

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

Schaller, Iowa  
December 18, 2022

10:00 A.M.  
Christmas Program

Rev. Michael Sydnor

**PRELUDE**

**ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING**

Mark and Sam McDonough

**Reader One: Isaiah said that the Lord spoke to the king and said, "Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven" (Isaiah 7:11 NRSV). But when the king refused, God would not be stopped. "Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14 NRSV).**

**Reader Two: God wants us to know, even when we aren't sure ourselves. God wants us to experience God's presence, even when we think we can handle life on our own. God sends us signs of God's presence with us; all we need to do is keep our eyes open and look.**

**Reader One: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, 'God is with us.'" When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus (Matthew 1:23-25 NRSV).**

**Reader Two: We light these candles, the candle of joyous hope, of proclaimed peace, of deep everlasting joy, and today of presence that speaks of love, as a sign that no matter our circumstance, we know we are not alone.**

**Light all four candles of the Advent wreath.**

**WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Elder

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Elder: Look! The young woman is with child;

People: she will call him Emmanuel, for God is with us.<sup>1</sup>

Elder: Let us worship God!

**INVOCATION**

Pastor

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<sup>1</sup> Presbyterian Church. Book of Common Worship (p. 179). Presbyterian Publishing. Kindle Edition.

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION (UNISON)

Elder

God of grace and truth, in Jesus Christ you came among us as light shining in 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. <sup>2</sup> (Time of Silent Prayer) Amen.

## ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Pastor

## GLORIA PATRI

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM - \*Carols sung by the people

# Welcome:

*Introduce the program and give instructions to the congregation.*

### Narrator:

Welcome everyone to Bethlehem! Let us open our eyes and ears and listen to the story of when Christ was born.

## Part I: Mary and Joseph

*As the Marys' and Josephs' come forward, we will hear, "Mary, Did You Know?" "by Pentatonix." When the Marys' and Josephs' are on stage, the narrator begins.*

### Narrator:

Mary and Joseph, a pitiful sight.  
So tired and dirty, they gave me a fright.  
Sickly or dying? What was the matter?  
"A room in the inn?" Impossible chatter!  
"My rooms are all taken; not one empty bed.  
There'll not be a room in all Bethlehem," I said.  
But their eyes told a story of hunger and need.  
I couldn't avoid them, so I tried a good deed.  
I cleaned up the stable: Rachel cooked up a meal.  
We helped all we could, at least, that's how I feel.  
For we noticed that Mary was expecting – and soon!  
So we prepared for delivery right under the moon.  
The child came so quickly. His face seemed a light.  
As if God had shone God's presence so bright.  
Joseph said softly. "It's Jesus, my friend."  
God sent him among us to bring to an end fear and  
hatred, darkness and sin.

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<sup>2</sup> Presbyterian Church. Book of Common Worship (p. 190). Presbyterian Publishing. Kindle Edition.

Instead God gave light, to let God's love in.

## Part II: The Animals

*Those who wish to be goats, sheep, cows, or donkeys are invited by the narrator to come forward. Animals are given masks or hats. As the animals come forward, the congregation sings "Away in a Manger" #157." When the animals are on stage, the narrator begins.*

Narrator:

My animals were calm, quieter than normal.

They often were noisy, and never too formal.

They always were eating, or else they were sleeping.

The stable required continuous sweeping.

But on Christmas night, they were strangely in awe at the sight of the babe and all that they saw.

It's as if they were aware that God had just hushed them,

Had fed and watered and carefully brushed them.

They knew, I believe, that God had been able to work a miracle there in that stable.

## Part III: Angels

*Those who wish to be angels are invited forward. Gold and silver garland halos are placed on their heads. As the angels come forward, the congregation sings "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing." #133. When the angels are on stage, the narrator begins.*

Narrator:

We don't often see angels in flight.

But on the first Christmas, they lit up the night.

They appeared to the shepherds and, boy, were they scared!

"Angels!" cried one. "Will any lives be spared?"

"Are they here to destroy us? Is our time on earth up?"

Have we seen our last day? Have we drunk our last cup?"

But "Peace on earth; goodwill to all" was the angels' sweet song; that was their call.

With a light show that dazzled all who did see, the angels hallelujah'ed and sang out with glee.

"To Bethlehem, shepherds!" the angels directed.

"To see Jesus the Christ, whom God has perfected."

"Go worship the Lord and follow his ways.

And you'll find Christmas joy for all of your days."

## Part IV: Shepherds

*Those who wish to be shepherds are invited forward. They are given candy canes to represent shepherds' staffs. As the shepherds come forward, the congregation sings "Go Tell It on the Mountain." #138. When the shepherds are on stage, the narrator begins.*

Narrator:

The shepherds, I told you, were scared and stunned.  
“Too much hard work or too much hot sun!”  
That’s what they thought; that’s how they explained.  
Perplexed and afraid, they loudly complained.  
But the angels’ song calmed them, and then they believed.  
They rejoiced when they knew and they were quite relieved.  
They went to the stable and worshiped the Lord.  
Then they left and began to spread the good Word.

## Part V: Wise Persons and Star

*Those who wish to be Wise Persons are invited forward. Colorful construction-paper crowns with “jewels” are placed on their heads. An older child has been asked in advance to bring forward a brilliant star extended high on a stick. As the Wise Persons come forward, the congregation sings “We Three Kings.” #166. When the Wise Persons are on stage, the narrator begins.*

Narrator:

The star that shone brightly led Wise Persons at night  
To Bethlehem’s stable, to the manger’s strange light.  
They came bearing gifts, in worship and love, praising God for God’s wonders from heaven above.  
The Wise Men were kings and they knelt on my straw.  
It was the oddest of things that ever I saw.  
If kings bring him treasure, then maybe you, too, can worship with pleasure the person of Jesus, who came to us all.  
So worthy of praise, for he brings us God’s call.”  
“I am the way, the truth, and the life,  
Come to God for healing from strife.  
Come unto me, all you who labor,  
And I’ll give you rest forever to savor.”

## Part VI: Conclusion

Narrator:

T’was the very first Christmas and there in the manger,  
The Christ-child was born; it couldn’t have been stranger.  
Shepherds saw angels; Wise Men, a star.  
They came to see Jesus; they came afar.  
They knew he was special – God’s very own son,  
He came to the earth to love everyone.  
He grew up in time, the Savior, the Lord,

To be worshiped each day, to be loved and adored.  
So now at Christmas we all take delight.  
In the gift that God gave us that first Christmas night.  
In the gifts we receive and the ones that we give,  
Let us never forget, it's in Christ that we live.  
We now invite everyone to join with us as we close by singing Joy to the World.  
After we finish singing, everyone will stay on the stage so we can take a group photo. If you have a camera, feel free to take a photo as well.

**Everyone sings “Joy to the World.” #125**

**The End**

**OFFERING**

**OFFERING PRAYER**

**BENEDICTION**