

*Merry Christmas!*



**SHILOH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
2251 WILLOW ROAD  
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# Shiloh United Church of Christ

*Christmas Eve Candlelight Service*

*December 24, 2020*

## MEDITATION

*"God, we are as confounded as Joseph and Mary, as busy as the innkeepers, as lonely as the shepherds, as frightened as Herod, as wayfaring as the Magi. Turn us again to the place where, with quietness, you wrap up your truth and promise, your love and salvation in the Child born in a rude stable...Bring us to Bethlehem, to the place where he was homeless but where we are truly at home. Amen."*

~ From The Unsettling Season by Donald J. Shelby

PRELUDE . . . . . A Tapestry of Angels . . . . . Smith  
. . . . . A Christmas Festival . . . . . Van Der Pol  
. . . . . O Holy Night . . . . . Adam

## WELCOME AND CONCERNS

### CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Tonight the promise is fulfilled! New dreams come to life!

**All: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace.**

One: Hope gives way to joy and prayer to proclamation.

**All: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace.**

One: Our candles illuminate the night. The Light of the World has come.

**All: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace.**

One: And this light is a light for all, igniting a flame within the soul, lighting our lives with presence of God-with-us, within us, and among us.

**All: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, goodwill to all!**

HYMN #132 "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

## PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Glorious God, who presents us with the precious gift of eternal life, we praise you for all your blessings. Tonight we have come to this holy place, in the midst of a busy time. We might not even have everything ready at home, yet we have come, because we ourselves need to be ready. Work in our hearts this night: prepare us for your presence. Work in our lives that we may feel the comfort of your Spirit; work in our world that the darkness that has encompassed it may be dispelled by the brightness of your love and benevolence of your eternal gift. In faith and expectation, we pray. Amen.

## LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

*Candle lighting*

Tonight we light all the candles. The **first candle** ignites the thrill of hope in the hearts of weary people. The **second candle** shines peace that surpasses understanding into a conflicted and confused world. The **third candle** expresses the joy of fulfilled promises and the anticipation of those yet to come. The **fourth candle** shines with grace and new life in God's unconditional love.

HYMN #140 "What Child Is This"

## SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

HEBREW SCRIPTURE READINGS: Isaiah 9:2-7

CAROL #137 "Away in a Manager"

A PSALM READING: Psalm 96

CAROL #125 "Good Christian Men, Rejoice"

EPISTLE READING: Titus 2:11-14

CAROL #117 vs. 1 & 4 "Angels, From the Realms of Glory"

GOSPEL READING: Luke 2:1-7

CAROL #134 vs. 1 & 4 "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

GOSPEL READING: Luke 2:8-14

CAROL #116 "Angels We Have Heard on High"

GOSPEL READING: Luke 2:15-20

CAROL #120 "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

CHRISTMAS EVE REFLECTION "Holy Night"

HAND BELL CHOIR . . . . . "Let Heaven and Earth Sing Gloria!". . . . . Edwards

**OUR RESPONSE TO GOD**

**INVITATION TO OFFERING**

We are called to be the light of the world, to share the Love of the Holy One with all whom we encounter, to proclaim to those who have walked in darkness and in shadow: “Do not be afraid! God is with you, no matter what.” We are not called to hide our light; no, we are called to let it shine, to give of ourselves, to bless the world. You are invited now to share your light, to give as generously as you are able. In that Spirit, our Christmas Eve offering will now be received.

**OFFERTORY**

**\* DOXOLOGY**

*To God, all glorious heavenly Light,  
To Christ, revealed in earthly night,  
To God the Spirit, now we raise  
Our joyful songs of thankful praise. Amen.*

**\* PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

**Loving God, we pray you bless these gifts that they might become a blessing to this world you love so very much. May those who receive them know that you are with them, in this holy season and in all their days to come. In the name of the Child of Bethlehem, the Light of the World, we pray. Amen.**

CHAMBER CHOIR ..... “All is Well” ..... Arr. Larson

**SHARING THE CHRISTMAS LIGHT**

**LIGHTING THE CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLE – THE PROMISE OF ARRIVAL**

Advent is a time for God’s people to reawaken their longings.

**Joy to the world, the Savior reigns!**

Tonight, we long to worship the newborn king.

**Joy to the world, the Savior reigns!**

Tonight, we long to hear the good news proclaimed by the angels.

**Joy to the world, the Savior reigns!**

Tonight, we long to receive the promise foretold.

**Joy to the world, the Savior reigns!**

*Candle lighting*

Tonight, we light the **Christ candle** in celebration of our Messiah’s birth. As God’s promises continue to shine, we echo the words shared through the ages – Joy to the world, the Savior reigns!

**CAROL** #130 *“Joy to the World! The Lord Is Come”*

**THE BENEDICTION**

One: Joy to the world, the Lord has come!  
We have celebrated this wonderful gift of God this day.  
As we go, let us share the good news of Christmas with all we meet!  
Go in peace to love and serve God.  
**All: Amen.**

**SENTENCES BEFORE DISTRIBUTION OF CHRIST’S LIGHT**

The God who said “Let there be light,” has caused light to shine in our hearts. That light is the glory of God reflected in the face of Jesus Christ. As our candles are a sea of light lit from the one light of Christ, so may the church reflect Christ’s light and love in the world. Amen.

**LIGHT FROM CHRIST CANDLE**

*Pastor Melinda will light her candle from the Christ Candle. The ushers will light their candles from Pastor Melinda's candle. They will take their candles and light the candle of each person on an aisle seat, and they in turn, will light the candle of the person next to them. When all the candles are lit, the people will hold their lit candles and walk out of the Sanctuary singing “Silent Night.”*

**\* CAROL** *“Silent Night”*

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.

Silent night, holy night, Shepherds quake at the sight,  
Glories stream from heaven afar,  
Heavenly host sing alleluia;  
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!

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.

**POSTLUDE** ..... He Is Born, The Divine Christ Child ..... Parks

**THE ALTAR FLOWERS** are presented to the glory of God and in memory of Robert S. Limbert and in honor of Dorothy Limbert, Bob and Mary Crone by Bob and Stephanie Limbert.

**THE LITURGIST:** Brad Jacobs

**ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTERS:** Robert, Stephanie and Nathan Limbert

The **Poinsettias** will be available for pick-up on **Wednesday, December 23 from 8-9 p.m. in the sanctuary and on Thursday, December 24 from 10-11 a.m. in the welcome center.**



The Consistory has voted to donate the **Christmas Offering** envelopes and loose plate as follows: \$100.00 to the Shiloh Fire Company; \$500.00 to Mr. Sandy's Homeless Veteran's Center and the remainder will be split between the Dover Food Bank and the Salvation Army.

**We wish you a very Merry Christmas! May the Christ Child bring you the reign of peace!**

THE CHURCH STAFF

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