

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
PLEASANT VALLEY AND CAMDEN AVENUES  
MOORESTOWN, NEW JERSEY

CHRISTMAS EVE 2013

11:00 PM

CANDLE LIGHTING SERVICE

THE CELEBRATION OF OUR SAVIOR'S BIRTH

LARGE PRINT BULLETINS ARE AVAILABLE IN THE NARTHEX

Welcome! We are pleased that you have come to worship here this Christmas Eve. We invite you to open your heart to the Good News of the birth of Christ, proclaimed in word and music, and to sing with us, and the angels, songs that celebrate his coming!

PRELUDE

Christmas Carols for Brass Quartet  
In the Bleak Mid-winter  
Christmas Joy  
Adult Handbell Ringers

Brass Quartet  
Karen Buckwalter  
Cynthia Dobrinski

WELCOME

INVITATION TO BETHLEHEM

Leader: I bring you news of great joy! Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ, the Lord!

**People: Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing which has taken place!**

Leader: Place our hope on Bethlehem this night, O God. Convince us that small is victor over large, that we can find a lot in a little. Slow us down. Move us out of the fast lane. Let everything we do contain the seed of your son's birth, so that we can know the song in the silent night, the gift in giving gifts, and the peace that passes all understanding in the quiet of our hearts.

**People: Let us go to Bethlehem to find him who brings the scattered home.**

Leader: Come softly to us, O Jesus. Bring us home by your path. Open our eyes and ears that we may welcome the life you bring. Revive the desert places in us that we may yet blossom.

**People: Let us go to Bethlehem to meet him who hears us when we have no words,**

Leader: when we have no justification, no excuses, only the thud of facts and gnawing memories, only the knowledge that too many tables are thinly laid and that we, too, are poor in ways that frighten us.

**People: Let us go to Bethlehem to find the child who amazes us.**

Leader: Bethlehem – so small, so insignificant, it seems unlikely that you should use it for your purpose. But you sneak in there, holy child, so silently, almost unobserved. And if you can use Bethlehem, that means you can use us. Come to our quiet space and point us to the purposes you have for us. At your manger, make sense of our lives.

**People: Let us go to Bethlehem and see that our usual hopes are too small, that our imagination is inadequate to grasp the things you have in mind.**

Leader: Make us wild in hope – that disease will be cured, that peace will blanket the earth, that we will find calm for our souls. Show us that we are not alone, that you are with us, that in your smallness we find all we truly need. Amen.

**People: Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing which has taken place!**

\*HYMN 240

Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

\*OPENING PRAYER: Eternal God, as you came to the world in the birth of the Christ child, come to us this night. Come into our hearts and shine your light upon our path. As you brought your hope, your peace, your joy, and your love to the world in the form of the babe of Bethlehem, so bring to us his radiance and help us to glorify both Him and You. We ask that the fullness of his life might live in us, and that at his name every knee bow, and every tongue confess, that He is Lord. Amen.

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

Isaiah 9:2-7

HYMN 211

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Verses 1-4

A NEW COVENANT PROMISED

HYMN 219

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  
(Chorus) This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing.

What Child is This?

So bring Him incense, gold and myrrh,  
Come, peasant, King to own Him.  
The King of kings salvation brings,  
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.

Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the Babe, the Son of Mary.

Jeremiah 31:31-34

William Dix

THE BIRTH OF OUR SAVIOR

"...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."

Luke 2:1-7

HYMN 234

HEAVEN REJOICES

MINISTRY OF MUSIC

HYMN 204

WE HAVE SEEN HIS GLORY

PRESENTATION OF OUR CHRISTMAS OFFERING

MINISTRY OF MUSIC

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

O Come, All Ye Faithful

Glory to God in the Highest!

Still, Still, Still

Emmanuel

The Word Became Flesh

Do You Hear What I Hear?

From Bedlam to Bethlehem, pt. 5

Mind the Light

verses 1, 3, 6

Luke 2:8-14

Arr. Robert Wetzler

John 1:1-14

Arr. Harry Simeone

Pastor Steve Donat

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

LITANY

Leader: It is you, loving God, who lights our path with truth.

**People: Your Word, Jesus, is truth.**

Leader: In his light, draw all to the manger

**People: to gather in wonder with the shepherds.**

Leader: In his light, draw all to the manger

**People: to kneel in reverence with the wise ones.**

Leader: In his light, draw all to the manger

**People: to sing for joy with the angels.**

Leader: In the brightness of his life,

**People: cast away the darkness of injustice, poverty, violence and hunger in the world.**

Leader: It is you, loving God, who meets us on our way.

**People: In the light of Jesus, show the world the way of life. Amen.**

Leader: Let this flame represent the light of our Savior's love.

Receive its warmth, and let it grow bright in you.

*Ushers will light a candle at the end of each row. As you pass the flame,  
please hold the lit candle upright and tip the unlit candle to receive the flame.*

CANDLE LIGHTING AND CAROL SING

See insert for words for carol sing

CHRISTMAS PRAYER: 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.

*After song, please extinguish all candles*

**\*CLOSING**

Leader: When the song of the angels is stilled, when the star in the sky is gone, when the kings  
and princes are home, when the shepherds are back with their flocks, then the work of Christmas begins:

**People: to find the lost, to heal the broken, to feed the hungry, to release the prisoner,  
to rebuild the nations, to bring peace among all peoples, to make music in the heart.**

Leader: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God!**

**\*THE PEACE**

The Peace of the Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

**\*POSTLUDE**

**\*The People Stand**

**ACOLYTES:** Alex Weitzner, Olivia Bewley

**BRASS QUARTET:** Fred Reimers, Bill Hosbach, trumpets;  
Andrei Shidlowski, Jeff Lowden, trombones

*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 7:00 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

Bonnee Noyes-Bongiorno, Parish Nurse

Karen Murray, Dir. of Christian Education

Bill McIlmail, Property Coordinator

Kathy Clawges/Sam Rotz, Youth Directors

Steve Bixby, Facilities Maintenance Coordinator

Devika Gill, Pre-School Director

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