

**FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

**Pleasant Valley and Camden Avenues**

**Moorestown, New Jersey**

**Christmas Eve 2012 8:00 P.M. Candle Lighting Service**

LARGE PRINT BULLETINS ARE AVAILABLE IN THE NARTHEX

Welcome! We are happy that you have come to worship here this Christmas Eve.

We invite you to open your heart to the message of the birth of Christ, proclaimed in word and music, and to sing with us the songs that proclaim his birth!

**PRELUDE** Come, All Ye Shepherds  
Cantique de Noel

Youth Handbell Ringers  
Karen Murray, Worship Leader

**WELCOME**

**CALL TO WORSHIP: (Isaiah 40:3-5)**

Leader: A Voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

**People: Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low;**

Leader: The uneven ground shall become level,

**People: and the rough places a plain.**

Leader: Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,

**People: and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."**

**OPENING HYMN 240 Hark! the Herald Angels Sing**

**INVOCATION:** O almighty God, by the birth of your holy child Jesus you gave us a great light to dawn on our darkness. We confess that we often turn away from the great light of your love, depending instead on the poor reflection of our own efforts. We focus on earthly treasures, failing to see beyond their dull glow. We turn our backs on the needs of others to satisfy our own desires for more things and bigger treasure. Grant that in this season of light we may turn once again and see the light of Christ. Bestow upon us that most excellent Christmas gift of love to all people, so that the likeness of your Son may be formed in us, and that we may offer to others the ever brightening hope of everlasting life through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

**THE PROPHET ISAIAH SPEAKS** "...For unto us a Child is born."

Isaiah 9:2-7

**HYMN 211 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel**

Vs. 1 - 4

**A NEW CONVENANT PROMISED**

Jeremiah 31: 31 - 34

**SONG Emmanuel (Hallowed Manger Child)** *(by Chris Tomlin & Ed Cash)*

What hope we hold this starlit night: a King is born in Bethlehem. Our journey long, we seek the light that leads to the hallowed manger ground. What fear we felt in the silent age, Four hundred years can He be found? But broken by a baby's cry; rejoice in the hallowed manger ground.

*Chorus: Emmanuel, Emmanuel, God incarnate, here to dwell.*

*Emmanuel, Emmanuel, praise His name, Emmanuel.*

The Son of God, here, born to bleed; a crown of thorns would pierce His brow. And we beheld this offering, exalted now, the King of kings, praise God for the hallowed manger ground.

Emmanuel, Emmanuel, God incarnate, here to dwell. Emmanuel, Emmanuel, praise His name, Emmanuel. Emmanuel, praise His name, Emmanuel. *(2009 Worshiptogether.com)*

**THE BIRTH OF OUR SAVIOR**

Luke 2:1-7

*"...she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth,  
and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn."*

**HYMN 234 O Come, All Ye Faithful**

verses 1, 3, 6

**HEAVEN REJOICES**

Glory to God in the Highest!

Luke 2:8-14

**HYMN 204**

**Emmanuel**

**WE HAVE SEEN HIS GLORY**

*The Word Became Flesh*

John 1:1-14

**PRESENTATION OF OUR CHRISTMAS OFFERING**

**SPECIAL MUSIC**

Ding, Dong, Merrily On High!

From Bethlehem

Youth Choir

**CHRISTMAS MESSAGE**

**The Journey, pt. 5**

Pastor Steve Donat

*A Visit to the Manger*

**LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE**

**LITANY**

Leader: We thought we lived in the light, but the darkness of fear, anger, and alienation had taken over.

**People: We wondered where God was.**

Leader: God banished the darkness away in the light of the Christmas Star.

**People: God's light was found around a manger, a place where the Holy Child was given to sleep.**

Leader: God called to the shepherds through the voices of the angels whose first words were

"Do not be afraid. There is Good News for you!"

**People: And in that instance, all the people who felt that God didn't care about them, had Hope.**

Leader: The star shone brightly and shines brightly in our lives.

**People: Now no darkness can shut it out.**

Leader: Go, Tell the Good News. Christ is Born!

**People: Praise be to God who has poured God's Light and Love into our lives once again.**

**Now and forever. AMEN.**

**CANDLE LIGHTING AND CAROL SING**

*See insert for words for carol sing*

**CHRISTMAS PRAYER** Following prayer, please extinguish all candles.

*Gracious and Loving God, you have brought us again to the glad season when we celebrate the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Grant that his Spirit may be born anew in our hearts this day and that we may joyfully welcome him to reign over us. Open our ears that we may hear again the angelic chorus of old. Open our lips that we, too, may sing with uplifted hearts. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, goodwill toward all; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

**CLOSING HYMN 246**

**Joy to the World!**

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

Joy to the world, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ;  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground;  
he comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found,  
far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.

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**

**The Canticle of Simeon**

Leader: The holy child of Bethlehem has come to us this night.

**People: We have welcomed the Prince of Peace.**

Leader: Now, like Simeon, that righteous and devout man who looked forward to the consolation of Israel and who beheld the coming of our Lord Emmanuel, we pray:

**People: Lord, let your servants now depart in peace, according to your word; for our eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of your people Israel.**

**\*THE PEACE**

The Peace of the Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

**\*POSTLUDE**

**\*The People Stand**

**ACOLYTES:** Taylor Marcinek and Walter McGrath

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*Have a blessed and Christ-centered Christmas!*

**NEW YEAR'S EVE COMMUNION**

A service of Healing and Holy Communion will be held in our Sanctuary on Dec. 31, at 9:00 p.m.

We would like to encourage you to make this a part of your evening's agenda as we welcome in a New Year remembering our common hope in Christ Jesus.

Come and worship with us at any of our services

Saturday 5:30 p.m. in the Chapel

Sunday mornings 8:30, 9:30 and 11:00

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**STAFF OF FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

Steve Donat, Senior Pastor	Joan Flamini, Office Administrator
HeyYoung Horton, Associate Pastor	Karen Halligan, Membership Secretary
Glenn Rodgers, Director of Music	Sue Harris, Parish Nurse
Karen Murray, Dir. of Christian Education	Bill McIlmail, Property Coordinator
Brad Kenney, Youth Director	Steve Bixby, Facilities Maintenance Coordinator