

*FIRST  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH*



**Christmas Eve Service**  
Sunday, December 24, 2023  
7:00 P.M.

119 WEST COMMERCE STREET  
BRIDGETON, NJ 08302  
PHONE (856)455-0809 [WWW.FPCBRIDGETON.ORG](http://WWW.FPCBRIDGETON.ORG)

## ORDER OF WORSHIP

### PRELUDE

“How Brightly Shines the Morning Star”

Johann Pachelbel

“Gesù Bambino”

Pietro Yon

Beverly P. - flute & pan flute

### WELCOME

Liturgist

## GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

### CALL TO WORSHIP

Liturgist

Darkness is all around,

**but great things happen in the dark.**

Seeds planted in the dark bloom into flowers.

**Humans formed in the dark are born.**

From within the night we see a great light.

**That light is the presence of God.**

We greet a child, Emmanuel, God with us.

Let us live in the light of the coming of Christ.

**Let us worship God!**

\*HYMN #41 “O Come, All Ye Faithful”

### CALL TO CONFESSION

Rev. Norlita

A new neighbor has arrived,

**but we are too insulated to greet them.**

A new neighbor has come to our door,

**but we are too sequestered to receive them.**

God became flesh to live among us,

**but we are too arrogant to recognize it.**

We segregate ourselves as if we have the

power to withhold God’s grace,

**but our members-only policies have failed**

**us time and time again.**

Have we accepted inaccessibility, seclusion,

and quarantine as best practices for living

in community? When will we learn that we are interdependent?

### **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Rev. Norlita

**Forgive us, God our neighbor.  
Forgive us, God our savior.  
Forgive us, we pray. . . .  
Remind us who you really are  
and who we really are,  
so that, with Simeon, we might rejoice  
when we recognize you at last.  
Amen. (*Silent Reflection*)**

### **ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Rev. Norlita

When will we learn that God's grace  
is not something to be withheld?  
When will we finally hear the good news  
and believe it: in Jesus Christ, **we are forgiven.**  
**Thanks Be To God!**

**\*GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO.....**

### **A TIME TO BE YOUNG**

**ANTHEM** "On Christmas Night" P. Manz, arr. D. Cherwien

### **PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

Great God,

**we were on the journey** with Mary and Joseph, afraid and nervous about what the future would bring. **We were in the fields** with the shepherds, **shocked and astonished** at the proclamation of the angels:

**Unto us a child is born**, a Son is given, and authority rests on him. **Through our fears we are learning** to sing a new song, one that declares your glory, honor, and praise. **Help us, O God, to be active participants in your story**, that we

might enact justice in a society yearning for it and **share the grace offered in the person and work of Christ. Help us Holy Spirit** to hear your word in new ways even as we hear the familiar stories. **In the name of the One called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Amen.**

### **The First Lesson**

John A.

Luke 2:1-7

**HYMN** #25 "Away in a Manger"

### **The Second Lesson**

Bill F.

Luke 2:8-12

**Hymn** #59 "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks"

### **The Third Lesson**

Debbi B-G.

Luke 2:13-18

**HYMN** #23 "Angels We Have Heard on High"

### **The Fourth Lesson**

Marie D.

Luke 2:19-20

**HYMN** #56 "The First Nowell"

### **AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

**I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the**

**communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen**

## **INVITATION TO THE OFFERING**

### **OFFERTORY**

“Jesus, Jesus, Rest Your Head”      Traditional/arr. J. Innes  
    Kyle S - organ  
    Gae F - piano

### **\*Doxology**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

## **PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

## **INVITATION TO THE TABLE**

## **THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Lord we greet you happily this night.....

.....And so with the faithful of all ages, we say that praise and glory of your name:

**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might.  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory, Hosanna in  
the Highest. Blessed is he, who comes in the name  
of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest.**

Glory to God in the highest! And so, O God, come among us

tonight.....Let us pray now with confidence as children of God the prayer the Christ Child taught us to pray saying:

### **THE LORD'S 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. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

### **SHARING THE MEAL**

(Come For All Is Now Ready. Rev. Kaul will give instructions for coming forward to receive the elements. Those that are unable to come forward to receive the elements, please let the ushers know so that the elements can be brought to you, where you are.)

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

**By the power of your Holy Spirit, unite us with Christ and all who share this feast, just as you send us out to be his presence in and for your world. Give us courage to be your people, to show your justice, grace, mercy, peace, and love, and to be a part of your transformation of our world until the day when the baby whose birth we celebrate tonight comes again in peace and we sing your praise and glory forever. Amen.**

### **THE WORD BECAME FLESH**

Rev. Norlita Kaul

### **THE LIGHTING OF THE CHRISTMAS CANDLE**

### **SHARING CHRIST'S LIGHT**

**HYMN #60 "Silent Night, Holy Night"**

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**HYMN** #40 “Joy to the World!”

## **BENEDICTION**

### **Benediction for Christmas**

Our Savior born.

#### **A seed planted.**

Roots driven into the earth.

#### **Soil quakes.**

A mighty tree shoots toward the heavens.

#### **Branches sprout, extending hands of praise.**

Leaves flower, shouting glory and grace.

The family tree made simple.

#### **Singular.**

All-encompassing

#### **Perfect.**

God the Father.

#### **We the family.**

Friends, the seed has been planted.

#### **And we are one. Hallelujah Thanks be to God!**

(Written by Michael Yager, and posted on Ecclesia. <http://www.ecclesiahouston.org>)

*“May the Lord watch over between me and thee, while absent, one form the other.” (Mizpah Benediction)*

## **POSTLUDE**

“Joy to the World”

arr. Lani Smith

## **Serving Today**

**LITURGIST-** Curtis H.

### **USHERS**

Joyce I. & Marie D.

### **LESSON LITURGISTS**

1- John A.

2 - Bill F.

3- Debbi B-G.

4 - Marie D.

### **COMMUNION SERVERS**

Debbie H., John A. & Darlene F.

### **CANDLE LIGHTER**

Yvonne C.

**Rev. Norlita Kaul, Pastor**

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**John Ambrose, Clerk to Session**

**Bob Woodruff, Treasurer**

