



Christmas Eve

CARMICHAEL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

*"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulders and his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."
-Isaiah 9:6*

December 24, 2023

5:00 p.m.

As you enter the Sanctuary, all children are encouraged to choose a figure from the nativity scene in the narthex.

At the designated times during the service, children may place their figures in the Bethlehem village at the front of the church.

PRELUDE

"Toccata on 'Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabella'"
Rick Schlosser, Organ

Traditional French Carol
Toccata by Richard Hudson

PASTORAL WELCOME

Pastor Keith L. DeVries

* CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: Good news of great joy!

People: People who walked in darkness now live in great light.

Pastor: Good news of great joy!

People: Oppression and war will not have the last word.

Pastor: Good news of great joy!

People: A Savior is born, who is the Messiah, the Lord. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace.

* CAROL OF PRAISE

"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 earth, 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.

CONFESSION AND PARDON

Pastor: Friends, the grace of Christ educates us so that we can live sensible, ethical, and godly lives. On this eve of his birth, we confess that we struggle to receive him still. We pray together:

All: God of Love Incarnate, we confess that, with the shepherds, we are terrified of your glory; for in glory's light we see plainly all that is wrong in the world: how oppression still enslaves; how garments of war are still stained with blood; how those seeking refuge still find no place of safety. We also see what is wrong in us: how passionately we pursue the things of this world, but forget to ponder the mystery of faith; how we do not practice the peace you intend in our relationships, our community, or even in the church. Forgive us, we pray, and help us not to be afraid. Like the shepherds, we want to follow and find you.

Silence

Pastor: Good news! Great joy! In Jesus Christ the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all.

People: Glory to God in heaven, and on earth, peace.

The Christmas Story
Told in the Reading of Scripture and the Singing of Carols

LESSON ONE

Isaiah 9:2-6

CAROL

“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King.
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!”
Joyful, all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”
Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold Him come, offspring of the virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail the incarnate Deity,
Pleased in flesh with us to dwell, Jesus our Emmanuel.
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King.”
Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings, risen with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,
Born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King.”

LESSON TWO

Micah 5:2-5a

CAROL

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”
(The animals are placed in the manger, except the camel and donkey.)

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.
For Christ is born of Mary; and gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing to God the King, and peace to all on earth.
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!

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

The Grace Family

CHRISTMAS PRAYER

All: Lord Jesus, as we search for signs of Christ’s presence this week, help us to become the signs of Christ’s presence that others are searching for. As these candles are but a glimpse of the light of the heavens, help us to be a glimpse of heaven on earth. Help us to shine like stars in the world. Amen.

CAROL

**"Love Has Come"
(Mary, Joseph, and the donkey are placed.)**

Love has come: a light in the darkness!
Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it;
hear how their song of joy arises:
Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior!
Love! Love! Glory to God on high.
Love is born! Come, share in the wonder.
Love is God now asleep in the hay.
See the glow in the eyes of his mother;
what is the name her heart is saying?
Love! Love! Love is the name she whispers.
Love! Love! Jesus, Emmanuel.
Love has come and never will leave us!
Love is life everlasting and free.
Love is Jesus within and among us.
Love is the peace our hearts are seeking.
Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas.
Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

ANTHEM

**"Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"
Sanctuary Choir**

arr. Michael Praetorius

*Lo, how a rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung,
of Jesse's lineage coming, by faithful prophets sung.
It came, a floweret bright, amid the cold of winter,
when half spent 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 for us a Savior,
when half spent was the night.*

LESSON THREE

Luke 2:1-7

CAROL

**"Away in a Manger"
(Jesus, the Christmas Star and other stars are placed.)**

Away in a manger, no crib for His bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.
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.
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.

CHRISTMAS PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Pastor: Glory to you, O God, for good news of great joy that you give to all people. Thank you for Jesus Christ, the Messiah, who lived among us and now reigns on high. Thank you for his light that shines in the darkness. With the angels, we sing praise to you, celebrating your glory in all the earth, in the Son given to us, and in your promised salvation.

Silence

Pastor: Gathered as a community on this Christmas Eve, we pray for your church in every place, that we may make known to others what has been told to us about this child. Help us to bear Christ's light in every place of need. Draw near to those who spend this night apart from community: travelers and those far from home, people who live alone, one who waits in a hospital room, one who sits in a prison cell, one who is working deep in the night, one estranged from family or friends. Comfort those who are poor and vulnerable: the child at risk, the homeless on the streets, the family that is hungry, and those contending with prejudice and scorn.

Silence

Pastor: Restore those who have lost faith, lost hope, or simply lost their way. End the hostilities and wars we construct by ushering in the endless peace of your design. Establish your reign of justice and righteousness. You are the Lord of hosts who, with zeal, will do this; through Jesus Christ our Savior who taught us to pray:

People: 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.

CHRISTMAS OFFERING AND PRAYER

OFFERTORY

"The Holly and the Ivy"

English Carol
arr. Lee Evans

JOYFUL GOOD NEWS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Pastor Ivan N. Herman

LESSON FOUR

Luke 2:8-14

CAROL

**"Angels We Have Heard on High"
(Angels and shepherds are placed.)**

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!

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!

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!

