

CUP EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

530 Blackhawk Rd. Beaver Falls, PA. 15010

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“Join us for a drink of Living Water”

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service December 24, 2023 Festival of Lessons and Carols

I do love Christmas. But at the same time, I sometimes find myself just wanting to get through Christmas Day intact and out the other side, back to normal life. Maybe you're the same. You find Christmas as stressful as you find it joyful. There's the stress of who you'll be with at Christmas, and who you'll disappoint. There's the stress of getting the presents (and batteries). There's the stress of how much food to buy, and when to put it in the oven, and trying to remember whether or not your auntie is still a vegan. And you find yourself thinking, 'If I can just get through Christmas, then things will go back to normal.' But imagine if Christmas could be rescued from the stress or sadness of just getting through Christmas. Imagine if January could be rescued from the disappointment if your joy was in getting to Christmas. Imagine if there was a joy that lasted – that endured through January and that wasn't dented by reality. That would be worth finding, wouldn't it?

The people who experienced that first Christmas and understood its meaning found a joy that did not fade. So can you. Whether you're a get-to-er or get-through-er, if you get the meaning of the first Christmas this Christmas, then you'll get the feeling of joy, and find it's a feeling that lasts.
-- Carl Laferton, from 'Rescuing Christmas'

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Prelude ‘He is Born’ ~ French Carol

Lighting of the Christ Candle The Cunniff Family

Call to Worship ‘Come Let Us Worship the King’ CUP Choir

*Opening Carol #145 ‘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!

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 heaven above!

Glory to God, all glory in the highest!

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

Carol #166 ‘We Three Kings’

We three kings of Orient are: Bearing gifts we traverse afar
Field and fountain, moor and mountain – Following yonder star.
O star of wonder, star of night, Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding, Guide us to thy perfect light.

Ninth Reading - John 1:1-14
John reveals the mystery of the Incarnation

Rev. Dr. Marc Shefelton

* Carol #132 ‘Angels We Have Heard on High’

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply Echo back their joyous strains.

Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.

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.

Meditation

Rev. Dr. Marc Shefelton

The Lord's Supper

Pastoral Prayer and Lords 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. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”

*Carol #147 ‘Silent Night’

(We will have 1 verse of instrumental music while our candles are lit. We will then sing all three verses. On the third verse, please hold your candle up high.)

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.

*Benediction

Postlude ‘Hark! The Herald Angels Sing’

~ Mendelssohn

First Reading - Genesis 3:8-15

God declares the victory of the Messiah over Satan and sin

Mags O’Roark

*Carol #125

‘Joy to the World!’

Joy to the world! the Lord is come; let earth receive her King; let eve’ry heart prepare Him room,
and heav’n and nature sing, and heav’n and nature sing, and heav’n, and heav’n and nature sing.
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.

Second Reading – Genesis 22:15-18

God promises that through Abraham all nations of the earth will be blessed

Laura Osman, Deacon

Anthem

‘His Name Will Be Called’

(By Sue Smith and David Mott, Arranged by Russell Mouldin)

CUP Choir

Third Reading –Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

Isaiah declares the Messiah will reign forever

Wade Rider, Trustee

*Carol

‘On Christmas Night’

On Christmas night all Christians sing to hear the news the angels bring. On Christmas night all Christians
sing to hear the news the angels bring;news of great joy, news of great mirth, news of our merciful King’s
birth. Then why should we on earth be sad, since our Redeemer made us glad? Then why should we on
earth be sad, since our Redeemer made us glad, when from our sin he set us free, all for to gain our liberty?

Fourth Reading – Micah 5:2-5a

Micah prophesies that the Messiah will be born in Bethlehem

Brian O’Roark, Ruling Elder

Carol #160

‘Lo! How a Rose E’er Blooming’

Lo, how a Rose e’er blooming from tender stem hath sprung! Of Jesse’s lineage coming
as men of old have sung. It came, a Flower bright, Amid the cold of winter, when half-gone was the night.
Isaiah ‘twas foretold it, The Rose I have in mind; With Mary we behold it, the virgin mother kind.
To show God’s love aright she bore to men a Savior, when half-spent was the night.

Fifth Reading – Luke 1:26-35, 38

The angel Gabriel visits the virgin Mary

Paula Keefer Herter, Deacon

*Carol #141

‘O Little Town of Bethlehem’

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.
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.

Sixth Reading – Luke 2:1-7

Luke recounts the birth of Jesus

Jale Haas, Ruling Elder

Carol #131

‘Angels, from the Realms of Glory’

Angels, from the realms of glory, wing your flight o’er all the earth;
Ye who sang creation’s story, now proclaim Messiah’s birth:
Come and worship, come and worship, Worship Christ, the newborn King.
Sages, leave your contemplations, Brighter visions beam afar;
Seek the great Desire of nations, Ye have seen His natal star:
Come and worship, come and worship, Worship Christ, the newborn King.

Seventh Reading - Luke 2:8-20

The angels share the good news with the shepherds

Tammy Popham, Deacon

*Carol #144

‘How Great Our Joy’

While by the sheep we watched at night, glad tidings brought an angel bright.
How great our joy! Great our joy! Joy, joy, joy, Joy, joy, joy!
Praise we the Lord in heaven on high! Praise we the Lord in heaven on high!
There shall be born, so he did say, in Bethlehem a Child today,
How great our joy! Great our joy! Joy, joy, joy, Joy, joy, joy!
Praise we the Lord in heaven on high! Praise we the Lord in heaven on high!

Eighth Reading - Matthew 2:1-12

The Magi come to worship Jesus

Robin Kahle, Usher Captain