

CELEBRATING *the* BIRTH *of* OUR SAVIOR



Communion Service *of* Lessons and Carols

Dec 24 2025 at 7PM
West End Presbyterian Church

Preparation For Worship on Christmas Eve

“I behold a strange and wonderful mystery.
My ears resound to the shepherds’ song.”

John Chrysostom

This evening’s **Service of Lessons and Carols** recounts the powerful, unfolding history of the loving purposes of God.

From the first days of humanity’s rebellion, to the glorious redemption brought to us by the Christ Child, we will see the Lord’s heart of passion for us.

A story that begins in the Garden of Eden culminates in the City of God. And every generation in-between longs to know that truly **God is with us** in the person of Jesus Christ.

Each lesson teaches us the ancient promises of the Lord to His people, and points us to Jesus, our Hope and Salvation. We will hear how the words of the Old Testament prophets are fulfilled in the New Testament narrative of Christ’s birth. Each lesson’s carol enables us to further reflect on the good news that **the Lord is come.**

Let every heart prepare Him room.

Prelude

Aubrey & Psalm Han, *piano*

Bidding Prayer

Tonight's Bidding Prayer was adapted from the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols observed at King's College, Cambridge University (1918).

::: Congregation, please rise if you are able. :::

[Leader]

Beloved in Christ, on this Christmas Eve let it be our care and delight to hear again the message of the angels, and in heart and mind to go unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, and the Babe lying in a manger. Let us read and mark in Holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our disobedience unto the glorious Redemption brought to us by the Christ Child.

But first, let us pray for the needs of the whole world:

[People]

For peace on earth and goodwill among all His people; for unity in the Church He came to build, especially in our city, our community, and our congregation.

Let us remember, in Jesus' name, the poor and the helpless:

The cold, the hungry, the oppressed, the sick, the grieving, the hopeless, the unloved, the enemy, the elderly, the refugee, the widow, the orphan, the little children; all those who do not know the Lord Jesus, who do not love Him, or who by sin have grieved Him.

Lastly, let us remember before God all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore, and in a greater light:

That multitude which no man can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom we are one forevermore in the Lord Jesus.

These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the Throne of Grace, in the manner in which Our Lord Himself taught us to pray:

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 the evil one, for Thine is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

"Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because He has come and has redeemed His people." (Luke 1:68) Come. Let us worship the Lord.

::: Congregation, please be seated and remain seated through the Second Lesson reading. :::

First Lesson

Our Need of God's Promise of Redemption

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

So the LORD God said to the serpent,

"Cursed are you above all the livestock
and all the wild animals!
You will crawl on your belly
and you will eat dust
all the days of your life.
And I will put enmity
between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will crush your head,
and you will strike his heel."

Genesis 3:8-15

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God!**

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

"And a Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression," declares the LORD." Isaiah 59:20

Come Thou long expected Jesus
Born to set Thy people free
From our fears and sins release us
Let us find our rest in Thee
Israel's strength and consolation
Hope of all the earth Thou art
Dear desire of every nation
Joy of every longing heart

Born Thy people to deliver
Born a child and yet a King
Born to reign in us forever
Now Thy gracious Kingdom bring
By Thine own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone
By Thine all sufficient merit
Raise us to Thy glorious throne

Joy to those who long to see Thee
Dayspring from on high, appear
Come, Thou promised Rod of Jesse
Of Thy birth we long to hear!
O'er the hills the angels singing
News, glad tidings of a birth
Go to Him, your praises bringing
Christ the Lord has come to earth

Charles Wesley | Rowland Hugh Prichard. Public Domain. CCLI #708363

Second Lesson

In Your Offspring Shall the Nations Be Blessed

And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven and said, "By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice."

Genesis 22:15-18

If you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise....
But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son,
born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law,
that we might receive the full rights of sons.

Galatians 3:29; 4:4-5

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God!**

... Congregation, please rise if you are able and remain standing through the singing of "O Little Town of Bethlehem" ...

What Child Is This

“Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel.” Luke 2:34

What child is this, who, laid to rest
On Mary's lap is sleeping
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
While shepherds watch are keeping
This, this is Christ the King
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing
Haste, haste to bring Him laud
The Babe, the son of Mary

Why lies He in such mean estate
Where ox and ass are feeding
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here
The silent Word is pleading
Nails, spear, shall pierce Him through
The Cross be borne for me, for you
Hail, hail the Word made flesh
The Babe, the son of Mary

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

William Chatterton Dix (c.1865); Tune: GREENSLEEVES, Traditional English Melody (16th century). Public Domain

Third Lesson

The Virgin Receives the Promise of Jesus, Our Immanuel

Therefore the Lord himself
will give you a sign:
The virgin will be with child
and will give birth to a son,
and will call him Immanuel.

