

Christmas Eve 2016

*“The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness has not overcome it.”*

(John 1:5)

Gathering Music

Ethan Li

Prelude

“Oh Holy Night”

Lydia Eze and Julian Ross

Welcome/time of preparation

Meghan

“O come, all ye faithful”

212, vs. 1 & 3 (Kay on organ)

(As the congregation sings, candle lighter process: Sarah starts with the first words of the 1st verse and lights the candle of “hope.” Ted starts with the words “Come and behold him...” in the 1st verse and lights the candle of “peace.” Meghan starts with the first words of the 2nd verse and lights the candle of “joy.” Steve and Georgia start with the words “Glory to God, all glory...” in the 2nd verse and Steve lights the candle of “love.”)

1.

O come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem.
Come & behold Him, born the king of angels
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord.

2.

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heav’n above;
Glory to God, all glory in the highest.
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord.

John 1:1-5 & Lighting the Christ Candle

Smith family

Sarah: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

(pause)

We have lit the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love. Now, we light the Christ candle.

(Georgia lights the Christ candle).

Let us join our voices and sing
“O come, O come Immanuel.”

“O come, O come, Immanuel”

172, verse 1 & 6 *(Pete on guitar)*

1.

O come, O come, Immanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here,
until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice!

Immanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

6.

O come, Desire of nations, bind
all peoples in one heart and mind.
Bid envy, strife, and quarrels cease.
Fill the whole world
with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice!

Immanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Call to worship

Psalm 97

(1-Sarah Smith, 2-Georgia Smith)

1: Please stand in body or spirit and join us in reading the responsive call to worship found on the powerpoint.

1: The Lord is king! Let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad!

2: Clouds and thick darkness are all around him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.

People: Fire goes before him, and consumes his adversaries on every side. His lightnings light up the world; the earth sees and trembles.

1: The mountains melt like wax before the Lord, before the Lord of all the earth.

2: The heavens proclaim his righteousness; and all the peoples behold his glory.

People: All worshipers of images are put to shame, those who make their boast in worthless idols; all gods bow down before him.

1: Zion hears and is glad, and the towns of Judah rejoice, because of your judgements, O God.

2: For you, O Lord, are most high over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods.

People: The Lord loves those who hate evil; he guards the lives of his faithful; he rescues them from the

hand of the wicked. Light dawns for the
righteous, and joy for the upright in heart.

**All: Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous, and give
thanks to his holy name!**

2: Please stay standing and let us sing together “Come,
thou long-expected Jesus.”

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“Come, thou long-expected Jesus”

#178 (*Kay on organ*)

1.

Come, thou long-expected Jesus!
born to set thy people free,
from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art,
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.

2.

Born thy people to deliver,
born a child, and yet a king,
born to reign in us forever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit,
rule in all our hearts alone.
By thine all-sufficient merit,
raise us to thy glorious throne.

Opening Prayer

(*Ted Ryan*)

Heavenly Father, we came tonight to celebrate the
birth of your son. Guide us through worship and let your
light shine through us. Even in the darkest of days, your
light will never fade. You are Lord of all, full of grace,
mercy, and love. We will sing praises to you because you
are the greatest. Thank you for your light. In your son's
name we pray, amen.

You may be seated.

Children's story

“The Birds of Bethlehem”

by Tomie dePaola

(*Read by Sharon Kagarise*)

“Away in a Manger”

#194 (*Kay on organ*)

1.

Away in a manger,
no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus
laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky
looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus
asleep on the hay.

2.

The cattle are lowing,
the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus
no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus!
Look down from the sky,
and stay by my side
until morning is nigh.

3.

Be near me, Lord Jesus,
I ask thee to stay
close by me forever,
and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children
in thy tender care,
and fit us for heaven
to live with thee there.

Luke 1:26-38

(*1-Jeff Wolf, 2-Mike Hanna, 3-Gail Hanna*)

- 1 - In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said,
- 2 - “Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you!”
- 1 - But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her,
- 2 - “Do not be afraid Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there will be no end.”
- 1 - And Mary said to the angel,
- 3 - “How shall this be, since I have no husband?”
- 1 - And the angel said to her,
- 2 - “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible.”

1 - And Mary said,

3 -“Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.”

1 - And the angel departed from her.

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“Angels we have heard on high”

#197, vs. 1 & 4 (*Kay on organ*)

1.

Angels we have heard on high,
singing sweetly through the night,
and the mountains in reply
echoing their brave delight.

Glo.....ria in excelsis Deo,

Glo.....ria in excelsis Deo.

4.

See him in a manger laid
whom the angels praise above.

Mary, Joseph, lend your aid,
while we raise our hearts in love.

Glo.....ria in excelsis Deo,

Glo.....ria in excelsis Deo.

