

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

4:00 & 6:00pm

December 24, 2016

WELCOME

PRELUDE

Eulyn Riemersma & Arla Stover
"The Christmas Song"

LIGHTING OF ADVENT CANDLES

Brad, Susan, Fran & Lauren Travis - 4pm
John & Sue Ziegenbusch - 6pm

Leader: The angel told Joseph that his son would be called Jesus, which means "God saves," and that he would be "Immanuel," which means "God is with us." This first promise of Christmas comes to us whenever we need it most. We are not alone. We are not abandoned. God is with us.

People: May the hope of God's presence shine in our darkness.

Leader: The angel's sang to the shepherds, "peace on earth and good will to all," proclaiming that the Prince of Peace had arrived. God's peace fell upon the chaos of human life with the promise of a savior.

People: May the peace of Christ find us amidst our worries, our fear, and our doubts. May it quiet our hearts and calm our minds and live in us that we might be peacemakers in Christ's name.

Leader: When Mary heard the promise of God for her life, she cried out, "My spirit rejoices in God my savior." Joy is the natural reaction to Christmas. The heart cannot help but be glad when the promise of God is revealed.

People: May our hearts and our lives be filled with God's holy joy.

Leader: Because God loved, God gave. The simplest truth of the manger is love. A God who loved the world, parents who loved their newborn son, and a baby who would come to love all people so much that we would give himself to save them. Love is the foundation of Christmas, and the pure and beautiful reason for this wondrous gift.

People: May we know the love of God again this night, and may others know it through us in the days to come.

Leader: No one understood who this baby was, who this baby

would become. They were amazed and wondered, but didn't understand. They couldn't begin to guess that the path from the manger would lead to a cross and an empty tomb. All they could do was give thanks, and praise for what God had done and promised to do through the life of this precious Son.

People: May the light of Christ shine on us, and in us, as we celebrate again the birth of the savior.

* HYMN 23

"Angels We Have Heard on High"

* OPENING PRAYER ~~based on a prayer by John Van De Laar
Gracious God, in a world where children go hungry and disease attacks even the innocent it may seem foolish to speak of joy. In a world of corrupt power in which the haves exploit and oppress the have-nots, it may seem false to speak of justice. In a world filled with grief and suffering it may seem callous to sing songs of celebration. All of this would be true, O God, if it were not for Jesus, not for the unimaginable gift given to a world desperately in need of love and grace. Because of Christ, we receive joy, work for peace, and proclaim hope. Bring light to our darkness and refresh our tired souls with the life-giving promise of Christmas. May we embrace your gift that we might extend it to others and may the good news of Christ live in us and truly bring joy to the world. Amen.

CHILDREN'S TIME

Michael Gewecke

* HYMN 53

"What Child Is This"

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 1:18-25

(Page 783 in your Pew Bible)

ANTHEM

Chancel Choir

"Ding Dong! Merrily on High"

SCRIPTURE

Luke 2:1-11

(Page 832 in your Pew Bible)

MESSAGE

Clint Loveall

The first and last words of Christmas

A LITANY FOR CHRISTMAS

Leader: For the birth of the Christ child, we give you thanks.

People: Be with every child who is lost, hungry, hurting, and helpless.

Leader: For a young mother and an uncertain father who struggled yet believed.

People: Be with each family that struggles, and give them grace

Leader: For wise men who sought the truth and saw the light

People: And for the foolish who feared the truth and hid in the dark

Leader: For the working poor, who on that one night, were invited in.

People: And for all of those who go without, those who have nothing to give.

Leader: For the joy of Christmas, and the songs of angels.

People: And for the loneliness of grief and the heavy heart of despair.

Leader: For those who are filled with the hope of faith.

People: And those who are empty, full of only pain and doubt.

Leader: For those who are set free by the truth

People: And those held captive by lies.

Leader: To those who find Christmas

People: And those who need Christmas to find them...

Leader: Lord we find them all at the manger, we find them all at Christmas, we find them all in ourselves.

People: Born this day to all people, we find the savior.

OFFERING

Offertory

Adult Handbell Choir

"Do You Hear What I Hear"

PRAYER

THE SERVICE OF CANDLELIGHTING

* HYMN 60

"Silent Night"

After the Benediction, please carefully extinguish candles. Place them on the table in the narthex on your way out.

* BENEDICTION

(You are welcome to sit quietly and reflect or leave when you wish.)

Many thanks to all for participating in and providing our Christmas Eve Candlelight Services music this evening.



First Presbyterian Church

3501 Hill Ave., Spirit Lake, IA 51360

(712)336-1649

office@fpcspiritleake.org

www.fpcspiritleake.org