

CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

NORTHMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

DECEMBER 24, 2017

CHRISTMAS EVE

THE WORLD IS ABOUT TO TURN



PRELUDE

Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen
Greensleeves
In Dulci Jubilo
In Dulci Jubilo

Johannes Brahms
Richard Purvis
J. S. Bach
Marcel Dupré

Good evening! We are thrilled you have joined us for this Christmas Eve celebration in song, scripture and prayer!

WELCOME

***CALL TO WORSHIP AND LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES**
We gather tonight to celebrate and rehearse something miraculous and mysterious.

The world is about to turn!

After tonight, we need no longer fear. God is reaching across the chasm of time and space to enter human life, earthly time, reminding us that each life, each era of earthly time, is precious to God. Emboldened, we light the candle of Hope.

And the world is about to turn!

Seemingly in every corner of the globe, we war with one another and with ourselves over who is right, who is powerful, who is in charge. Tonight, the angels remind us that ultimate authority rests

Our cover art this evening is "The Nativity," painted in 1891 by Julius Gari Melchers (1860-1932). Melchers painted the War and Peace murals for the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893.

When you see an asterisk (), you are invited to stand in body or in Spirit as you feel led and are able.*

Please join in on all parts of the liturgy that are printed in **bold italics**.

For almost as long as there have been Advent candles, the tradition has been to place them in the context of a circular wreath—a symbol of Shalom—our completeness in God. The circle without beginning or end reminds us of God’s unending “hesed,” or steadfast love, in which we live out the promises of Advent and Christmas.

with the author of time who is coming as the Prince of Peace, willing us to live in justice, harmony and unity. Relieved, we light the candle of Peace.

For the world is about to turn!

Mary’s sighs of pain and Joseph’s fears for her give way to rejoicing as the angels’ promises to each of them are fulfilled in the “I am here” cries of the newborn Child of Promise. And so we light the candle of Joy!

For the world is about to turn!

And at last we celebrate that divine love never fails—it transforms all who receive it and all who share it. Tonight, we light the candle of Love because, tonight, love is born for all.

And the world is about to turn!

*HYMN *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear* Purple, No. 123

A PROMISE REMEMBERED ***Isaiah 52:7-10***

ANTHEM *In the Bleak Midwinter* arr. Abbie Betinis

*ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF OUR NEED OF GRACE

***God of stable, stars and surprises,
of light and hope and new life:
open our eyes and hearts to your presence in our world;
forgive our obsessions with power and possessions;
forgive our compromises and narrowness of vision.
As you tear down the veil between heaven and earth
And humble yourself into a dusty cowshed,
the child of oppressed refugees, tear down the walls
we have built of fear, despair and arrogance.
Open us to your grace,
that we might hear again the song of the angels,
and respond with lives that sing out your refrain
of peace, compassion and goodwill. Amen.***

*ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

The unquenchable light of Grace is born into the world this night in the form of a little Child.

***As the forgiven and released children of God,
let us have a newborn’s purity, an infant’s love, a baby’s joy.
Let us follow this Child with hope and courage.***

*RESPONSE *Go Tell It on the Mountain* Purple, No. 136

*SHARING THE PEACE

The Peace of Christ be with you, ***And also with you.***

NATIVITY SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 2:1-20

HYMN

Born in the Night, Mary's Child
Verses 1 and 2 only

Purple, No. 158

CHANGING OF THE PARAMENTS

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

The old ways of seeing the world are transformed by the light of grace breaking into the world this night. Nevermore will we fear that shadows and death will have the final say.

For the dawn draws near, and the world is about to turn!

ANTHEM

Joy to the World

arr. John Rutter

REFLECTION

The World is About to Turn

HYMN

O Come, All Ye Faithful

Purple, No. 133

WORSHIP THROUGH GIVING

Call to Offering

Offertory

Away in a Manger

arr. Ola Gjeilo

Prayer of Dedication

***Lord Jesus, be born anew in our hearts tonight.
Loving God, like Mary and Joseph,
who trusted in your grace and your steadfast love,
we offer ourselves and our gifts this evening.
Bless our offering and hallow our every thought,
word, and deed, so that the Son,
the Christ, shall be revealed through us
to a world that waits in shadow and confusion.
In the name of the child,
our Brother, our Lord, Jesus Christ, Amen.***

*PASSING OF THE LIGHT

Silent Night

See insert

*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

*HYMN

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
Verses 1 and 3 only

Purple, No. 119

POSTLUDE

Fanfare

Francis Jackson

Our theme for Advent, which is also the title of tonight's Reflection, is indirectly inspired by Mary's song of praise in Luke 1, often called The Magnificat, which in turn served as the inspiration for the contemporary hymn, "The Canticle of the Turning," the last line of which is also our theme for Advent 2017.

The Christmas Joy special offering tonight will help church workers receive assistance in their time of need, and will give opportunities to students of Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges to help them learn, grow and lead in their faith. This is one way we can celebrate God's greatest gift to us, Jesus Christ, our Savior.

To avoid dripping wax, when lighting one candle from another, it is best to hold the lit candle still and let the unlit candle be the one tilted for ease of lighting. Candles are a symbol of Divine Presence in many religious traditions.

Please join us immediately following this service for a Christmas reception in the Guild Room through the right front door of the Sanctuary.

TONIGHT'S WORSHIP LEADERSHIP

Preaching—Rev. Michael D. Kirby

Liturgist—Rev. Jessica C. Gregory

Candle Lighters—Nancy, Jim, Jamie & Abi Otwell

Musicians—Dr. Christopher Owen, Paul Vander Weele, the Chancel Choir

Choral Soloists—Johanna Moffitt, soprano; Jackie King, alto; Steve Uliana, tenor

Ushers—Tom Abendroth, Tom & Steve Davies, Adam & Kent Geibel, Stephanie Mitchell



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