Luke 1:46-55

(1- *Meghan Knight*, 2-*Beth Kagarise*)

1 - And Mary said,

2 - “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

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Special Music

“Breath of Heaven”

(sung by *Beth Kagarise* and *Meghan Knight*
video karaoke with scenes from movie, “*The Nativity*”
Karen Gonzalez is doing sign language for it)

Matthew 1:18-25

(1-Grace Miller, 2-Gary Miller)

1 - This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about. His mother Mary and Joseph had promised to get married. But before they started to live together, it became clear that she was going to have a baby. She became pregnant by the power of the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph was faithful to the law. But he did not want to put her to shame in public. So he planned to divorce her quietly. But as Joseph was thinking about this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. The angel said,

2 - “Joseph, son of David, don’t be afraid to take Mary home as your wife. The baby inside her is from the Holy Spirit. She is going to have a son. You must give him the name Jesus. That’s because he will save his people from their sins.”

1 - All this took place to bring about what the Lord had said would happen. He had said through the prophet, “The virgin is going to have a baby. She will give birth to a son. And he will be called Immanuel.” (Isaiah 7:14) The name Immanuel means “God with us.” Joseph woke up. He did what the angel of the Lord commanded him to do. He took Mary home as his wife. But he did not sleep with her until she gave birth to a son. And Joseph gave him the name Jesus.

“What child is this”

#215, vs. 1 & 2 (Pete on guitar)

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 & angels sing.
Haste, haste to bring him laud,
the babe, the son of Mary!

2.

Why lies he in such mean estate
where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear, for sinners here
the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce him through,
the cross be borne for me, for you
Hail, hail the Word made flesh,
the babe, the son of Mary!

Luke 2:1-20

(1-Sharon Kagarise, 2-Terri Smyth,
3-Roxanne Eilers, 4-Courtney Eilers)

- 1 - Many years ago, the Roman Emperor Augustus gave orders for a census to be conducted throughout the whole empire. This was the first time it had been done while Quirinius was governor of Syria. Every man was required to go and register himself and his family in the town where he had been born. For Joseph, this meant travelling all the way from Nazareth in Galilee to Bethlehem in Judea. Bethlehem had been the hometown of King David, and Joseph, being a descendent of David, had been born there too, so that was where he had to report.
- 2 - Joseph's fiancée, Mary, travelled with him to Bethlehem for the census. She was pregnant and the baby was due any day. There was no accommodation left anywhere in the town, so they ended up sleeping rough in the stables behind a pub. Sure enough, she went into labour while they were there and gave birth to her first child – a baby boy. Mary wrapped the baby in a bunny rug and made up a bed for him in a feed trough. The region around Bethlehem was sheep country, and that night there was a bunch of shepherds spinning yarns around their campfire.
- 1 - Suddenly the whole sky lit up with the glory of God, and the Lord's messenger stood among them. They were packing death, but the messenger said to them,

- 3 - "It's okay! There's no need to panic. I'm here with good news, news that will give everyone everywhere good reason to celebrate. A saviour has just been born in David's town. He is God's chosen one, the Lord of all. Go and see for yourselves. You'll know you've found him when you see a baby wrapped in a bunny rug and lying in a feed trough!"
- 2 - The moment he'd finished speaking, the messenger was joined by a whole crowd from heaven, all praising God and shouting at the tops of their voices, saying:
- 3 - "All the glory belongs to God in heaven, and let there be peace on earth for all God's people!"
- 1 - Then it was all over – the crowd went back to heaven and the shepherds were left sitting there looking at one another, astonished.
- 4 - "We'd better go and check this out,"
- 2 - they said.
- 4 - "Let's go into town and see if we can see what's happened, what the Lord has let us in on."
- 1 - So without messing around they headed straight into Bethlehem, and sure enough, they tracked down Mary and Joseph and saw the baby lying in the feed trough. When they saw all this, they began telling everyone what they had heard about this child. People could hardly believe their ears when they heard what the shepherds were saying. But their words were precious to Mary and she repeated them over and over in her mind, wondering what would become of it all.

2 - The shepherds headed off towards their camp again – a rowdy mob, singing and shouting in the streets about how fabulous God was because of everything they had seen and heard. Everything had been just the way they had been told it would be.

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“O little town of Bethlehem”

#191, verse 1 & 3 (Kay on organ)

1.

O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.

3.

How silently, how silently,
the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming,
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still
the dear Christ enters in.

Matthew 2:1-12

(1-Sara Shenk, 2-Erin Eilers, 3-Ethan Lane)

- 1 - In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking,
- 2 - “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.”
- 1 - When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him,
- 3 - “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: ‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.’”
- 1 - Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying,
- 3 - “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.”
- 1 - When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house,

they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

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“We three kings”

#141, vs. 1 & 5 in red Brethren Hymnal (*Kay on organ*)

1.

We three Kings of Orient are;
bearing gifts we traverse afar,
Field & fountain, moor & mountain
following yon- der star.
O star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light.

5.

