

**December 24, 2017 8 and 11 pm**

**A Service of Christmas Lessons and Carols**

**Prelude**

Where shepherds lately knelt *Craig Courtney*

What child is this *arranged by Dale Warland*

Still, still, still *Traditional Austrian Carol*

Aria *Marcel Grandjany*

**Processional Hymn 234** O come, all ye faithful (stanzas 1-3, 6, standing) *Adeste Fideles*

**Lighting of the Advent and Christ Candles**  8:00 Chris and Stacey Roslek

11:00 Linda and Rick Minnotte

**Hymnal 196 Come, thou long-expected Jesus** (stanza 2, seated)*Hyfrydol*

**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.**

**The Bidding Prayer**

Leader: Beloved in Christ,  
 this Christmas Eve it is our duty and delight

     to prepare ourselves to hear again the message of the angels,

     and to go in heart and mind to Bethlehem,

     and see this thing which is come to pass,

     and the Babe lying in a manger.

Therefore let us hear again from Holy Scripture

     the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our sin

     until the glorious redemption brought us by this holy Child;

and let us make this house of prayer glad with our carols of praise.

But first, because this of all things would rejoice Jesus' heart,

     let us pray to him for the needs of the whole world, and all his people;

     for peace upon the earth he came to save;

     for love and unity within the one Church he did build;

     for goodwill among all peoples.

And particularly at this time let us remember

     the poor, the cold, the hungry, the oppressed;

     the sick and them that mourn; the lonely and the unloved;

the aged and the little children;

Lastly let us remember all those who rejoice with us,

     but upon another shore and in a greater light,

     that multitude which no one can number,

     whose hope was in the Word made flesh,

     and with whom, in this Lord Jesus, we for evermore are one.

These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the throne of heaven,

     in the words that Christ himself has taught us.

**The Lord’s Prayer**

**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. Amen.**

**Blessing**

Leader: The almighty God bless us with divine grace,

      Christ give us the joys of everlasting life,

      and unto the fellowship of the citizens above

      may the King of Angels bring us all.

**People: Amen**

**Sung Response 184** Of the Father's love begotten (stanza 1) *Divinum Mysterium*

**First Lesson** Genesis 3:8-15, 17-19

God announces in the Garden of Eden Adam and Eve's punishment for their rebellion

and that the seed of woman shall bruise the serpent's head.

Lector: The Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**Carol 196** Come, thou long expected Jesus (stanzas 1-2) *Hyfrydol*

**Second Lesson** Genesis 22:15-18

God promises to Abraham that by his descendants all the nations of the earth

shall obtain blessing.

Lector: The Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**Carol 211** O come, O come, Emmanuel (stanzas 1, 4) *Veni Emmanuel*

**Anthem** Weihnachten (Christmas Evening) *Humperdinck, arr. Proulx*

**Third Lesson** Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

The prophet announces the birth of a king to a people in darkness.

Lector: The Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**Carol 216** Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming (stanzas 1, 2) *Es ist ein Ros*

**Anthem** 8:00 Night of Silence *Daniel Kantor*

**Fourth Lesson** Micah 5:2-5a

The king is coming and will usher in a reign of justice for the poor

and peace for all of God's creation.

Lector: The Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**Carol 230** O little town of Bethlehem (stanzas 1, 4) *St. Louis*

**Fifth Lesson** Luke 1:26-35, 38

The angel Gabriel announces to the virgin Mary that she will give birth to God's promised Son whose kingdom shall never end.

Lector: The Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**Christmas Offering**

**Anthem** Angels’ Carol *John Rutter*

**Doxology 221** **In the bleak midwinter** (stanza 4, standing) *Cranham*

**What can I give him, poor as I am?**

**If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;**

**if I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;**

**yet what I can I give him: give my heart.**

**Sixth Lesson** Luke 2:1-7

Against a backdrop of emperors and taxes, Jesus is born.

Lector: The Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**Carol 245** The first Noel (stanzas 1-2) *The First Noel*

**Seventh Lesson** Luke 2:8-16

The shepherds go to see the Savior of the world, lying in a manger.

