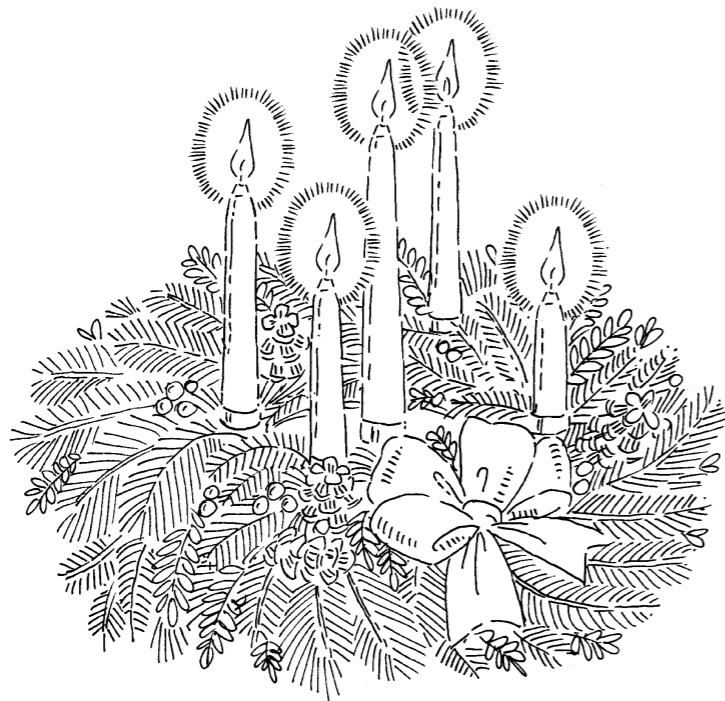


# Christmas Eve



*First Presbyterian Church*

*Founded 1835*

*Corner of Jefferson and Clinton Streets*

*Marianna, Florida*

*(850) 526-2430*

*A Celebration of the Light of Our Faithful God Seen in the gift*

*of Jesus Christ to be The Light of the World*

*with the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper and Candlelighting*

*Christmas Eve 2008 at 6:30 p.m.*

## THE CHURCH GATHERS . . .

### THEME VERSE FOR REFLECTION DURING THE CHRISTMAS SEASON

For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

II Corinthians 4:6

**PRELUDE** *With the first notes of the organ please silently prepare yourself for worship.*

### WELCOME AND SHARING OF COMMUNITY LIFE

**INTROIT** "Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light"  
Words by Johann Rist and Norman E. Johnson  
Music by Johann Schop, harmonized by Johann S. Bach

### \* LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

Leaders: Kip, Betty, Kelly and Joshua Blighton and Daniel Rhee

Leader: When we gather for worship we light a candle to remind us that at creation God said,

**People:** "Let there be light," and there was light.

Leader: When we gather for worship we light a candle to remind us that Jesus said,

**People:** "I am the Light of the World. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."

Leader: During Advent we have lit special candles to remind us

**People:** of the gifts our faithful God offers to us in the gift of Jesus, the Light of the World.

Leader: Tonight we light again our first candle.

**People:** This is the candle of forgiveness.

Leader: This candle invites us to know and to accept the good news of God's mercy and grace offered to us in Jesus Christ.

**People:** When we accept this invitation we can know that our sins are forgiven.

Leader: Tonight we light again our second candle.

**People:** This is the candle of comfort.

Leader: This candle invites us to know and to accept the tidings of comfort and joy that God offers to us in Jesus Christ.

**People:** When we accept this invitation we can know the comfort that God alone can give us in life and in death.

Leader: Tonight we light again our third candle.

**People: This is the candle of freedom.**

Leader: This candle invites us to know and to accept the gift of freedom that God offers to us in Jesus Christ.

**People: When we accept this invitation we can know a freedom from all that would hold us captive.**

Leader: Tonight we light again our fourth candle.

**People: This is the candle of strength.**

Leader: This candle invites us to know and to accept the gift of strength that God offers to us in Jesus Christ.

**People: When we accept this invitation we can know a strength through which to live as God's forgiven, comforted and free people.**

Leader: Tonight we come to light our Christ Candle.

**People: This candle reminds us of Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, whose birth we have come to celebrate.**

Leader: This candle invites us to accept Jesus Christ, the Babe of Bethlehem, as the Savior and Lord of our lives.

**People: When we accept this invitation we can know all of the blessings of his heaven that our faithful God wants to give us in the gift of Jesus.**

**\* CAROL OF ADORATION OF THE ONE WHO BRINGS US ALL OF GOD'S**

**GOOD GIFTS No. 41**

*Adestes Fideles*

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!
2. Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, Born this happy morning,  
Jesus, to Thee be all glory given;  
Word of the Father, Now in flesh appearing!  
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!

**CALL TO CONFESSION**

**UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**God of grace and truth, in Jesus Christ, you came among us as light shining in the darkness. In the face of Jesus Christ you have revealed to this world the light of your glory. We confess that we have not welcomed your light, nor trusted your good news to be good. We have closed our eyes to the signs of your glory in our midst. Forgive our doubt, renew our trust in you, and enliven our hope in your light that still shines in all the darkness of this world, so that we may receive the fulness of your grace, and live in your truth revealed in Jesus Christ.**

**PERSONAL PRAYERS OF CONFESSION IN SILENCE**

**SUNG RESPONSE SEEKING GOD'S FORGIVENESS No. 44 (stanza 1-2)**

*St. Louis*

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.
2. 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.

**THE ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

**\* SUNG RESPONSE OF ASSURANCE No. 44 (stanza 3-4)**

*St. Louis*

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!

TO HEAR AND REFLECT ON GOD'S WORD. . .