Isaiah 7:14

In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

Luke 1:26-33

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:
"The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son,
and they will call him Immanuel" –
which means, "God with us."

Matthew 1:22-23

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God!**

Our Lord Come

"He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!"
Revelation 22:20

Our Lord, come
Come, Lord Jesus, come!

Kevin Greene, 2015

O Little Town of Bethlehem

"But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah...from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days." From Micah 5:2

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in Thee tonight

How silently, how silently, the wondrous Gift is giv'n
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His Heav'n
No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin
Where meek souls will receive Him still, the dear Christ enters in

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray
Cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel

Phillips Brooks (1868); Tune: ST. LOUIS, Lewis H. Redner (1868). Public Domain.

::: Congregation, please be seated, and remain seated until you come forward to participate in the Lord's Supper. :::

Fourth Lesson

Jesus, Son of David, Branch of Jesse, is Born

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.
The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and of power,
the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD
and he will delight in the fear of the LORD.

Isaiah 11:1-3

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree
that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world...
and everyone went to his own town to register.
So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea,
to Bethlehem the town of David,
because he belonged to the house and line of David.
He went there to register with Mary,
who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.
While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born,
and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son.
She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger,
because there was no room for them in the inn.

Luke 2:1, 3-7

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God!**

Silent Night

"They hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in a manger." Luke 2:16

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
Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace
Jesus Lord at Thy birth
Jesus Lord at Thy birth

Silent night, holy night
Shepherds quake at the sight
Glories stream from heaven afar
Heav'nly hosts sing hallelujah
Christ the Savior is born
Christ the Savior is born

Joseph Mohr (1818); Tune: STILLE NACHT, Franz Gruber (1818). Public Domain.

Fifth Lesson

Angels Proclaim the Savior's Birth

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the increase of his government and peace
there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the LORD Almighty
will accomplish this.

Isaiah 9:6-7

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

Luke 2:8-14

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God!**

The First Noel

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” Luke 2:11

The first Noel, the angels did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep
On a cold winter's night
That was so deep...

*Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel
Born is the King of Israel*

They looked up and saw a star
Shining in the east beyond them far
And to the earth, it gave great light
And so it continued both day and night...

Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heavenly Lord
That hath made heaven and earth of nought
And with His blood mankind hath bought...

Traditional English Carol, Tune: THE FIRST NOEL. Public Domain.

Sixth Lesson

The Glory of the LORD is Revealed

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and proclaim to her
that her hard service has been completed,
that her sin has been paid for,
that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins.
A voice of one calling:
"In the desert prepare
the way for the LORD;
make straight in the wilderness
a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be raised up,
every mountain and hill made low;
the rough ground shall become level,
the rugged places a plain.
And the glory of the LORD will be revealed,
and all mankind together will see it.
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

Isaiah 40:1-5

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Luke 2:15-20

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God!**

WEPC Deacon's Ministry Fund Offering

Tonight's offering provides financial assistance for the needy in our church and community and for ministries approved by the WEPC Diaconate.

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

"He is Lord of lords and King of kings." Revelation 17:14

Infant lowly, infant holy
For his bed a cattle stall
Oxen lowing, little knowing
Christ the babe is Lord of all
Swift are winging, angels singing
Noels ringing, tidings bringing
Christ the babe is Lord of all
Christ the babe is Lord of all

Flocks were sleeping
Shepherds keeping
Vigil till the morning new
Saw the glory, heard the story
Tidings of the Gospel true
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow
Praises voicing, greet the morrow
Christ the babe was born for you
Christ the babe was born for you

Polish Carol; Tune: W ŻŁOBIE LEŻY, 14th century Polish Carol. Public Domain.

Sermon

Pastor Steve Shelby

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

Words of Institution of the Lord's Supper

When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God." After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."

from Luke 22:14-20

Confession of Sin

**Holy Lord,
You have prepared Your salvation in the presence of all peoples.
Yet, we confess that we have not followed the light of Your Word.
We have not been consoled by Your presence,
and have sought comforts of our own design.
We have not sought Your will,
or trusted Your Good News to be good.
We have failed to rejoice at Your Son's coming
and refused His peace on earth.
We have hoped for little from You,
And the very thoughts of our hearts are revealed
in the light of the glory of Your great mercy toward us.**

Silence

Forgive our unbelief,
and renew us by Your Holy Spirit that we might eagerly worship You,
that we may watch and wait and once more find the Gospel of our Savior, Jesus
Christ, to be our greatest joy. Amen.

Words of Encouragement

God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him,
and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things,
whether things on earth or things in heaven,
by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross.

