carla Pratt Keyes

+ Hymn 110     *Love Has Come*

+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.***

## Invitation to the Lord's Table

### Great Prayer of Thanksgiving and the Lord's Prayer

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: It is right to praise you and rejoice in you, our God and Savior, for you have looked with favor upon your servants. You have seen the proud deserving to be scattered and the desperate needing to be carried, and to all of us you have shown such mercy! Now even those who walk in darkness can see glimmers of your light, for the yoke of their burden you have broken. A child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rest upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

**All sing: *Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis Deo.*** (Refrain, Hymn 113)

With angels and saints through the ages we rejoice at the good news of this day – the Savior born, the Christ revealed, the child around whom strangers gathered to worship that long-ago night in Bethlehem. Today we gather at this table; hungry people in search of food, lonely people in search of company, thoughtful people in search of meaning, We praise you, God, for the astonishing news that you are with us and for us and hold nothing back from us, not even your own self. We praise you for Jesus - lowly in a manger, yet radiant with heavenly light. He came to make your blessings flow in every heart and every place. More powerful than sin and evil, stronger even than death is Christ's love for us.

**All: When we eat this bread and drink this cup,  
we proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,  
our judge and our hope.**

One: Eternal God, by your Holy Spirit, make us agents of your healing love. In word and deed may we display your glory and tell out your good news. Encourage us, like Jesus, to bind up the brokenhearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, and comfort all who mourn. Help us to cultivate peace among your people. Strengthen us to serve you gladly. And fashion us strangers gathered here into a community so unified and joyous that it will draw others near to praise and partake of you, too. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, who makes us bold to pray together:

**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.**

### Communion of the People

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

*Please hold your hand flat to receive the bread and take a cup from the tray,  
then 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

*Shepherds, Hark the Song  
O Holy Night*

Louis Claude Daquin  
Adolphe Adam

### Prayer after Communion

**Welcome, welcome, Jesus Christ our infant savior,  
baby who makes every birth holy.**

**May we, who like the shepherds have witnessed in the stable a new kind of love  
return to our work with joy.**

**May we, for whom the heavens have opened to proclaim that God is with us,  
go out to be instruments of your peace, day by day. Amen.**

## The Candle Lighting

*The candles will be lighted, beginning with the person on the inside aisle.*

*To keep wax from dripping, please light your candle from your neighbor's and hold your candle upright after lighting.*

*During the singing of the final verse, please hold your candle aloft, extinguishing it upon completion of the carol.*

## Hymn 119 (sing 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.**

## Postlude

*In Dulci Jubilo*

J.S. Bach



*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.*

*Carla uses this fund to provide confidential financial support to  
individuals or households in the church or community in  
response to crises or critical personal needs.*

*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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### **Join us again this coming Sunday - Sunday, December 28, 2025 - 11:00am - Brunch Church**

*We will be meeting in the Fellowship Hall for worship, which will include hymn singing, Bible study, prayer, and the eucharist - all shared over brunch! We will be providing bread, gluten free crackers, orange and grape juice, and baby quiches (or something similar). To bring additional food or to assist otherwise with the brunch, please sign up using the link in the newsletter online. We will invite you to make a special offering for a baby in GPPC's community (to be born tomorrow!), whose father was recently abducted by ICE and deported to Guatemala: money, Spanish language baby books, or beautiful and useful gifts for a baby boy.*

POINSETTIAS - Thanks to everyone who purchased a poinsettia to decorate our Chancel. If you would like to take your poinsettia home tonight, please do!

HEARING ASSISTANCE DEVICES AND LARGE PRINT HYMNS are available from an usher in the Narthex.

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**CHRISTMAS 2025 POINSETTIAS**

*In memory of Debbie Carter  
by Erica Angert*

*In memory of Guadalupe Mejía, Rubén Arjona, & Pablo Avila  
In memory of Noemí, Esther, Susana & Mirna Arjona  
by Sara Avila and Rubén Arjona (5)*

*In memory of our parents and grandparents  
by Fran and Clyde Davis*

*In memory of my husband Bob  
by Judy Harr*

*In memory of Robert and Joanna Knox  
by Ann and Bob Knox*

*In memory of Carol and Del Lohuis  
by Ardyth Lohuis*

*In memory of Winfield and Virginia Marriner  
In memory of Guss and Tweedie-Ann Devlin  
by John and Ann Foster Marriner (2)*

*In memory of Helen's mother Mary Lou Wyatt  
In memory of Bob's parents Marcus and Rose Roybark  
In honor of Bob and Helen's 35th wedding anniversary  
by Helen and Bob Roybark (3)*

*In memory of my daughter, Alice Cathryn McIver Ross  
by David Ross*

*In memory of our parents, Dave and Susie Ross, and William and Jimmie Middlebrooks  
by Laura Middlebrooks and David Ross*

*In memory of my parents Herbert Swofford and Mary Beaty Hicks  
by April Swofford (2)*

*In memory of parents Bill and Betty James, Howard and Carol Webb, and  
Kathy's brother Richard James.  
by Kathy and Chuck Webb (2)*

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