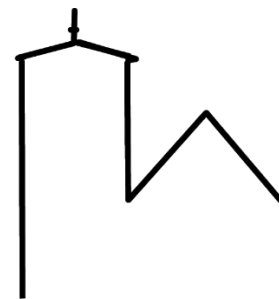


WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
1420 WEST MOSS AVENUE
PEORIA, ILLINOIS 61606



CHRISTMAS EVE

24 December 2021

Four O'clock

GATHERING IN THE PRESENCE OF THE NEWBORN KING

THE PREPARATION

Noel: Grand Jeu et Duo
Weihnachten, 1914

Claude Louis d'Aquin
Max Reger

WELCOME AND CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH FAMILY

Rev. Denise Clark-Jones

*LIGHTING OF THE CHRISTMAS CANDLE ...

One: *The promise of God has come to us. Our lives are the manger in whom the Christ Child is born. No longer do we seek light from another source; now the light burns in our hearts and we become love's lamp.*

All: **So, we light the candle at the center of our wreath and our faith. We light it in the name of the One who is the light, and, as Mary did so long ago, we name this light Jesus. Glory to God in the highest!**

*CALL TO WORSHIP

One: *There is good news of great joy for all!*

All: **Our Savior is born: the Messiah, the Lord!**

One: *Glory to God in the highest,*

All: **and peace to God's people on earth.**

*HYMN

O Come All Ye Faithful

Adeste Fideles

**1. 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.**

**2. God of God,
Light of Light
Lo, he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Very God,
Begotten, not created**

*O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him,
O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!*

**3. Child for us sinners,
Poor and in the manger,
Fain we embrace thee with awe and love;
Who would not love thee,
Loving us so dearly?**

**4. Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
Glory to God
In the highest.**

5. Yea, Lord we greet thee
Born this happy morning,
Jesu, to thee be glory given;
Word of the Father,
Now in flesh appearing.

***CALL TO CONFESSION**

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION** (*praying together*)

GOD WHO COMES TO US in Jesus Christ, you came among us as light shining in the darkness. We confess that we have not welcomed the light, or trusted good news to be good. We have closed our eyes to glory in our midst, expecting little, and hoping for less. Forgive our doubt, and renew our hope, so that we may receive the fullness of your grace, and live in the truth of Christ the Lord.

***TIME OF SILENCE AND PERSONAL CONFESSION**

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND RESPONSE**

Gloria

1. 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!

2. Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heavenly song?
Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Gloria in excelsis Deo!

3. Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come adore on bended knee
Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Gloria in excelsis Deo!

HEARING THE WORD

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Old Testament: Isaiah 9:2-7

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness — on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

ANTHEM

**What Is This Lovely Fragrance?
The Choir**

Healey Willan

What is this lovely fragrance wafting like to the scents of flowers in spring? Shepherds, O tell us, whence such beauty, Hear you not heavenly caroling? What is this lovely fragrance wafting like to the scents of flowers in spring. What is this light so fair, so tender Breaking upon our wondering eyes? Never the Morning Star so radiant Followed his course o'er eastern skies. What is this light so fair, so tender, Breaking upon our wondering eyes? Shepherds, O haste with eager footsteps, Seek the Saviour, born today. Low at his feet we lay our treasure, Heart's adoration, love for aye. Shepherds O haste with eager footsteps, Seek the Saviour, born today.

Epistle: Titus 2:11-14

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, ¹² training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, ¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. ¹⁴ He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

ANTHEM

Gloria in Excelsis

Florence Jolley

Gloria! Gloria in excelsis Deo. Now sing we Gloria in excelsis Deo. All praise to thee, eternal Lord, Clothed in a garb of flesh and blood, Who chose a manger for thy throne, While worlds on worlds are thine alone. Gloria! Gloria in excelsis Deo. A little child, thou art our guest, That weary souls may find their rest. Forlorn and lonely in thy birth, That we may rise to Heaven from earth. Thou comest in the darksome night, To make us children of the Light. To make us in the realms divine, Like thine own angels 'round thee shine. Gloria! Gloris in excelsis Deo. All this for us thy love hath done, By this to thee our love is won. For this we tune our cheerful lays, And sing our thanks in ceaseless praise. Gloria! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Text: Martin Luther

Gospel: Luke: 2:1-20

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph 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. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And 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 for them in the inn.

