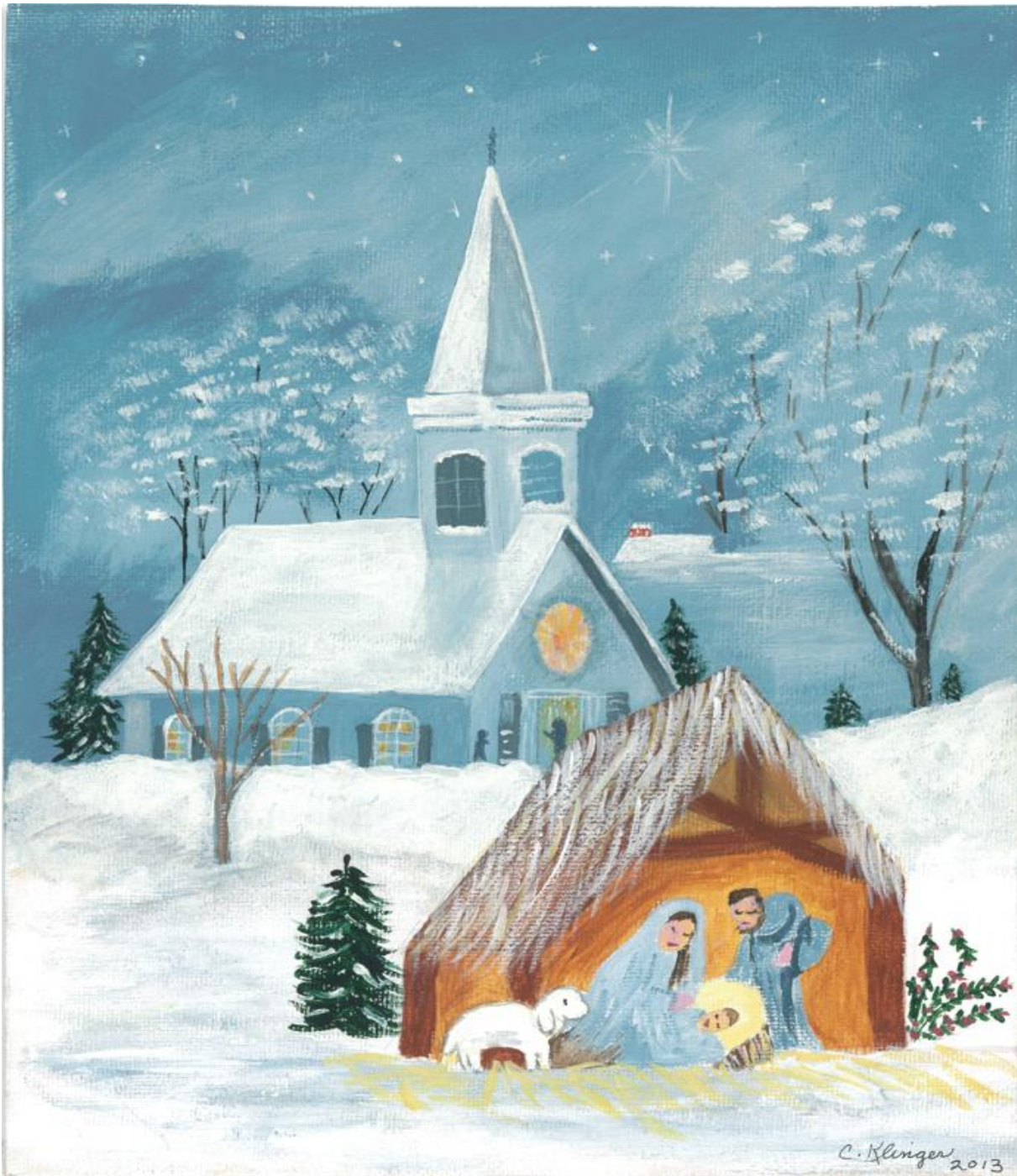


ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Sunday, December 24, 2023
Christmas Eve 7pm



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**Christmas Eve Service, Candle Lighting, The Sacrament of Holy Communion,
Special Music by the St. Paul’s Minstrels, Senior Choir and the Sunday School Children**

Rev. Ken McDowell, Pastor

Music Director and Pianist- Rae Ann Borger

*Worship Notes: We welcome all visitors with us this evening.
Please sign our guest book in the narthex.
We hope you will come back and worship with us again.
The Offering will be collected by the ushers.
Communion will be served in the pews by the ushers.*

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WELCOME

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES.....Joe and Tamara Nagle, and their children, Elias, Abram, Jeremiah, and Hannah

Advent Scripture - Isaiah 9:2-7 (Page 593)

Congregational Response: Hymn No. 175.....“We Light the Advent Candles,” (Vs. 1 & 5)

We light the Advent candles against the winter night, to welcome our Lord Jesus who Is the world’s True Light, to welcome our Lord Jesus who is the world’s True Light.

Four candles burning brightly announce that Christ has come, prepare, my heart, believe it, and give to Christ child room, Prepare, my heart, believe it, and give the Christ child room.

Advent Prayer

PRELUDE

GATHERING FOR THE WORD

The congregation may stand.