ISAIAH PREPARES US FOR GOD'S GIFT OF LIGHT IN JESUS CHRIST

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

*The Response:* Leader: This is the Word of the Lord  
People: Thanks be to God

\* CAROL OF THE BIRTH OF JESUS No. 25

Mueller

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.

JOHN TELLS THE STORY OF GOD'S GIFT OF LIGHT IN JESUS CHRIST

John 1:1-5, 10-13

*The Response:* Leader: This is the Word of the Lord  
People: Thanks be to God

ANTHEM

“This Peaceful Night”

Words by Nancy Price and Don Besig. Music by Don Besig

THE GLORY OF GOD IS SEEN IN THE FACE OF JESUS CHRIST

John 1:14, 16-18

*The Response:* Leader: This is the Word of the Lord  
People: Thanks be to God

REFLECTIONS ON GOD'S WORD

Dr. Christopher

“The Light of our Faithful God Revealed in Jesus Christ Still Shines on”

\* CAROL WELCOMING THE SON OF GOD OF HUMBLE BIRTH No. 27

*Tempus Adest Floridum*

1. Gentle Mary laid her child lowly in a manger;  
There He lay, the undefiled, to the world a stranger.  
Such a babe in such a place, can He be the Savior?  
Ask the saved of all the race who have found His favor.
2. Angels sang about His birth. Wise men sought and found Him;  
Heaven's star shone brightly forth, Glory all around Him.  
Shepherds saw the wondrous sight, Heard the angels singing;  
All the plains were lit that night, All the hills were ringing.
3. Gentle Mary laid her child lowly in a manger;  
He is still the undefiled, but no more a stranger.  
Son of God, of humble birth, Beautiful the story;  
Praise His name in all the earth, Hail the King of glory!

TO CELEBRATE THE LORD'S SUPPER . . .

\* INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE

\* THE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Leader: It is indeed right that we should give you thanks and praise.....as we pray as  
Jesus taught us saying,

Unison: Our Father who art in heaven...

(The Lord's Prayer, Presbyterian Hymnal, page 16 traditional, using debts and debtors)

COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

(Please hold the bread and the cup until all have been served.)

PRAYERS FOR THE WORLD

## TO SHARE THE LIGHT OF CHRIST . . .

### SHARING OF THE LIGHT OF CHRIST, THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

*(The pastor will light a candle from the Christ Candle and light the candles of the elders, who will then light the candles of the first person on each aisle. Light will then be passed from worshiper to worshiper. The lighted candle should remain upright and the unlighted candle is tipped to the lighted candle.)*

#### \* CAROL OF DEDICATION No. 60

*Stille Nacht*

*(the candle is held close to the breast)*

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.**

*(the candle is extended outward)*

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."**

*(the candle is extended upward)*

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.**

#### \* THE CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

#### \* SHARING GOD'S GIFTS OF CHRISTMAS

*(When invited to do so, please extinguish your candle, and then take it with you to the receptacles in the narthex or the hallway as you leave. As you leave please greet those around you as we share together the good news of God's gift to us of Jesus.)*

#### \* POSTLUDE

#### \* All who can do so comfortably will stand

Huw Christopher, Pastor  
Elder of the month: Frankie Stewart

Director of Music: Lawrence R. Nelson  
Organist: Stanley Littleton

**Welcome to Worship at the First Presbyterian Church** on this Holy Night. We pray that through our worship together you will come to appreciate more of the everlasting light of God seen in the face of Jesus Christ. We invite you to worship with us on other occasions in the future. Each Sunday we have Sunday School for all ages at 9:45 a.m. and our Worship Service at 11 a.m.

**All who seek to love and serve the One who was born as Christ our Lord**, and who are members of any Christian Church, are invited to share in the meal he has given us as a way of remembering him. According to the custom of this congregation we will hold the bread and the cup until all have received them in order to eat and drink together.

We are grateful for all who are sharing with us their musical talents to lead us in worship tonight. Special appreciation is extended to **Linda Price** for playing our organ while Stanley Littleton is recuperating from surgery.

We appreciate all who have provided **poinsettias** for our sanctuary during Advent. If you would like to take your poinsettia tonight you may take any of them except the two large ones on the flower stands. Please leave the plastic plate so that it may be used again.

### ***SYMBOLISM OF THE LIGHTS***

*The significance of the Candlelight Service is twofold.*

***First**, in the distribution of the lights, we see dramatized before us the spreading of the Gospel Message and the growth of the church through the centuries. The pastor's candle is symbolic of Christ, the living Word, and is an extension of the Christ Candle on the Advent wreath. The elders who carry the light to the congregation represent the Apostles whom Christ sent out to spread that Word and draw the world to Him. The church has grown because men and women and young people who have heard the Good News have been faithful in telling someone else about it, and this is symbolized by passing the light to the person beside you. The Elders will light the candle closest to the aisle. As each candle bursts into flame and the sanctuary gradually brightens, we catch the significance of Jesus' statement that we are the "light of the world," and that we should spread this light to the "very ends of the world."*

***Secondly**, we find significance in the lights during the singing of the carol of dedication. During the singing of the first verse, we hold our lights close as we rededicate ourselves to Christ. As we sing the second verse, we hold the candle out in front of us as we rededicate our homes and families once again to him. During the last verse, we hold our candles high as we rededicate our part of His church here to the task of taking the Gospel Light to every corner of the earth.*

Please use extreme caution in the handling of the lighted candles to prevent accidents with the hair or clothing of the person in front of you and the pews or carpet. Children must be carefully supervised. For safety's sake, it is requested that children under six should "share" their parent's candle. Please always tip the unlighted candle to the lighted one.