



Christmas Eve



December 24, 2021

Draw near to God

for God is waiting for you.

* indicates where the congregation is to stand if able
italic type is spoken by the liturgist – bold is spoken by the congregation

PRELUDE

*CALL TO WORSHIP

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.

We long for a light to guide us.

You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy.

We long for God's joy in our lives.

For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

We long to be relieved of all that we carry.

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

He is named Emmanuel: God with us. In this tiny baby, this vulnerable child, we find our light, our joy, our comfort. Joy to the World! The Lord is come!

*OPENING PRAYER

We come to your manger, each of us, in the stillness of this night. Here we know our profound powerlessness, and here you are – a fragile powerless newborn, yet the newborn child in whom we recognize the ruler of the universe.

We hear your newborn cry, the cry we have been waiting for – "Make room! Make room for me!"

Fragile God, born in the night, meet us here at your manger. Meet us as a newborn child meets new parents, come to change our lives forever. Meet us as the newborn who insists that we make room for you, who requires that we reorder our lives to pay attention to you, who demands that we be re-centered on the very center of life.

Fragile God, born in the night – you come as a tiny light in a vast darkness yet that fragile and flickering light changes the darkness completely.

Fragile God, meet us here in the lighting of our small lights, that we may know your awesome power making room among us as the light that shines in the darkness, the fragile light that the darkness cannot overpower.

Fragile God, there is room in our inn. Be born in our night. Amen.

**HYMN #133* O Come, All Ye Faithful

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

Refrain: O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

2. True God from true God, Light from light eternal, born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;
very God, begotten, not created!

3. Sing, choirs of angels; sing in exultation; sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest! *Refrain*

4. Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning; Jesus, to thee be all glory given;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing! *Refrain*

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

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.

UNISON PRAYER

Angels dance and the bright star shines. All creation bows to you, Lord of all. Yet you chose to be one with us, born to save and to show us the way to you. Alleluia, Alleluia. Amen.

**HYMN #132* Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

1. Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice; give ye heed to what we say:
Jesus Christ is born today; ox and ass before him bow, and he is in the manger now.
Christ is born today! Christ is born today!

2. Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice; now ye hear of endless bliss:
Jesus Christ was born for this! He has opened heaven's door, and we are blest forevermore.
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!

3. Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice; now ye need not fear the grave:
Jesus Christ was born to save! Calls you one and calls you all to gain the everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Psalm 96

¹O sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth.

²Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day.

³Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples.

⁴For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; he is to be revered above all gods.

⁵For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but the Lord made the heavens.

⁶Honor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

⁷Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

⁸Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts.

⁹Worship the Lord in holy splendor; tremble before him, all the earth.

¹⁰Say among the nations, “The Lord is king! The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved. He will judge the peoples with equity.”

¹¹Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it;

¹²let the field exult, and everything in it. Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy

¹³before the Lord; for he is coming, for he is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with his truth.

SPECIAL MUSIC “Away in a Manger” Rachel Dell’Orefice and Courtney Woolslayer, soloists

HOMILY Bedlam in Bethlehem

DRAMATIC PRESENTATION Once Upon a Manger (based on Luke 2:1-20) *by Tracy Wells*

RESPONSIVE PRAYER

We have waited for a long time for your hope, your joy, your love, to shine in the darkness of this world, Almighty God. You did not come into this world in a show of power and glory. You did not shine forth for all of creation to behold. A tiny spark – a newborn baby, visible to parents and curious animals. A host of angels – away from the highly populated areas, singing to migrant workers. A sparkling star – guiding foreigners to see what neighbors could not.

Open our eyes, that we might behold your presence in the least likely of places, and among the least likely of people. God with us, kindle your spark within us, that together we may shine forth your light, we might banish the shadows of this world, we might be the continuation of the Christmas miracle: Emmanuel is in this world, God is with us, now and evermore. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC “Still, Still, Still” Rachel Dell’Orefice and Courtney Woolslayer, soloists

RECOGNITION OF THE CHRISTMAS OFFERING

**THE DOXOLOGY*

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise him, all creatures here below. Praise him above, ye heavenly hosts. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

**PRAYER OF DEDICATION*

Dear God, we cannot thank you enough for the gift of your Son. Through your grace, you have given us everything, including our very lives. On this night, we celebrate the miracle of Christmas! But when the candles are blown out, when the angels and shepherds have gone home, may we continue to shine your light into the world through the giving of these offerings. And so we offer you yet another gift: our partnership to build your reign here on earth. Amen.

JOYS AND CONCERNS

CHRISTMAS PRAYER

In joy and thanksgiving at Christ's birth, let us sing to the Lord a new song,

On earth peace, good will among people.

We pray for all faithful people, for all welcome messengers of good news, let us sing to the Lord a new song,

On earth peace, good will among people.

For the nations and their rulers, for anyone with power over the lives of others, let us sing to the Lord a new song,

On earth peace, good will among people.

For those who defend the helpless, for those who strive for justice, for those who work to find a way to peace, for all the world, and all who live in it, let us sing to the Lord a new song,

On earth peace, good will among people.

For anyone suffering, sick, alone, afraid, or in any kind of trouble. We pray especially for... Let us sing to the Lord a new song,

On earth peace, good will among people.