Glorious new behold him arise,
King and God and sacrifice;
Al-le-lu-ia, Al-le-lu-ia!
Sounds thru the earth and skies.
O star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light.

Invitation to give

(*Nicci Smyth*)

Christmas is a season of great anticipation of what God is about to do here on Earth. Likewise, we often have a feeling of anticipation when the offering plate is passed around. As people rummage through purses and pockets we begin to anticipate the plate as it moves to and fro, back and forth in the aisles. Perhaps you have thought to yourself, “The ushers are coming! They are looking right at me!” However, the reasons behind that anticipation are different for each one of us. Maybe that is because we do not want anyone to see how much or how little we put in the plate. Perhaps we sense we can always put in more than we usually do. The truth of the matter is that when we give, it should be in a spirit of joyful anticipation! Contribute with joy for what is to come as a result of your giving. Place your offering in a spirit of prayer that God will do something new with our tithes. Give your whole self in hopes that, in no matter how little or how much we give –God is glorified in a new, miraculous way. Will the ushers please come forward.

*Adaptation of Invitation written by Eric Landram
for the Church of the Brethren Advent Offering, 2016.*

Offertory Song

“The Little Drummer”

(led by Pete on guitar & Caitlin on Djembe – all sing)

*(Ushers bring offering plates back up to the front
when they're finished collecting offerings)*

1.

Come they told me, pa rum pum pum pum
A new born King to see, pa rum pum pum pum
Our finest gifts we bring, pa rum pum pum pum
to lay before the King, pa rum pum pum pum,
rum pum pum pum, rum pum pum pum
So to honor Him, pa rum pum pum pum
When we come.

2.

Little Baby, pa rum pum pum pum
I am a poor boy/girl too, pa rum pum pum pum
I have no gift to bring, pa rum pum pum pum
That's fit to give the King, pa rum pum pum pum,
rum pum pum pum, rum pum pum pum
Shall I play for you, pa rum pum pum pum
On my drum?

3.

Mary nodded, pa rum pum pum pum
The ox and lamb kept time, pa rum pum pum pum
I played my drum for Him, pa rum pum pum pum
I played my best for Him, pa rum pum pum pum,
rum pum pum pum, rum pum pum pum
Then He smiled at me, pa rum pum pum pum
Me and my drum.

Prayer of Dedication

(Ruoyun Li)

Christ who is coming soon, we joyfully anticipate this new thing you are about to do! Use these gifts, O God, in miraculous ways. Use us, O God, as instruments of your peace, this day and every day. Amen.

*Written by Eric Landram
for the Church of the Brethren Advent Offering, 2016*

Candle lighting invitation

(Meghan)

*(Center ushers become candle lighters.
All sanctuary lights go off EXCEPT the cross flood light).*

“The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness has not overcome it.”

(John 1:5)

As we sing, “Silent night,” you are invited into this light which shines in the darkness. When the light comes to you, let your unlit candle be the one that bends toward the light. This better prevents wax from dripping. It also reminds of humility and that, as we sang earlier, “where meek souls will receive him still the dear Christ enters in.” Please be careful with your candle. May we be set on fire spiritually, not physically. Let your light shine.

(While the above is spoken, the 2 ushers who brought the offering forward begin lighting their own candles off the Advent

wreath, then go and stand in the center aisle at the first pew – on either side. The other two ushers come forward and have their candles lit by the first two, then go eight pews back and wait – on either side. When the music starts, quietly begin to pass to the light to the first person in the center of each pew. As it says above, it is the person whose candle is unlit who bends their candle to light it off yours..)

“Silent night, holy night”

#193 (Pete on guitar)

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 the heaven afar,
heavenly hosts sing Alleluia;
Christ the Savior is born!
Christ the Savior is born!

3.

Silent night, holy night,
wondrous star, lend thy light
With the angels let us sing
Alleluia to our King
Christ the Savior is here,
Jesus the Savior is here!

4.

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.

(After hymn, there is a moment of silence).

Prayer

(Meghan)

Meghan: “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. *(pause)* Please quench your candle and rise in body or spirit. “You are the light of the world,” Jesus said. Don’t hide your light. Shall we sing together verses 1 and 4 of “Joy to the world”?”

“Joy to the world”

#318, vs. 1 & 4 (*Kay on organ*)

1.

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
let every heart prepare him room,
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and heav'n and nature sing.

4.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.

(Benediction)→

Benediction

(*Meghan and Pete*)

1 - It is good to have been here!

2 - The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;

1 - those who lived in deepest night, are lit up with a brilliant sight.

2 - Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.

1 - The spread of his influence and of his peace will never end.

2 - Therefore, go out into the world with great joy,

1 - and the grace of Bethlehem's matchless Child,

2 - the love of the God who never ceases to amaze,

1 - and the fellowship of the Spirit who never wearies,

2 - will be with you this holy night and evermore.

1 - Thanks be to God!

2 - Yes, thanks be to God!

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Minister of the Uniting Church in Australia

Postlude