SOLEMN DECLARATION.....Sung “Amen”

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: Good news! Unspeakable joy!

People: A great light has burst forth, overcoming the darkness!

Pastor: A child is born for us—a son has been given!

People: Bringing a kingdom of endless peace, we shall call him Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God!

Pastor: Come, let us see what God has brought us! Let us see what the Lord has done! Glory to God in the highest!

People: And on earth, peace and goodwill to all! Amen!

OPENING HYMN NO. 182“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

*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.*

Refrain: *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, O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
glory to God, all glory in the highest; [Refrain]*

*Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning, Jesus to thee be all glory given;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing; [Refrain]*

INVOCATION

The congregation may be seated.

ENGAGING THE WORD

INTRODUCTION

READING OF THE WORD.....Lector: Trevor Smith

Gospel Lesson - Luke 2:1-14 (Page 889)

SPECIAL MUSIC BY THE SUNDAY SCHOOL CHILDREN.....“Once Upon a Manger”

Words and Music by Lowell Alexander; Arranged by Russell Mauldin

Gospel Lesson - Luke 2:15-20 (Page 889)

CHILDREN’S SERMON

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

Candle Hymn No. 184.....“What Child Is This” (Verse 1)

*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.*

Christ Candle Prayer

People: God of all creation, spark of life in every birth, and midwife of the new selves we may become, we gather seeking light and warmth. We come giving thanks, in the face of all our grief and regrets, for the one who came by water and blood. Light our hearts like lamps in this hour, that we may become beacons of your love. For we pray in the strong name of the one born of Mary, holy child of the Living God, Jesus Christ. Amen.

SENIOR CHOIR ANTHEM.....“Candlelight Carols” by Hal Wright; Eliza Kline - Soloist

*Medley includes “Bring A Torch, Jeanette, Isabella,” “Infant Holy, Infant Lowly,”
“How Great Our Joy,” “Sing We Now of Christmas” and “Still, Still, Still.”*

MEDITATION

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

CALL TO OFFERING.....Selections by St. Paul’s Minstrels

(At this time, the regular & all special offerings will be received)

The congregation may stand.

OFFERATORY

We give thee but thine own, what e’er the gift may be; all that we have is thine alone, a trust, O Lord from thee.

OFFERING PRAYER

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation

Communion Prayer

Pastor: God be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to God

Pastor: Let us give thanks to God most high.

People: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

The Seraphic Hymn

*Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth; Heaven and earth are full, are full of the majesty of Thy glory
Hosanna, Hosanna, hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna,
hosanna, hosanna in the highest!*

The congregation may be seated.

Words of Institution

Prayer of Consecration

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 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

Breaking of the Bread

Lifting of the Cup

Call to the Supper

The Sharing of the Elements

The Blessing of the Children

Table Dismissal

The congregation may stand.

The Prayer of Thanksgiving (Unison)

On this Christmas Eve, we thank you O God and offer our lives in gratitude for your gracious presence in our lives. Be born in us anew, shine your light on us and surround us with your glory, so that we, like the shepherds long ago might sing your praises and reveal your grace in all that we say and do. Amen.

THE CANDLE LIGHTING SERVICE

(Please note: Please tip the unlit candle to the candle which is lit, so as to prevent any injuries from hot wax. Candles will be lit during the singing of "Silent Night" and remain lit throughout the singing of "Joy to the World." Please extinguish your candle at the conclusion of the worship service.)

Candle Hymn No. 186 "Silent Night! Holy Night!"

*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! Shepherds quake at the sight, glories stream from heaven afar,
heavenly hosts sing alleluia; Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born!*

*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.*

GOING WITH THE WORD

COMMISSION

Pastor: A child has been born in Bethlehem.

People: The Prince of Peace has come.

Pastor: The glory of God has been revealed. Treasure the story. Ponder it in your heart. Go and tell it to the world.

People: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel has come! God is with us! Amen.

BENEDICTION

PARTING HYMN NO. 179“Joy to the World”

*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 world! the Savior reigns; let all 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 sins 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.*

SILENT MEDITATION

POSTLUDE

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Portions of today’s worship resources were reproduced or adapted from the UCC’s Book of Worship, Worship Connection by Nancy C. Townley on MinistryMatters.com, Worship Elements by Joanne Carlson Brown and the 2021 Abingdon Worship Annuals edited by Mary J. Scifres and B. J. Beu. Portions reprinted by permission from The Worship Sourcebook, Second Edition, © 2013, Faith Alive Christian Resources.

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- The altar flowers are in honor of a “Happy Birthday to Jesus” by Mr. and Mrs. Brian Clauser and family.
- The bulletins are in honor of Bill and Bonnie Reber’s Anniversary by Dylan, Kaitlyn, Jenna, and Kelly.
- The rose is in memory of Aaron Kreager by Amy Clauser and Amy Crouse.
- The Christmas tree in the Sanctuary is presented in loving memory of John & Dolores Halabura, and Wilma, Marvin, and Charles Eckert by John & Mae, Matthew & Madeline Halabura and Michelle, Pete & Mila Ellison.
- A very special thank you to the Halabura Family for the donation of the tree.

Merry Christmas and Wishes for a Happy New Year!