



Forest Hill Church
Service of Worship
December 24, 2020 at 5:00 pm
Christmas Eve Service

Please join our YouTube Live Stream:

<https://youtu.be/juCLGqFwoBo>

Centering Words

*Light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness flees as the light grows in power and beauty.*

PRELUDE

The Wassail Song arr. Kenneth Baird
Scott Laffrety and Ahren Stock, trumpets

Fantasia on Greensleaves by Vaughn Williams
OPUS 216

O Holy Night by Adolphe Charles Adam
Lara Troyer, soprano

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

Castillo-Keefe Family

Molly, Lola, Gabriel and Sadie

Leader: Hope, peace, joy and love. Four candles, four promises continually offered to us by God, and all of them manifest in this one we light tonight: The Christ candle. In Christ we find the hope of transformation, the peace that follows justice, the joy of self-fulfillment in community, and the love that encompasses us in all our diversity, empowering us to make our own unique contribution to this world. In Christ, we find light and life, and the courage to be like him, answering his call and following his footsteps.

All: We rejoice in God's steadfast presence in our lives, and in God's unique presence in the life of Jesus of Nazareth – born of Mary, growing through childhood into an adult ministry, in all his life manifesting the peace, love, and justice of God; his voice undimmed by the centuries his call and his promise as clear to us as it was to his disciples so long ago. Come to us, Lord Jesus, Be born in us this night, in our hearts, our minds, and our lives. May the light of your life bar kindled in us, And lead us to the shining truth, Of God with us, God for us, God in us. Amen.

1. 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!
3. 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!

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Rev. Dr. Veronica Goines

Protect us with your light, when the darkness threatens. Redeem us with your grace, when sin separates us from your presence. Pour your love upon us throughout the world, that hatred may yield to companionship, and apathy may warm to compassion. In your mighty love, we pray. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

We, who once walked in darkness, are now children of light, and no darkness can overcome the light. We, who once were no people, are now God’s people of love, and nothing can separate us from this love, through Jesus Christ our newborn King. Amen.

READING: ISAIAH 9:2-7

Seth Ungemach

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

HYMN NO. 119

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

1. 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 angelic hopes proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king."
3. Hail the heaven born Prince of Peace! Hail the sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing on 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."

READING: PSALM 96

Molly Webster

O sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples. For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; he is to be revered above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but the Lord made the heavens. Honor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord Glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts. Worship the Lord in holy splendor; tremble before him, all the earth. Say among the nations, "The Lord is king! The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved. He will judge the peoples with equity." Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it; let the field exult, and everything in it. Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before the Lord; for he is coming, for he is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with his truth.

ANTHEM

Samuel Barber

Sure on this Shining Night

Lara Troyer, soprano

READING: LUKE 2:1-20

Rev. Dr. John C. Lentz, Jr.

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David :) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

HYMN NO. 121

O Little Town of Bethlehem

1. 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.

3. How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him still the dear Christ enters in.

4. 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.

HOMILY

Rev. Dr. John C. Lentz, Jr.

Christmas In the Trenches

HYMN NO. 134

Joy to the World

1. 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.

2. Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ,
3. While fields and floods, rocks, hills,
and plains repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

4. He rules the earth 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.

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

Rev. Dr. Veronica Goines

THE JOY GIFT OFFERING

ANTHEM

Sweet Little Jesus Boy
Caleb Alexander Wright

THE LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

HYMN NO. 122

Silent Night

1. 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.

2. 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!

3. 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.

4. 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

POSTLUDE

Christmas Time is Here
OPUS 216



A very special thank you to the following:

Sally Wile, soprano
Molly Webster, alto
Jack Lentz, tenor
Seth Ungemach, bass
Scott Lafferty, trumpet
Ahren Stock, trumpet



FHC NOTES

Prayer Requests:

To request prayers for a personal concern, please email Pastor Lentz (pastorlentz@fhcpresb.org) or Pastor Goines (pastorgoines@fhcpresb.org) no later than Thursday afternoon of each week for inclusion in next week's congregational prayer. Please direct all prayer concerns that arise between Friday and Sunday morning to the Pastor's on-call phone line (216-319-3596). The on-call phone is operational after office hours on weekdays and Saturday through Sunday morning.