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

¹⁵When 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." ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

SERMON

Rev. Denise Clark-Jones

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

*CAROL

Away in a Manger

Cradle Song

1. Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky look down where he lay
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

2. The cattle are lowing; the poor baby wakes
but little Lord Jesus no crying he makes,
I love thee Lord Jesus, look down from the sky
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.

3. Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay
close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
and fit us for heaven to live with thee there.

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH** (*Reading together*)

The Apostles' Creed

I BELIEVE in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen.

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

One: *The Lord be with you.*

All: **And also with you.**

THE GIFT OF MUSIC

A maiden most gentle

Andrew Carter

A maiden most gentle and tender we sing, Of Mary the mother of Jesus our King. *Ave, ave, ave Maria. Ave, ave, ave Maria.* How blessed is the birth of her heavenly Child, Who came to redeem us in Mary so mild. *Ave, ave, ave Maria. Ave, ave, ave Maria.* The archangel Gabriel foretold by his call The Lord of creation and Saviour of all. *Ave, ave, ave Maria. Ave, ave, ave Maria.* Rejoice and be glad at this Christmas we pray, Sing praise to the Saviour, sing endless, 'Ave'. *Ave, ave, ave Maria. Ave, ave, ave Maria!*

SEALING THE WORD

At the time of the DISTRIBUTION OF THE ELEMENTS, please use the bread and wine distributed as you entered the Sanctuary. We encourage those worshipping at home to find a piece of bread and some wine, and join in the joyous feast of the Lord. Christians of any age or church affiliation are welcome at Christ's table, where Christ is the host. Joining together over the Internet and with families near and far, we celebrate our oneness with the Church Eternal.

INVITATION

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 God thanks and praise.**

COMMUNION PRAYER ... *in the unending song of praise ...*

**1. Angels from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o'er all the earth
You who sang creation's story
Now proclaim Messiah's birth.
Come and Worship, Come and Worship
Worship Christ, the newborn King!**

**2. Saints before God's presence bending
Watching long in hope and fear.
Suddenly the Lord, descending,
In his temple shall appear.
Come and worship, Come and worship
Worship Christ, the newborn King!**

COMMUNION PRAYER

MEMORIAL ACCLAMATIONS ...*we proclaim the mystery of faith*

**Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
Give ye heed to what we say: Jesus Christ is born today;
Ox and ass before Him bow, and He is in the manger now
Christ is born today! Christ is born today!**

**Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
Now ye hear of endless bliss; Jesus Christ was born for this!
He hath opened heaven's door, and we are blest forevermore.
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!**

**Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
Now ye need not fear the grave: Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all to gain the everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save**

INTERCESSIONS AND SUPPLICATIONS

(... *In your mercy ... Lord hear our prayer*)

THE CONSECRATION

THE LORD'S PRAYER [*praying together*]

**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.**

*These are holy things, to keep us holy. Gifts of God for the people of God.
Let us keep the feast. Alleluia!*

DISTRIBUTION OF THE ELEMENTS

COMMUNION MUSIC

O Holy Night
Laurel Cramer, *soprano*

Adolph Adam

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES **Silent Night, Holy Night**

Stille Nacht

(When receiving the light, tilt your unlighted candle into the lit flame. Do the same as you pass it along the pew.)

1 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.

2 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.

SCRIPTURE READING **John 1:1-14**

BEARING THE WORD INTO THE WORLD

*CAROL

Joy to the World!

Antioch

1 Joy to the world! The Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing.

3. Joy to the world! The Savior reigns:
Let us our songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy.

2. No more let sins and sorrows grow
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow
Far as the curse is found.

4. He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness
And wonders of His love.

*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

*POSTLUDE

Gentle Mary Laid Her Child

Paul Manz

LEADING IN WORSHIP THIS EVENING

Rev. Denise M. Clark-Jones, Pastor of Westminster
Thomas Clark-Jones, Organist-Choirmaster
The Westminster Choir
Elder Larry Hicks, Video Producer

OPEN HANDS, OPEN HEARTS, OPEN MINDS



CHRISTMAS EVE 2021

Westminster Church of Peoria

A Presbyterian Church, USA in the Presbytery of the Great Rivers

1420 West Moss Avenue
Peoria + 61606

December 24, 2021 + Four in the afternoon