

Calvin Presbyterian Church

Third Sunday of Advent, December 17, 2023 ♦ 10:00 am



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Order of Service

Sunday, December 17, 2023

— Prepare the Way...

Preparation for Worship

God of all hope and joy,
open our hearts in welcome,
that your Son, Jesus Christ, at his coming
may find in us a dwelling prepared for him,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God now and forever. Amen.

Prelude “The Holly and the Ivy” Laurel Underwood, *piano*

Introit “Angels from the Realms of Glory” Chancel Bell Choir

Call to Worship *In Search of Our Kneeling Places* Neil Trainer

In each heart lies a Bethlehem,
an inn where we must ultimately answer
whether there is room or not.

When we are Bethlehem-bound
we experience our own advent in his.

When we are Bethlehem bound
we can no longer look the other way
conveniently not seeing stars
not hearing angel voices.

We can no longer excuse ourselves by busily
tending our sheep or our kingdoms.

This Advent let's go to Bethlehem
and see this thing that the Lord has made known to us.

In the midst of shopping sprees
let's ponder in our hearts the Gift of Gifts.

Through the tinsel
let's look for the gold of the Christmas Star.
In the excitement and confusion, in the merry chaos,
let's listen for the brush of angels' wings.
This Advent, let's go to Bethlehem
and find our kneeling places.

Carol "Away in a Manger" (#24, vv. 1 & 3) Congregation

Welcome and Greeting Neil Trainer

— In the Beginning...

Advent Candle Lighting John 1:1–5 The Dean Family

Choir "Of the Father's Love Begotten" Christmas Choir

Reading *The Word of God* Linda Erickson

Scripture Psalm 53:2–3 Jamie Kang

Song of Confession "Just As I Am, Without One Plea" (#370, v. 1) Congregation

Assurance of Grace *The Word of God* Rick Jackson

Carol "O Little Town of Bethlehem" (#44, v. 3) Congregation

— The Waiting...

Scripture Isaiah 40:3–5 Jamie Kang

Carol "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" (#9, v. 3) Congregation

Reading	<i>The Promised One, the Expected One, the Messiah</i>	Rick Jackson
Carol	“What Child Is This?” (#53, vv. 1–2)	Congregation
Reading	<i>In December Darkness</i>	Linda Erickson

— The Promise...

Scripture	Luke 1:26b–38	Jamie Kang
Reading	<i>Mary, Nazareth Girl</i>	Linda Erickson
Choir	“The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came”	Christmas Choir

— The Birth...

Scripture	Luke 2:1, 3–7	Jamie Kang
Reading	<i>Unexpected</i>	Linda Erickson
Choir	“Glory, Hodie!”	Christmas Choir

— The Celebration...

Scripture	Luke 2:8–14	Jamie Kang
Reading	<i>This Year</i>	Rick Jackson
Carol	“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” (#31, vv. 1–2)	Congregation
Scripture	Luke 2:15–20	Linda Erickson

Reading	<i>What Do I Want for Christmas?</i>	Jamie Kang
Carol	“O Little Town of Bethlehem” (#44, vv. 1, 2, 4)	Congregation
Music	“Canticle of Carols”	Christmas Choir and Chancel Bell Choir

— Our Response...

Reading	<i>The Gifts of the Magi</i>	Linda Erickson
Offering	“Christmas Carol Fest”	Chancel Bell Choir
Reading	<i>The Child Is Born Again</i>	Neil Trainer

Each year the Child is born again.
 Each year some new heart
 finally hears
 finally sees
 finally knows love.
 And in heaven
 there is great rejoicing!
 There is a festival of stars!
 There is celebration among the angels!
 For in the finding of one lost sheep,
 the heart of the Shepherd is glad,
 and Christmas has happened once more.
 The Child is born anew
 and one more knee is bowed!

Carol	“O Come, All Ye Faithful” (#41, vv. 1, 3)	Congregation
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Benediction

Choral Postlude	“Christmas... In About Three Minutes”	Christmas Choir
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All the poems in today's service (readings listed in italicized titles) were written by Ann Weems, the "Presbyterian Poet." The poems are either from

Kneeling in Bethlehem, The Westminster Press, 1980; or

From Advent's Alleluia to Easter's Morning Light, Westminster John Knox Press, 2010.

Thanks to our Musicians:

Calvin's "Christmas Choir"
Chancel Bell Choir
Nate Brown, *trumpet*

And thanks to our Readers:

Linda Erickson
Rick Jackson
Jamie Kang
Neil Trainer

The News in Brief



Happy Birthday!

