



*Main Street United Methodist Church
Greenwood, South Carolina*

Christmas Eve

December 24, 2022

Our Mission: "Following Christ from City Center"

Prelude

In Dulci Jubilo
Matthew Miller, Organist

Samuel Mareschall

***Call to Worship**

Leader: The people who walk in darkness. That's us!

People: We have seen deep darkness in the world around us.

Leader: So we have come to search for the light.

People: We want the light to shine on us!

Leader: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given"

People: A child is born for US!

Leader: A son is given to ALL of US!

People: We come to see the child that has been born,

Leader: we come to gather in the glow of the stable,

People: we come to sing with angels and wonder with shepherds.

Leader: Come and worship, come and worship!

People: Worship the one who is born for this day.

***Opening Prayer**

Gracious Lord, be the God of our Christmas celebration. We rejoice with the shepherds over the good news of Jesus' birth. We join in the praises of the angelic choir, saying: "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom God favors!"

Almighty God, you have favored us with the greatest gift ever given--your only begotten Son, light of true light, God of true God. May we never take this your gift for granted; may our songs of praise never fade, and may we treasure it in our hearts always and forever. Bless all of us here gathered in worship as well as our loved ones at home. May peace and joy ring in our hearts and reverberate through our communities tonight in the name of Jesus the new born King. **Amen.**

***Hymn of Praise**

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus
Crucifer: Addison Leopard
Acolyte: Caroline Leopard

#196

Children's Sermon

Rev. Keck & Charlie

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Scurry, Gemma, Scurry and Bennett Charles

Scripture Reading:

Luke 2:1-7

We light the Advent wreath again tonight as we remember. The first Advent candle is one of Hope, and we begin the wait. This candle reminds us that the prophet Isaiah as well as the people in the early church were longing for God's presence. This candle is a symbol for our own longing for God to be with us.

The second candle is one of Peace and reminds us of our dreams for peace in the world and that Jesus, the Prince of Peace, is coming. This candle is a symbol of God's promise of peace, comfort, and strength.

The third candle is for Joy and to remind us that God wants us to rejoice, even when that feels hard to do. This candle is a symbol of the joy that comes when God is with us.

The fourth candle is one of Love and the circle is complete. It is a love that has no ending, that lives on in young and old, not just at Christmas, but throughout the year.

We light the center candle that reminds us that Jesus Christ is the Light of the World!

All: Blessed be our Savior!

All: Our time of waiting is almost over. May we as people of God proclaim God's greatness. May we see God in those who are weak, humble, poor, hungry, who come to God empty-handed and expect to be fed. May we pray for the Light of the World to shine into our lives, and then through our lives, into the darkness of the world. May the Word indeed become flesh and dwell among us. Amen.

Advent Candle Hymn

A Candle Is Burning (tune of Away in a Manger)

We honor Messiah with the Christ-Candle's flame;

Our Christmas Eve candles glad tidings proclaim.

O come, all ye faithful, rejoice on this night,

As God comes among us, the Christian's true Light.

Offertory

O Holy Night

William Butler, Soloist

Gifts this evening will be given to Greater Greenwood United Ministries.

***Doxology**

***Offertory Prayer**

Rev. Keck

***Hymn**

It Came upon the Midnight Clear

#218

Gospel Lesson

John 1:10-14

Sermon

Jesus Changes Everything

Service of Holy Communion

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. You created light out of darkness and brought forth life on the earth. You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast. You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God, and spoke to us through your prophets. In the fullness of time you gave your only Son Jesus Christ to be our Savior, and at his birth the angels sang glory to you in the highest and peace to your people on earth.

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ. As Mary and Joseph went from Galilee to Bethlehem and there found no room, so Jesus went from Galilee to Jerusalem and was despised and rejected.

As in the poverty of a stable Jesus was born, so by the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

As your Word became flesh, born of woman, on that night long ago, so, on the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and for ever.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Sharing of the Light

***Candlelight Hymn**

Silent Night, Holy Night

#239

***Closing Prayer**

Dear Lord, on a wondrous night you sent your son to take on frail human flesh in order that all who believe in Jesus might be saved. You sent angels to herald his birth in Bethlehem and a star to proclaim it to the ends of the earth. Send us now as messengers of your good news and proclaimers of your peace. In Jesus name we pray. **Amen**

***Postlude**

Joy to the World

Lowell Mason

*Please stand if you are able.

***All are invited to partake in Holy Communion.
The table is open to anyone who seeks to respond to
Christ's love and seeks to lead a new life of peace and love.