Prayers are requested this week for:

Melanie Alban, Barbara Bodzin, Kiva Bohanon, Kathy Cameron, Graham Creasey, Mark Davidson, Marcie Denton, Rita Grube, Carol King-Himmelsteib, Lillian Houser, Deborah Howard, Joanna Klingenstein, Kitty McWilliams, Susan Way, the family of Doris Brandt (her daughter and grandson, Cindy and Jon Newton), and the family of Dick Peterjohn.

Please remember these homebound members in your prayers:

Marge Drollinger, Robert Kellermeyer, Florence and Ron Klein, Carol Hopkins-Lutz, Emelia McGuire, Margaret Sentell, Elaine Tapié, Beryl and Henrietta Williams.

Care Group: *The All Church Care Group* will assist our pastors with members' needs in **December**. Please call the church office to report an illness, hospitalization, family emergency, birth or death. Information will be passed on to the **Care Group leader, Elaine Turley** (deacons@fhcpresb.org).

Thank you, all office volunteers: Lynda Bernays, Cathy Ghiandoni, and Ellen McChesney.

The deadline for the bulletin and weekly email is Tuesday of each week at 5 pm. The next TOWER deadline is **January 14 (for the February TOWER) at 8:00 am**. Please submit your written requests to office@fhcpresb.org.

Bible and Bagels (Bible Study) discusses next Sunday's texts on Wednesday mornings (virtually) from 7:30-8:30 am. The lessons for this week are: **Isa. 9: 2-7; Ps. 96; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-20**.

Poinsettias are given by:

- Cliff and Jane Kowall in memory of parents Walter and Elaine Grasson and Paul and Dorothy Kowall.
- Eileen Vizcaino in celebration of the Sanctuary.
- Marina B. Grant in celebration of her family and PO6 sisters.
- Nancy Burcham in memory of Dave Halkerston and Bill Burcham.
- Rachel Martinez-Finn and Bill Finn in loving memory of their parents.
- Rob Reynolds in honor of his loving family.
- Roberta Lentz in honor of Pop-Pop and Peter.
- The Weissbrod Marunowski Family in Memory of their parents Pat & Ray Weissbrod and Kay & Stanley Marunowski.



CHRISTMAS JOY SPECIAL OFFERINGS

LEADERSHIP: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

The Christmas Joy Offering reflects that God is with us through the generous gifts that support church leaders among us, retired, present, and future, who have pointed us to God. \$1.3 million of gifts from 2019 are being used to provide critical financial support and grants for current and retired Presbyterian Church workers in their times of need.

Income supplements from the BOP helped nearly 311 households, assisting retired church workers and surviving spouses with the means to provide for themselves. Housing supplements from the BOP helped more than 249 households remain in their homes, afford assisted living or long-term care. Shared and Emergency Grants from the BOP helped more than 84 households facing times of great financial need or uncertainty due to unforeseen circumstances.

AND

\$1.2 million in gifts from 2019 supported new leaders for our Church and world through the ministry of Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color — offering students the means for a brighter future and enhanced opportunities to use their talents and skills to serve God, the Church and the world for years to come.

Text JOY to 56512 to receive a link to resources to learn more about how your gift to the Christmas Joy Offering makes a difference, or visit [pcusa.org/Christmas joy](http://pcusa.org/Christmas%20joy)

If you wish to give a Christmas Joy Offering, please feel free to mail in your gift or click the link:

https://www.paypal.com/donate/?cmd=s-xclick&hosted_button_id=AMCFXKQXJWRRRA&source=url

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Rev. Dr. Veronica R. Goines, Rev. Dr. John C. Lentz, Jr., Co-Pastors

Dr. Amy Wheatley, Dir. of Family, Youth & Children's Ministries

Dr. Qin Ying Tan, Interim Director of Music

Rev. Carol Wedell, Parish Associate