Lector: The Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**Carol 229** Infant holy, infant lowly *W Zlobie Lezy*

**Meditation** Rev. Thomas Q. Strandburg

**Christmas Prayer (in unison)**

**Eternal God, by the birth of Jesus Christ you gave yourself to the world.**

**Grant that, being born in our hearts, he may save us from all our sins,**

**and restore within us the image and likeness of our Creator,**

**to whom be everlasting praise and glory, world without end. Amen.**

**Lighting of the Candles**

*Remember to keep lighted candles upright; only tilt the unlit candle to avoid dripping wax on yourself, the pew and the carpet. As the sanctuary lights dim the pastors will light a candle from the Christ candle and share it with the ushers. They will light the candles of those seated in the pews.*

**Anthem** A Savior from on high *Stephen Paulus*

**Carol 239** Silent night, holy night (stanzas 1, 3) *Stille Nacht*

**Carol 246** Joy to the world (stanzas 1, 4) *Antioch*

**Nunc Dimittis** Rev. Thomas Q. Strandburg

Leader: Master, now you are dismissing your servants in peace.

**People: For our eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared**

**in the presence of all people.**

Leader: A light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.

**People: Let us share this Light with the world.**

*Candles may now be extinguished.*

**Congregational Benedictions** *Please exchange greetings and blessings with each other.*

*Join us on Sunday, December 31, for a Unity Service at 10:45 am in the Sanctuary. The service will feature a Christmas Carol Communion, led by Rev. Kimberly Greway. A wiggle room will be offered in Brookline Parlor, but there will be NO Sunday School hour, no nursery and no Kids Praise.*

**Tonight’s Services**

**Special music** is provided by the Youth Choir, accompanied by Kathleen Whittaker, during the 8:00 service only, and the Chancel Choir, with soloists Timothi Williams, Kirby Dilworth and Kathleen Whittaker; conductor Richard Minnotte; harpist Julia Scott and oboist Renate Sakins. The presence of the instrumentalists is made possible by contributors to the Friends of Music Fund.

**Holiday hours** – The church office is closed and will reopen on Wednesday, December 27 at

8:30 am.

**Nursery services**  - A wiggle roomisavailable for parents and children in Brookline Parlor, adjacent to the sanctuary during the 8 pm service.

***Each year the W PA Conference and Eastern German Conference create daily Advent and Christmas devotionals for use in our homes and churches. We have chosen devotionals from each week. This is the devotional for Christmas Eve.***



**Rev. John Mize, Westmont UMC**

**John 21:4** *Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.*

As we fly through our preparations for Christmas and look forward to the coming of the Christ child, He often comes to us. He is in the line ahead of us at the grocery store, looking for the last few cents to buy his meager dinner. He in struggling to get His food to the car as He slowly moves across the lot with a walker. He is watching us through the eyes of the foreigner who does not understand our ways and is astonished at the extravagance. He is standing there watching us; waiting for us to recognize him. Sometimes we drop a few pennies in the red bucket and feel great about ourselves as we walk to our car, making sure everyone knows about our generosity. We make sure we attend all the church services so everyone will know how much we love Jesus. But He is watching waiting for us to show Him. Do we?

**Dr. Michael Wetzel, Lößnitz**

In John 21 the evangelist portrays disciples who have fallen back into routine. Disheartened, they are starring at their empty fishnets. John not only shows us empty nets but also empty souls – disciples without the fire of faith, without visions. And when Jesus approaches them in the morning they don`t even recognize him. Is this the picture of true disciples? And, thinking ahead, is this the state of the churches in the so-called Western societies? The great Lutheran reformation and the methodist awakening have cooled off. Routine seems to be the daily business of the church. And Christmas? Even Christmas celebrations might become a routine and some of us therefore might consider modern Christianity a story of crisis and decline.

But the story is going on. Jesus approaches the weak and discouraged disciples, perhaps silently and gently, but full of the power that becomes strong in the weak. He approaches his disciples to address them and to open their eyes for him. Christmas reveals the message: Even the midst of today`s discouragement Jesus wants to address us, he wants to open our eyes for his everlasting presence. He is seeking for our confession that we need him.



**Help Deliver Poinsettias**

Spread the Christmas cheer. Take a name card or two from the table in the Narthex and deliver a poinsettia to a shut in. Plants may be picked up any time after the 11 pm Christmas Eve service.

**Poinsettias and Food Pantry Memorial**

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