Dean Rowley	Dec. 19	Josh Logan	Dec. 27
John Claus	Dec. 20	Ruth Park	Dec. 27
Kristi Trainer	Dec. 20	Ethan Weschler	Dec. 29
Al Lutz	Dec. 22	Lenore Zissermann	Dec. 29
Yoko Weaver	Dec. 25	Michael Johnson	Dec. 31



Upcoming Events

Advent Service Project	Now through Jan. 14
<i>Assemble Hygiene SmilePacks to provide toiletries for children in need.</i>	
GriefShare, 10 am	Dec. 20
Sunday Worship, 10 am	Dec. 24
Candlelight Christmas Eve Service, 7 pm	Dec. 24
Messy Church, 5:30 pm	Jan. 03
First Fruits Sunday, 10 am	Jan. 07
<i>The Deacons request SpaghettiOs and individual-serving size boxes of cereal.</i>	

Longest Night Service Tonight at 7 pm

// Special service for those who find the holidays difficult

At 7 pm this evening, we are holding a “Longest Night” service of music, contemplation, and prayer. This service is open to everyone; however, it is in-person only and will not be streamed. With selected readings and instrumental music, we will cling to God’s light in the darkness of this season — because we recognize that not everything about this time of year is merry or bright. During the service, we will bring our whole selves to God and be reminded of, and renewed in, the love and faithfulness of the God who comes near to us in Jesus and who is with us still today.

December Giving

// Year-end donations support Calvin and our mission partners

When you donate to Calvin, you support *all* of our mission partners as well as all the ministries of the church. We depend on December contributions to ensure that all our ministries are fully funded. To give a special year-end gift to Calvin, or to give a special Christmas gift to the Deacons, Backpack Kids, Bridge Ministries, CUSP, DOVE, the Ahinas, Brian Maher and Bophal Yos, Lynn Ogata, Path from Poverty, Tall Timber, or Vision House — or to fund Worship and Messy Church, Family Ministries, Building and Grounds, or Technology, you may do so via Calvin’s giving site at www.calvinpc.org/donate/.

January’s Messy Church

// Join us Wednesday, January 3 from 5:30 to 7 pm

The values of Messy Church are hospitality, creativity, celebration, all ages, and Christ-centered. We are delighted to behold how God is moving through this new worshipping community. We hope you’ll join us on January 3rd — and of course your friends, neighbors, and relatives are invited as well.

For January 3, we need help with supplies. The biblical story will be about Mary, Martha, Lazarus, and Jesus. One of the crafts will be a DIY sand timer (to remember that God’s timing is not our timing), and we need empty glass spice bottles (3.75 x 1.5 inches) with a metal lid. Please also save any boxes you collect over the holidays: we need bigger boxes for building the tomb where Lazarus was buried and smaller boxes for taking crafts home. You can give Pastor Emily any of these items between now and December 31.

*Below is a repeat from the Stories of Faith column from the
Friday, December 23, 2022 email.*

O Holy Night

// by Jenny Strock

It was an ordinary evening two thousand years ago. The stars were beginning to flicker in the night sky; weary travelers rushed to find lodging for the night, shepherds prepared for the night watch, and in a far land wise men set their sights on the night sky. Nothing unusual about this night or was there?

Suddenly, the shepherds are startled by a voice and a heavenly host praising God, declaring the birth of a baby Jesus. Confused and excited, they leave their sheep to go see this child in a humble manger with his mother, Mary. Joseph is beaming nearby. In a far-off land three wise men watch the night sky and see a star they know as a sign of the birth of the King, and they, too, go to adore Jesus.

Zoom forward two thousand years to a large church packed full of people on Christmas Eve, to a little girl sitting on the main floor with her family and friends. They have sung all the songs of Christmas, and as is the custom, the choir rises, the organ begins the prelude and then a single soprano, in the clearest voice, begins to sing, “O Holy Night, the stars are brightly shining, it is the night of our dear Savior’s birth.” This is the moment she has waited for, that she’s clutched her little candle for. As the music is sung a flame is passed from one person to another until finally her candle, too, is lit. The room is dark except for a thousand candles twinkling like the stars that were in that night sky two thousand years ago. It’s magical, wondrous, and humbling. Jesus the light of the world is born.

As she listens the choir joins their voices with the soprano in telling the story of Jesus’ birth, God’s own Son. She is filled with the wonder and excitement of His birth. That feeling is as real to her today as it was on Christmas Eve long ago.



Contact [Kirsty](#) at the church office if you would like to contribute a meditation for Stories of Faith. The meditation should be short – about three paragraphs or 250 words.