For our own community, for friends, neighbors, and family, near and far. Let us sing to the Lord a new song,

On earth peace, good will among people.

For those who have died. We pray especially for ... Let us sing to the Lord a new song,

On earth peace, good will among people.

We offer thanksgiving for Mary's firstborn Son—good news of great joy. Let us sing to the Lord a new song,

On earth peace, good will among people.

Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. Before the eyes of all the nations you sent your Son, the exact imprint of love itself, to be our salvation. With the shepherds in the fields, let us go now to Bethlehem, there to find Christ in our hearts, and in the world. Amen.

SERVICE OF CANDLELIGHTING (Please remain seated during the singing of the first verse of the following)

HYMN #113 Angels We Have Heard on High

1. Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains, and the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains. Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

HYMN #123 It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

1. It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old, from angels bending near the earth, to touch their harps of gold: "Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heaven's all gracious King": the world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.

HYMN #145 What Child Is This?

1. What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping? Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping? This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing; haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!

HYMN #122 Silent Night, Holy Night! (all 4 verses)

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.

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!"

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.

4. Silent night, holy night! Wondrous star, lend thy light; with the angels let us sing Alleluia to our King: Christ the Savior is born; Christ the Savior is born.

BENEDICTION

Do not be afraid.

We go forth with courage!

Share the good news.

We go into the world

to proclaim tidings of great joy!

A savior has been born to you.

Glory to God in the highest heaven!

POSTLUDE

The Poinsettias in our sanctuary were given to the Glory of God....

In loving memory of Nancy Yerkes, Myrl and Addis Worthington from Leanne Yerkes.

In loving memory of my husband Frank and my parents from Martha Greenwood.

In loving memory of Elliott and Kathryn Wiggins from Rick Wiggins.

In loving memory of Alvin's parents, Mabel and Alvin Cornell and of Kathy's parents Bert and George McClintock from Alvin and Kathy Cornell.

In loving memory of Harry Shaffer from Gail Shaffer.

In loving memory of our loved ones from Craig and Donna Jencks.

In loving memory of our parents, Earl and Pinky Hampton, Rudy and Sally Kalozi from Jim and Sue Hampton.

In loving memory of our father, grandfather, great grandfather the Cullerton family.

In loving memory of my wonderful and loving husband Walter from Emilie Cullerton.

In loving memory of Janice's parents Bob and Edith Payton from Bob and Janice Propsner.

In loving memory of Mike Bernstein and David Danilowicz, Sr. from Peggy and Dan Danilowicz.

In honor of our great grandchildren Danny and Lizzy Cornell from Alvin and Kathy Cornell.

In honor of Marilyn Cook and Su Fall from Patricia Gessner.

In honor of our loving family from Ralph and Janet Martin.



ANNOUNCEMENTS: December 24, 2021

God is our refuge and strength



The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. (John 1:9)

Mayfield, Ky., Dec. 12, 2021. Courtesy of State Farm (© BF 2.0)

Special offering: As night fell on December 10, a horrific line of powerful tornadoes ripped across several states, ending the lives of more than 100 people and wreaking devastation across many communities by the time morning had broken. One of these tornadoes was on the ground for a terrifying and unprecedented 250 miles, more than 200 of those miles in Kentucky alone, where the town of Mayfield saw the catastrophic destruction of much of the downtown area, including the Presbyterian, Methodist and Baptist churches.

In the wake of these terrible and catastrophic storms, it is the role of ordinary people of faith like us to shine as light in this bleakest of winters. We are called to be the hands and feet of God as we reach out to shelter, feed, care for and help rebuild the lives of those who have lost loved ones, homes, work and a sense of safety as a result of the tornadoes. We are invited to stand with them — and to stand together — bearing witness by our gifts and prayers that God is indeed incarnate among us, no matter what.

If you are able, please make a donation to assist those in need following this storm. Please mark your gift “Tornado Relief.” All the contributions will be sent to the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance who are already on the ground in the areas of the recent devastation providing much needed help. This special offering will continue through January 2, 2022.

Office closed Monday December 27, 2021.

An evening of Fun, Fellowship and Food for everyone - January 8 for "Trivia Night": With the holidays behind us, we will gather as a church family in-person and on Zoom for a fun evening of trivia appropriate for all ages. A light supper will be offered of chili and chicken noodle soup. The whole event is from 4:00 – 6:00. Please join us! Sign up is available in Fellowship Hall as well as by calling Susan in the church office.

Sunday school: resumes Sunday January 9.

Youth group: resumes Sunday evening January 9.

Thursday evening Bible Study and Fellowship: will resume for a new study on January 13.

In our thoughts and prayers:

The Conner/Lang Family, Aleena Lang, Natalie Pizza, Bill Wark, Raymond Tinari,
Dick Wright, Sally Thiessen, Faith Hyndman

Thank you all for your support, compassion and patience through this past year. You all are what make Forest Grove Presbyterian Church a loving and caring community. We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year!!

Church Staff

Susan Fall, Pastor Leanne Yerkes, Director of Music
Susan Flanagan, Office Administrator Jason Gordon, Youth Director
Mary Ann Welsh, Treasurer Chris Miterko, Grounds Keeper

