

# Rejoice!

*Thou shalt have  
joy and gladness;  
and many shall  
rejoice at his birth.*

LUKE 1:14

WELCOME TO SHILOH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE**

DECEMBER 24, 2021  
3:00PM AND 7:00PM

**MEDITATION**

*“Are you willing to stoop down and consider the needs and desires of little children; to remember the weaknesses and loneliness of people who are growing old; to stop asking how much your friends love you, and to ask yourself if you love them enough; to bear in mind the things that other people have to bear on their hearts; to trim your lamp so that it will give more light and less smoke, and to carry it in front so that your shadow will fall behind you; to make a grave for your ugly thoughts and a garden for your kindly feelings, with the gate open? Are you willing to do these things for a day? Then you are ready to keep Christmas!”*

— *Henry van Dyke (1852 – 1933) American author and clergyman*

**PRELUDE**

**3:00PM & 7:00PM – DUET BY SANDY BAMBERGER & DANI BENTZEL**

“A Tapestry of Angels”

Smith

“A Christmas Festival”

Van Der Pol

“O Holy Night”

Adam

**WELCOME**

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP** *(Please stand as you are able and join in the call to worship.)*

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!**

**\*PRAYER OF INVOCATION**

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.

\*HYMN . . . . . “O Come, All Ye Faithful”. . . . . Special Hymnal #9

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Prepare our hearts, O God, to receive the Christ Child once more. When we are lost in darkness, shine your light in the darkness of our world. When the gloom clings tightly to us, Shine your glory into the shadows of our lives. Overcome our fear, Holy One, and inspire us to leave our flocks, and seek the Christ Child this night. Prepare our hearts, O God, to behold your precious gift in awe and wonder. Amen.

**WORDS OF ASSURANCE (Isaiah 9:2)**

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; Those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them light has shined.” Receive forgiveness. Receive light. Walk in God’s light – forgiven.

**EXCHANGING THE PEACE OF CHRIST (Please wave to one another)**

On this holy night of incarnate love,  
Let us share signs of the peace that came down to earth to bring us joy.

**CHILDREN’S TIME**

**SPECIAL MUSIC**

**3:00PM SHELLEY STEWART SOLO, ACCOMPANIED BY DONNA SEIFARTH**

“O Holy Night” Adam

**7:00PM – CHANCEL CHOIR**

“What Can I Give To The Holy Child?” Lav

**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. . . . . “What Child Is This”. . . . . Special Hymnal #11

**SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS  
PLEASE REFER TO THE SPECIAL HYMNAL**

**HEBREW SCRIPTURE READINGS:** Isaiah 9:2-7

CAROL “Away in a Manager” #4

**A PSALM READING:** Psalm 96

CAROL “Good Christian Men, Rejoice” #2

**EPISTLE READING:** Titus 2:11-14

CAROL “Angels, From the Realms of Glory” #12 vs. 1 & 4

**GOSPEL READING:** Luke 2:1-7

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

**GOSPEL READING:** Luke 2:8-14

CAROL “Angels We Have Heard on High” #3

**GOSPEL READING:** Luke 2:15-20

CAROL “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” #10

**CHRISTMAS EVE REFLECTION** “Rejoice”

**7:00PM - HAND BELL CHOIR**

”Stille, Stille, Stille!” Arr. Thompson

**PRESENTING OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS BEFORE GOD**

**INVITATION TO THE 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.

7:00PM

**CHAMBER CHOIR “Mary, Did You Know”** Lowry & Green/Arr. Schrader

**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 “**

*Joy to the World! The Lord Is Come”* Special Hymnal #7

**BENEDICTION**

One: Go in wonder. Go to bring light to those who sit in darkness, joy to those who have tasted bitter tears, and magic to a world bereft of hope. 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.**

**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, Holy Night.”*

**\*CAROL**

*“Silent Night, Holy 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**

**3:00PM & 7:00PM**.....*“In Dulci Jubilo”*..... Bach

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**WE ARE DELIGHTED THAT YOU JOINED US FOR WORSHIP TODAY!**

➤ **THE ALTAR FLOWERS** are presented to the glory of God and in loving memory of Nancy and LeRoy Leber. "Those we Love remain with us, for Love itself lives on. Cherished memories never fade, because a Loved one is gone. Those we Love can never be, more than a thought apart, for as long as there's a memory, they live on in our hearts." Until we meet again, Melinda (Leber) Kreiser, Leon Leber and families.

➤ **THE ALTAR FLOWERS** are presented to the glory of God and in loving memory of my husband, Robert, on our 62nd wedding anniversary by Margie Behler.

➤ **ACOLYTE: 3:00PM:** Kendra Tredway

➤ **CANDLE LIGHTER: 3:00PM** Steve & Sue Besecker, **7:00 PM** Natalie Fuhrman & Sallie Hagerman

➤ **LITURGIST: 3:00PM:** Sara Jacoby, **7:00PM:** Jen Miller

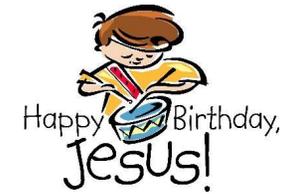
➤ **USHERS: 3:00PM:** Consistory, **7:00PM:** Consistory

➤ **GREETERS: 3:00PM:** Sue & Steve Besecker, **7:00PM:** Consistory

➤ **NURSERY DUTY: 3:00PM:** Volunteer, **7:00PM** Jessie Sechriest

➤ **MUSIC: 3:00PM:** Sandy Bamberger, Dani Bentzel, Donna Seifarth, Shelley Stewart, **7:00PM:**, Sandy Bamberger, Dani Bentzel, Handbell, Chancel and Chamber Choirs.

**THANK YOU TO ALL OF THE VOLUNTEERS AND MUSICIANS FOR PROVIDING THE WORSHIP MUSIC!**



**WE WISH YOU A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS! MAY THE CHRIST CHILD BRING YOU THE REIGN OF PEACE!**



Consistory has started a **special fund** for making renovations and improvements to the church's kitchen and social hall (Room 100). This year's special **Christmas Offering** will be used to help build this fund.

**THE CHURCH STAFF**

Pastor	Rev. Melinda LaMontagne, PhD
Director of Music	Stephanie Limbert
Organist	Sandra Bamberger
Missionaries in Costa Rica	Sally Jane and Crosby Johnson
Early Learning Center Director	Allison Hartnett
Administrative Assistant	Maira Rivera
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