Colossians 1:19-20

A Brief Guide to the Lord's Supper

West End Presbyterian Church welcomes all baptized Christians who actively trust in Jesus Christ for salvation, who are willing to forsake their sin and heart-idols, and who are members of congregations that proclaim the Gospel, to participate in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper with us. The Elders presiding over the Supper are praying for you as the congregation participates in the sacrament.

At each communion station, grape juice is served in purple cups, wine is served in clear cups, and gluten-free bread is served in a separate tray. For a list of ingredients in the wafers, see www.wepc.org/communion.

If you need special assistance and are not able to come forward for Communion, please raise your hand and an Elder will come to serve you the elements.

If you are not able to participate in the Lord's Supper, please use this time to meditate on one of the following prayers:

Prayer for Those Searching for Truth

Lord Jesus, You claim to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Grant that I might be undaunted by the cost of following You as I consider the reasons for doing so. If what You claim is true, please guide me, teach me, and open me to the reality of who You are. Give me an understanding of You that is coherent, convincing, and that leads to the life You promise. Amen.

Prayer of Belief

Lord Jesus Christ, I admit that I am weaker and more sinful than I ever dared admit, but through You I am more loved and accepted than I ever dared hope. I thank You for paying my debt on the Cross, taking what I deserved in order to offer me complete forgiveness. Knowing that You have been raised from the dead, I turn from my sins and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Amen.

Prayer of Commitment

Lord Jesus, You have called us to follow You in baptism and in a life of committed discipleship through membership in Your church. Grant that I may take the necessary steps to be one with Your people, and live in the fullness of Your Spirit. Amen.

Musical Offering

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

Words: John Mason Neale. Tune: IN DULCI UBILO. Public Domain.

∴ Congregation, please rise if you are able. ∴

Angels We Have Heard on High

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.” Luke 2:14

Angels we have heard on high
Sweetly singing o'er the plains
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains...

Gloria, in excelsis Deo
Gloria, in excelsis Deo

Shepherds, why this jubilee
Why your joyous strains prolong
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heavenly song...

Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing
Come adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn King...

Traditional French Carol, trans.1862; Tune: GLORIA, French Carol (18th century). Public Domain.

“O Come, All Ye Faithful

“Let us go to Bethlehem and see...” Luke 2:15

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 heav'n above
Glory to God
Glory in the highest....

Attributed to Francis Wade, 1751. Public domain

Seventh Lesson

Jesus Christ, Light of the World

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of the shadow of death
a light has dawned.

Isaiah 9:2

In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.
He was with God in the beginning.
Through him all things were made;
without him nothing was made that has been made.
In him was life, and that life was the light of men.
The light shines in the darkness,
but the darkness has not understood it...
He was in the world,
and though the world was made through him,
the world did not recognize him.
He came to that which was his own,
but his own did not receive him.
Yet to all who received him,
to those who believed in his name,
he gave the right to become children of God-
children born not of natural descent,
nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.
The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.
We have seen his glory,
the glory of the One and Only,
who came from the Father,
full of grace and truth.

John 1:1-5,10-14

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said,
"I am the light of the world.
Whoever follows me
will never walk in darkness,
but will have the light of life."

John 8:12

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life,
as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God
and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city.
On each side of the river stood the tree of life,
bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month.
And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.
No longer will there be any curse.
The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city,
and his servants will serve him.
They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.
There will be no more night.
They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun,
for the Lord God will give them light.
And they will reign forever and ever.

Revelation 22:1-5

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God!**

Joy to the World

“Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.” Psalm 98:4

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 men their songs employ
While fields and floods
Rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy
Repeat the sounding joy
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy

No more let sin and sorrows grow
Nor thorns infest the ground
He comes to make
His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found
Far as the curse is found
Far as, far as the curse is found

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, wonders of His love

Isaac Watts (1719); Tune: ANTIOCH. Public Domain

Benediction

Postlude

Tonight's sermon was given by **Pastor Steve Shelby**.

Worship was led by **Pastor Kevin Greene**.

Worship & music were led by **Worship Arts Director Becca Wethered**
Sarah Shrader(vox), **Mya Wilcox** (vox), **Pastor Kevin Greene** (guitar),
Jude Molique (bass), **Aubrey & Psalm Han** (keys),
Luke Shrader (audio tech), and **Chris Malak** (livestream tech).

Scripture lessons were read by **Rashel Amuda**, **Michael & Avery Chen**, **Derna Osuna**,
Rachel Shrader, and **Doug Wells**.

We are glad you were able to join us for worship this Christmas Eve!
Please join West End Presbyterian Church for worship on Sunday mornings at 9 & 10:30am.

www.wepc.org