



First Presbyterian Church
DECEMBER 24, 2010
6:30 P.M.

Christmas Eve

Checking God's Vision of Emmanuel

THE CHURCH GATHERS . .

MUSIC FOR THE CHRISTMAS SEASON

WELCOME AND SHARING OF COMMUNITY LIFE

*** THE LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE**

Leaders: Gina Stuart, Whitney and Connor Ward

Leader: In the darkness of this night, we come to turn our faces to the light,

People: To the light of God revealed in creation.

Leader: In the darkness of this night, we light our candles to help us to turn our faces to the light,

People: To the light of God revealed in Jesus Christ, the Light of the World.

Leader: In the darkness of this night, we light our candles to help us in all of the darkness of this world to turn our faces to the light,

People: To the everlasting light of God that is still stronger than all the darkness of this world.

(The Lighting of the Christ Candle)

All Sing:

St. Louis

**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 street shineth the everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.**

Leader: Tonight, in all of the darkness of our world, we will come to light our candles from this Christ Candle

People: and to turn our faces to the gifts that God gives to us in the gift of Jesus, our Lord Emmanuel.

Leader: In the gift of Jesus, our Lord Emmanuel, God gives us the vision of peace in all of the darkness and turmoil of our world.

(The lighting of the Candle of Peace from the Christ Candle)

People: In the gift of Jesus, our Lord Emmanuel, God gives us the vision of hope in the midst of all that fills our lives with fear and uncertainty.

(The lighting of the Candle of Hope from the Christ Candle)

Leader: In the gift of Jesus, our Lord Emmanuel, God gives us the vision of the joy that God desires for all people to know in their lives.

(The lighting of the Candle of Joy from the Christ Candle)

People: In the gift of Jesus, our Lord Emmanuel, God gives us the vision of the grace that God desires for all people to experience.

(The lighting of the Candle of Grace from the Christ Candle)

Leader: In the gift of Jesus, our Lord Emmanuel, God's everlasting light still shines forth in all of the darkness of this world.

People: O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

* CAROL OF ADORATION No. 41

Adestes Fidelis

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

CALL TO CONFESSION

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Everlasting God, for where we have allowed all of the darkness of this world to prevent us from seeing your everlasting light in the gift of Jesus, our Lord Emmanuel, please forgive us. God of all peace, for where all of the turmoil and unrest of this world has prevented us from seeing your vision of peace, please forgive us. God of all hope, for when our fears have stood in the way of your vision of hope in Jesus, our Lord Emmanuel, please forgive us. God of all joy, for where the events of this world, and of our own lives, have overcome your vision of joy, please forgive us. Gracious God, for where our refusal to forgive and to be gracious has stopped us seeing what your vision of grace can do in our lives, and in the life of this world, please forgive us. Help us, O God, in all of the darkness of this night to catch again your vision for this world, and

for each of our lives, because you have come to us in Jesus, our Lord Emmanuel, to assure us that you have not abandoned us, but that you always will be with us.

PERSONAL PRAYERS OF CONFESSION IN SILENCE

SUNG RESPONSE SEEKING GOD'S FORGIVENESS *St. Louis*

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.

THE ASSURANCE OF PARDON

* SUNG RESPONSE OF ASSURANCE FOR CHRISTMAS *St. Louis*

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.

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...

GOD GIVES THE PROMISE OF EMMANUEL *Isaiah 7:10-14*

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

* CAROL OF THE CHRIST CHILD No. 37 *W Zlobie Lezy* "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly"

MATTHEW TELLS OF THE COMING OF EMMANUEL

Matthew 1:18-25

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

SERMON

"Checking Our Vision with God's Vision of Emmanuel"

Dr. Christopher

TO RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD
AND TO CELEBRATE THE LORD'S SUPPER.....

* CAROL OF JESUS OUR EMMANUEL No. 31 *Mendelssohn*
"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

* INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE

* THE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Leader: The peace of the Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up 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 and our duty and delight to give you thanks and praise

Unison: for you have come to us in the gift of your Son, Jesus.

Leader: We thank you for all of the assurance that your gift of Jesus brings to us as we come to know that you are for us, and not against us,

Unison: that you come to love us and not to condemn us, to save us and not to destroy us.

All Sing No. 27 (stanza one)

Tempus Adest Floridum

Gentle Mary laid her child lowly in the 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.

Leader: We thank you that through your gift of Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us, we can know that wherever we may go we are never alone,

Unison: and that in all of the darkness of this world your everlasting light seen in the birth of Jesus still shines.

Leader: We thank you that with the singing angels, the shepherds and the wise men,

Unison: you invite us to celebrate his birth and to sing his praises this night and at all times and in all places.

All Sing No. 27 (stanza two) *Tempus Adest Floridum*
**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.**

Leader: We thank you this night that we can come to this table and remember and celebrate the way in which your love has been shown most clearly in Jesus Christ, your Son,

Unison: as he invites us to eat this bread and remember his body broken for us on the cross,

Leader: and to drink of this cup of the new covenant in his blood poured out for the forgiveness of our sins.

Unison: As we come and eat and drink in remembrance of him we thank you that we can affirm that the One whose humble birth we celebrate is the King of glory.

All Sing No. 27 (stanza three) *Tempus Adest Floridum*
**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!**

Leader: It is all that you have done for us, O God, in your gift of Jesus, our Lord Emmanuel, that gives us the confidence to pray to you as he taught us

Unison: 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.

COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

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

PRAYERS FOR THE WORLD AND FOR OURSELVES

* CAROL OF THE GOOD NEWS JESUS BRINGS TO US No. 28

In Dulci Jubilo

“Good Christian Friends, Rejoice”

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. 59

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**

Leader: Let us look at the light of our candles, and let us remember God's everlasting light seen in the gift of Jesus,

Unison: and let us remember that God's everlasting light is still stronger than all of the darkness of this world.

Leader: Let us look at the light of our candles, and let us remember that in Jesus God has come to us as our Lord Emmanuel.

Unison: Jesus is our assurance that God is with us,

Leader: and that God will never leave or forsake us,

Unison: and that nothing in life or in death can separate us from God's love.

Leader: Let us go forth into the darkness of this night knowing that God is with us.

Unison: Let us go forth into the darkness of every day and every night knowing that God will be with us.

Leader: Let us go forth from this place to share the good news that Jesus has been born.

Unison: Emmanuel has come! God is with us!

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

(Please extinguish your candle, and then please 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 Jesus, our Lord Emmanuel, God with us.)

* **ORGAN POSTLUDE**

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

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 what it means to celebrate the birth of Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us. We invite you to worship with us on future occasions. 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 has come as Our Lord Emmanuel, God with us, 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 tradition of this congregation, we will hold the bread and the cup in order that we might eat and drink

together when we are invited to do so. You are encouraged to hold the bread with the napkin provided as you break off your piece.

We appreciate all who have provided **poinsettias** for our sanctuary during Advent. If you would like to take your poinsettia tonight, please take any of them. Please leave the plastic plates so that they may be used again next year.

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.

Pastor: Huw Christopher
Elder of the month: Mary Bevis Schmidt
Administrative Assistant: Valerie Marlow
Nursery Assistants: Mary and Branham Skipper

Director of Music: Lawrence R. Nelson
Organist: Stanley Littleton
Custodian: Ron Jones

First Presbyterian Church
Serving God with Faith, Hope and Love since 1835
Corner of Jefferson and Clinton Streets
Marianna, Florida
(850) 526-2430
website: www.firstpresmarianna.org
E-Mail: firstpresmarianna@earthlink.net