

**FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

**Pleasant Valley and Camden Avenues**

**Moorestown, New Jersey**

**Christmas Eve 2017**

**8:00 P.M.**

**Candle Lighting Service**

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**

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

Still, Still, Still

Love Came Down at Christmas

**WELCOME**

Karen Murray, Worship Leader

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

Leader: Welcome to this most glorious night when angels and shepherds mingle  
and the birth of a baby changes the world.

**People: We come to celebrate with joy and wonder.**

Leader: Celebrate the light that shines all around us.

**People: We will sing and praise our most wondrous God.**

Leader: Let us kneel before the Christ child, who makes God's promises come true.

**OPENING HYMN 234**

**O Come, All Ye Faithful**

Verses 1, 3, 4

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.**

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation; O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!

Glory to God, all glory in the highest; **Refrain.**

See how the shepherds, summoned to his cradle, leaving their flocks, draw nigh to gaze;

we too will thither bend our joyful footsteps; **Refrain**

**GATHERING PRAYER:** Glorious God, who presents us with the most precious of gifts, we praise you for all your blessings in our lives. Tonight we have come to this place, in the midst of a busy time. We might not even have everything ready at home, yet we have come, because we ourselves need to be ready. Work in our hearts this night, preparing us for your presence. Work in our lives that we may reach out to others in comfort and compassion; work in our world that the darkness that has encompassed it may be dispelled by the brightness of your love and your Gift. In faith and expectation, we pray. AMEN.

**LITANY FOR CHRISTMAS EVE**

Leader: He did not wait till the world was ready, till men and nations were at peace.

**People: He came when the Heavens were unsteady, and prisoners cried out for release.**

Leader: He did not wait till hearts were pure. In joy he came to a tarnished world of sin and doubt.

**People: To a world like ours, of anguished shame he came, and his Light would not go out.**

Leader: He came to a world which did not mesh, to heal its tangles, shield its scorn.

**People: In the mystery of the Word made Flesh the Maker of the stars was born.**

Leader: We cannot wait till the world is sane to raise our songs with joyful voice,

**People: for to share our grief, to touch our pain, He came with Love: Rejoice! Rejoice!**

**MINISTRY OF MUSIC**

Messiah

Doug Sell, Soloist

**SCRIPTURE READING**

John 1:9-14

**HYMN 204**

**Emmanuel, Emmanuel**

Emmanuel, Emmanuel, his name is called Emmanuel.

God with us, revealed in us, his name is called Emmanuel.

**THE CHRISTMAS SCRIPTURE**

Luke 2:1-7

**HYMN 238**

**Angels We Have Heard on High**

All 4 verses

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!

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?

What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heavenly song?

Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Come to Bethlehem and see Christ whose birth the angels sing;  
come, adore on bended knee, Christ the Lord, the newborn King.

Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

See him in a manger laid, whom the choirs of angels praise;

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

Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo! *(1964 Abingdon Press)*

**PRESENTATION OF OUR CHRISTMAS OFFERING**

**MINISTRY OF MUSIC**

**Hark! the Herald Angels Sing**

Youth Choir

**THE CHRISTMAS SCRIPTURE**

Luke 2:8-20

**HYMN 245**

**The First Noel**

Verses 1,2,3,5

The first Noel the angel did say was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;  
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep, on a cold winter's night that was so deep.  
*Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.*

They looked up and saw a star shining in the east, beyond them far; and to the earth it gave great light,  
and so it continued both day and night. *Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.*

And by the light of that same star three Wise Men came from country far; to seek for a king was their  
intent, and to follow the star where ever it went. *Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.*

Then entered in those Wise Men three, full reverently upon the knee, and offered there, in his presence,  
their gold and myrrh and frankincense. *Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.*

**MESSAGE**

From Nazareth to Bethlehem

Pastor Richard Nichols

**HYMN 230**

**O Little Town Of Bethlehem**

verses 1, 3 & 4

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.

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

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray; cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell; O come to us, abide with us,  
our Lord Emmanuel! *(Public Domain)*

**THE LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE**

Leader: Jesus said, "I am the light of the world."

**Congregation: We will let the light of Christ shine in us.**

**CANDLE LIGHTING AND CAROL SINGING**

*See insert for words for carol sing*

**CLOSING HYMN 246**

**Joy to the World!**

Verses 1, 2, 4

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.

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**

**\*POSTLUDE**

**\*The People Stand**

**ACOLYTE:** Tyler Hare

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***Have a blessed and Christ-centered Christmas!***

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

**The Staff of First United Methodist Church**

Richard Nichols, Senior Pastor	Joan Flamini, Administrative Assistant
HeyYoung Horton, Associate Pastor	Karen Halligan, Membership Secretary
Donna Banes, Interim Music Team Coord.	Devika Gill, Pre-School Director
Karen Murray, Director of Christian Ed.	Doug Hamilton, Maintenance Coordinator
Kathy Clawges, Youth Director	

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