LESSON FIVE

Luke 2:15-20

*Jesus Christ is born today, let the nations praise Him!
 God and man in every way, to all honor raise Him.
 Young and old, both rich and poor, we are one before Him.
 So with simple hearts and pure, come let us adore Him!*

*Hark! the herald angels sing, as they did and still do.
 And the Wise Men presents bring, as they ever will do.
 Shepherds leave their flocks by night, as they always have done;
 As the star's eternal light scatters benediction.*

*What is old and what is new? What of joy and sorrow?
 Christ from ages past untold, still is our tomorrow.
 We are "what?" and "why?" and "when?," fooled by fad and fashion.
 Christ is now! and soon again, bears the bitter Passion.*

*Alleluia it is true, as foretold Isaiah.
 Now as then the word is new: Christ is our Messiah
 Christians! rally to his crib; what of wind or weather?
 While a boy in baby bib holds the world together.*

*O proud nation, bend your knee while you still are able.
 For a greater power is He, ruling from a stable.
 Alleluia to His name! Raise it now as never.
 Alleluia to the same, Jesus Christ for ever!*

**"We Three Kings of Orient Are"
 (The kings and camels are placed.)**

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!
 Born a King on Bethlehem's plain, gold I bring to crown Him again,
 King forever, ceasing never over us all to reign.

O star of wonder, star of night, Star with royal beauty bright;
 Westward leading, still proceeding, Guide us to thy perfect light!

Frankincense to offer have I: incense owns a Deity nigh;
 Prayer and praising we are raising, worshiping God Most High.
 O star of wonder, star of night, Star with royal beauty bright;
 Westward leading, still proceeding, Guide us to thy perfect light!

Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume breathes a life of gathering gloom;
 Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying, sealed in the stone-cold tomb.
 O star of wonder, star of night, Star with royal beauty bright;
 Westward leading, still proceeding, Guide us to thy perfect light!

Glorious now behold Him arise, King and God and Sacrifice;
 Alleluia, alleluia sounds through the earth and skies.
 O star of wonder, star of night, Star with royal beauty bright;
 Westward leading, still proceeding, Guide us to thy perfect light!

LITANY FOR LIGHTING CANDLES

Pastor: In the beginning and in the midst of darkness, God spoke.

People: Let there be light.

Pastor: In the beginning was the Word. And the Word came and dwelt among us. And the Word was the light of all peoples.

People: Let there be light.

Pastor: We light our candles, knowing that the One who is the source and promise of all light is the One whose birth we celebrate.

People: Let there be light.

Pastor: We need to know that we are part of something greater than the flicker of our own little candles. We long to be assured that the light of Christ is with us even in the moment.

People: Let there be light.

Pastor: So we light our candles in gratitude for the love and light that shine through the babe born in Bethlehem who became the Redeemer of us all.

People: Let there be light.

Pastor: May we be bold to share the love of God with a world longing for light and hope, purpose, and love. May our actions and generosity shine bright.

People: Let there be light.

Jesus is the light of the world. As His followers, we are called to receive His light and carry Him into the darkness of today.

Watch the light change as each of us receives the light of Christ.

CAROL

"Silent 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.

Silent night, holy night! Wondrous star, lend thy light;
With the angels let us sing, Alleluia to our King;
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born.

BENEDICTION

* CONGREGATION LEAVES IN SILENCE

* Please stand if you are able.

All music used in this program is copyrighted. Used by permission CCLI #74647.

Music reprinted/streamed with permission under One License #740355-A. All rights reserved.

Childcare for children up to age 4 is available in Room 102.

CHRISTMAS EVE 2023

Instructions for Lighting Your Candle

As we reflect upon the light of God's love which is revealed to us in the birth of Jesus Christ, we light candles to remind us that God's love brings light in the darkness. Tonight, just prior to singing "Silent Night," all of the lights in the Sanctuary will be turned off. **When Pastor Keith and Pastor Ivan turn on their candles, you are invited to turn on your candle using the switch at the bottom symbolizing how the light of God's love comes into the world.** Please turn off your candle following the benediction and place it in a basket as you exit.

Silent Night, Holy Night

This Christmas hymn was originally written by Joseph Mohr for a Christmas festival at St. Nicholas Church, Oberndorf, near Salzburg, Austria. The story is told that the organ was not functioning the day of the service and Mohr decided to write a new hymn that would not require organ accompaniment. He took it to his friend, Franz Xaver Gruber, and asked him to write a suitable tune. The two sang the new hymn as Gruber accompanied on the guitar. The village choir joined in, repeating the last line of each stanza in four-part harmony. As we sing this hymn tonight, may we lift our voices in prayerful praise with those who have been singing this hymn since 1831.

Special Thanks

We extend our gratitude to our excellent musicians and audio/visual technicians for their dedication and hard work and for sharing their gifts with us during the season of Advent and Christmas. We especially thank CPC's Director of Music Keith Atwater, Organist Rick Schlosser, and the Sanctuary Choir as they lead us in singing and praise this evening.

Please Join Us for Worship

If you do not already have a church home, we invite you to call Carmichael Presbyterian your church home. ALL are welcome to worship on Sundays at 10:00 a.m. in-person or online via YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/@carmichaelpres>).



5645 Marconi Ave. ■ Carmichael, CA 95608 ■ 916-486-9081 ■ www.carmichaelpres.org