

**WELCOME TO SHILOH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE
DECEMBER 24, 2024
3:00PM**

MEDITATION

“God came to us because he wanted to join us on the road, to listen to our story, and to help us realize that we are not walking in circles but moving toward the house of peace and joy. This is the great mystery of Christmas that continues to give us comfort and consolation: we are not alone on our journey. The God of love who gave us life sent his only Son to be with us at all times and in all places, so that we never have to feel lost in our struggles but always can trust that he walks with us.... Christmas is the renewed invitation not to be afraid and to let him whose love is greater than our own hearts and minds can comprehend be our companion.” ~Henri J.M. Nouwen

PRELUDE

DUET BY SANDY BAMBERGER & DANI BENTZEL

“A Christmas Festival

Van Der Pol

“What Child Is This?”

Innes

WORDS OF WELCOME

***CALL TO WORSHIP** *(Please stand if you are able)*

One: Joy to the world! Christ has come!

All: He did not come riding on a war horse from the clouds.

One: He came to us vulnerable and defenseless, born to a poor young couple with no place to lay him down but a manger.

All: God’s Son was not sent to go to war against us over our wickedness.

One: He came to instruct us, to make peace between us and God, and to heal us – all of us.

All: Joy to the world! Christ has come!

***UNISON PRAYER OF INVOCATION**

One: Let us pray!

All: O wondrous God of the stars, we come tonight with breathless wonder to see the babe who will change our lives. We hear names Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace, and we are awe. You have touched the earth this night with your unconditional love. Touch our hearts and minds and souls that we may never tire of this story or take it for granted. Make this night magical again. In the name of Jesus, the babe of Bethlehem, we pray. Amen.

CAROL

“O Come, All Ye Faithful” Special Hymnal #9 vs. 1-2

HIS NAME SHALL BE CALLED...
THE
Prince of Peace.
ISAIAH 9:6



CHILDREN’S SERMON (*All children of God who desire to come forward for the Children’s Sermon are welcomed. Parent’s/caregivers are encouraged to accompany their young child(ren) during the message.*)

VIDEO

“*Mary, Did You Know?*”
(Lyrics: Mark Lowry, 1984; Music: Buddy Greene, 1991)

LIGHTING THE CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLE

Reader: Tonight is the night for which we have all been waiting. Our Advent wreath will now be completed by the lighting of our Christ candle. “For unto us a child is given, unto us a Savior is born and the order of the world will be upon his shoulders.” With the birth of Jesus, our lives will be forever changed. We will be transformed by his model and message. We light this candle to represent that Christ is truly the center of our lives.

(Light the white candle)

HYMN “*Of the Parent’s Heart Begotten*” 118 vs. 5

One: Let us pray!

All: Gracious God, as we light the Christ Candle, we celebrate the birth of Your Son, Jesus Christ, who came to live with us. Tonight, we adore You, Jesus, and welcome You into our hearts and our homes. May Your light fill us, and may we reflect Your love, joy, peace, and hope to a world in need. In Your name we pray. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC

SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

(Please remain in your seats during the caroling)

FIRST LESSON: Genesis 3:8-15, 17-19

God announces in the Garden of Eden Adam and Eve’s punishment for their rebellion and that the seed of woman shall bruise the serpent’s head.

CAROL “*Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*” Special Hymnal #8 vs. 1

SECOND LESSON: Genesis 22:15-18

God promises to Abraham that by his descendants all the nations of the earth will obtain blessings.

CAROL “*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*” #110 vs. 1

THIRD LESSON: Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

The prophet announces the birth of a king to a people in darkness.

CAROL “*It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*” #129 Vs. 1 & 4

FOURTH LESSON: Micah 5:2-5a

The king is coming and will usher in a reign of justice for the poor and peace for all God’s creation.

CAROL “*O Little Town of Bethlehem*” Special Hymnal #1 vs. 1&4

FIFTH LESSON: Luke 1:26-35, 38

The angel Gabriel announces to the Virgin Mary that she will give birth to Gods promised Son, whose kingdom will never end.

CAROL “*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*” Special Hymnal #10 vs. 1&3

SIXTH LESSON: Luke 2:1-7

Joseph and Mary travel to Bethlehem, where Mary gives birth to her child

CAROL “*Away in a Manger*” Special Hymnal #4

SEVENTH LESSON: Luke 2:8-16

Angels appear to shepherds in the fields and announce the birth of the Messiah

CAROL “*Angels, from the Realms of Glory*” Special Hymnal #12 vs. 1-2

EIGHTH LESSON: Matthew 2:1-11

The wise men follow a star to find the child Jesus, the King of the Jews.

CAROL “*We Three Kings of Orient Are*” Special Hymnal #13 vs. 1-2

NINTH LESSON: John 1:1-4;10-14

John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.

CHRISTMAS MEDITATION “*The Word Became Flesh*” Pastor Melinda

INVITATION TO THE CHRISTMAS OFFERING

Come now and kneel before the Christ Child. Bring all that you are and all that you have. Offer gifts in wonder and surprise, awe and reverence. Offer your gifts in joy and delight. In the spirit of this night, let us receive our Christmas offering.

***OFFERTORY RESPONSE**

“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, there are so many things to be thankful for tonight. Receive these tokens of our gratitude for your love incarnate in the babe of Bethlehem. May they become God-with-us for all the world. May they breathe magic back into a world that needs a sense of wonder and joy. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

SHARING THE CHRISTMAS LIGHT

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 FIRST 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 sing “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.

THE LORD’S PRAYER

One: Let us say together the Lord’s Prayer!

All: 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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

***CAROL** “Joy to the World! The Lord Is Come”
Special Hymnal #7 vs. 1&4

***BENEDICTION**

One: Go in wonder.
Go to bring light to those who sit in darkness,
joy to those who have tasted bitter tears.
Go with the songs of angels in your ears,
and the love of God in your hearts.
Go and share the word
that Christ the Lord is born this night!
All: Amen.

POSTLUDE “Now Is Born the Divine Christ Child” Smith

We are delighted that you joined us for worship today! we wish you a very Merry Christmas! may the Christ child bring you the reign of peace!

- **THE ALTAR FLOWERS** are presented in loving memory of Nancy and LeRoy Leber by Melinda, Leon and their families.
- **THE BULLETINS** “Wishing all of our Family and Friends a very Blessed and Happy Holiday Season” Tim, Katie, Emily and Dani Bentzel
- **LITURGISTS:** Jim Bentzel
- **GREETERS** Jane Harrison
- **USHER:** Linda Little
- **NURSERY DUTY:**
- **MUSIC:** Sandy Bamberger, Dani Bentzel, Stephanie Limbert Handbell, and Chancel Choirs.

THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR VOLUNTEERS, READERS AND MUSICIANS!

Funds from the **Christmas envelope** will be given to the Veterans of the Cross.



"No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here at Shiloh UCC, where God is still speaking"

ATTENDANCE LAST WEEK:



Thanks goes to everyone who purchased poinsettias. They make the sanctuary especially beautiful! Poinsettias can be claimed **after the 7:00 service on Christmas Eve.**

Annual Reports for all organizations and committees of the church and Sunday School are due in the church office by **Sunday, December 31 2024.**



THE CHURCH STAFF

Pastor	Rev. Melinda LaMontagne, Ph.D. pastormelinda@shilohucc.com 717-764-3569
Pastor Melinda office hours:	Tues., Wed., and Thurs 9AM-1PM
Director of Music	Stephanie Limbert
Organist	Sandra Bamberger
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