



**CHRISTMAS JOY**  
**A CANDLELIGHT SERVICE FOR CHRISTMAS EVE**  
**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2024, 7 P.M.**  
**ST. PAUL'S UMC OF ODESSA**  
**PASTOR LINDA RAY – 406 MAIN ST., ODESSA, DE 19730**

**We Enter God's Gates With Praise**  
**Welcome With Music and Images**  
**Liturgist – Melissa Brooks**

GATHERING MUSIC: *Christmas Joy* Handbell Choir

WELCOME

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

Carl and Rev. Dr. Patti Ravilious

One: Beloved, today we welcome the Christ Child, the fulfillment of our joy, as we proclaim with the prophet Isaiah, "For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

**Many: Christ our joy has come near. Emmanuel, God with us, has come to dwell with us as a tiny baby. "His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this" (Isaiah 9:7).**

One: We light this candle as a sign of Christ coming to dwell with us, to live in the neighborhood of vulnerable humanity as a vulnerable child.

**Many May the light of Christ warm our hearts and light our way as we share the joy of God's salvation wherever we go.**

**All Singing: O come let us adore Him. O come let us adore Him. O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.**

\*OPENING HYMN: *O Come All Ye Faithful* vs. 1,2,3,6 Red Hymnal 234

**OPENING PRAYER: Holy God, help us to pause in the midst of our busyness. Quiet our minds on this Christmas Eve, that we may hear the good news of your gift of Jesus Christ, your gift to a world so in need of peace, justice, and joy. If we walk in darkness and despair, help us see the great light of your presence. If we wait in hope for the coming of Christ, help us offer hope to those around us. Help us see your glory breaking into our lives, as Mary and shepherds before us saw. In the quiet of this night, may we welcome your peace and favor, through Jesus Christ our Messiah and Lord. Amen**

WORDS FOR YOUNG BELIEVERS:

*He Is Born*

Red Hymnal 228

*He is born the holy child. Play the oboe and bagpipe merrily. He is born the holy child, sing we all of the Savior mild.*

FIRST LESSON: *Isaiah 9: 2-7* (CEB)

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.

On those living in a pitch-dark land, light has dawned.

<sup>3</sup>You have made the nation great;  
you have increased its joy.

They rejoiced before you as with joy at the harvest,  
as those who divide plunder rejoice.

<sup>4</sup>As on the day of Midian, you've shattered the yoke that burdened them,  
the staff on their shoulders,  
and the rod of their oppressor.

<sup>5</sup>Because every boot of the thundering warriors,  
and every garment rolled in blood  
will be burned, fuel for the fire.

<sup>6</sup>A child is born to us, a son is given to us,  
and authority will be on his shoulders.  
He will be named  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

<sup>7</sup>There will be vast authority and endless peace  
for David's throne and for his kingdom,  
establishing and sustaining it  
with justice and righteousness  
now and forever.

The zeal of the LORD of heavenly forces will do this.

\*HYMN OF PREPARATION:

*Away In A Manger*

Red Hymnal 217

\*GOSPEL LESSON: *Luke 2: 1-20* (CEB)

<sup>2</sup>In those days Caesar Augustus declared that everyone throughout the empire should be enrolled in the tax lists. <sup>2</sup>This first enrollment occurred when Quirinius governed Syria. <sup>3</sup>Everyone went to their own cities to be enrolled. <sup>4</sup>Since Joseph belonged to David's house and family line, he went up from the city of Nazareth in Galilee to David's city, called Bethlehem, in Judea. <sup>5</sup>He went to be enrolled together with Mary, who was promised to him in marriage and who was pregnant. <sup>6</sup>While they were there, the time came for Mary to have her baby. <sup>7</sup>She gave birth to her firstborn child, a son, wrapped him snugly, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the guestroom. <sup>8</sup>Nearby shepherds were living in the fields, guarding their sheep at night. <sup>9</sup>The Lord's angel stood before them, the Lord's glory shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup>The angel said, "Don't be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people. <sup>11</sup>Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord.

<sup>12</sup>This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup>Suddenly a great assembly of the heavenly forces was with the angel praising God. They said, <sup>14</sup>"Glory to God in heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors."

<sup>15</sup> When the angels returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, “Let’s go right now to Bethlehem and see what’s happened. Let’s confirm what the Lord has revealed to us.”

<sup>16</sup> They went quickly and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup> When they saw this, they reported what they had been told about this child. <sup>18</sup> Everyone who heard it was amazed at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup> Mary committed these things to memory and considered them carefully. <sup>20</sup> The shepherds returned home, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. Everything happened just as they had been told.

SERMON:

“Joy”

Pastor Linda Ray

### **We Give Thanks**

OFFERTORY PRAYER:

Holy God, we are grateful for the incredible gift of Jesus. The love and joy shared by Jesus has touched and transformed our lives. We bring our gifts to you this night. We bring our gifts of money to continue your mission of peace. We bring our hearts as we adore you and continue to follow you. Amen

OFFERTORY REMINDERS: Tonight’s Offering supports the Operational Fund of St. Paul’s United Methodist Church.

OFFERTORY

*Peace, Peace*

Chancel Choir and Handbells

\*DOXOLOGY:

Red Hymnal 95

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise him all creatures here below. Praise Him above ye heavenly host. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE:

One: Heavenly Father, on this silent night, we offer our prayers.

**Many: We pray for the blessings of your Spirit.**

One: We pray for all who are having a restless, noisy night.

**Many: Assure them and us of the forgiveness won for us by Jesus’ suffering and death.**

One: We pray for all those who are fearful and afraid.

**Many: Give all the frightened the assurance that you care for them and are with them.**

One: We pray for all those who feel anxiety because of life’s circumstances.

**Many: Give to them the healing of body and peace of mind. Bless all those who are caring for them. Bless all those who perform works of healing.**

One: We pray for all those in harm’s way, particularly those who are persecuted for their faith.

**Many: Give to them a silent night in which they know peace and safety.**

One: Heavenly Father, we pray for all your people everywhere on this silent night and we now join our voices together praying the prayer God continues to teach us:

**Many: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Ame**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

*Come to the Lord's Table, all you who love him. Come to the Lord's Table, confess your sin. Come to the Lord's Table, be at peace.*

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

One: The Lord be with you

**All: And also with you**

One: Lift up your hearts

**All: We lift them up to the Lord.**

One: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**All: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Reader One:: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

**Musical Response:**

**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of Power and might. Heaven and earth are full of your glory, Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest.**

Reader One: On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." Please take your bread and commune along with me.

Reader Two: When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." Please take your juice and commune along with me.

Readers One and Two: Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit, to give ourselves for others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Please come to the front of the church to receive the bread and the cup. Everyone is welcome at God's table.*

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION:

*John 1 (selected verses)*

Pastor Linda Ray

**We Go In Spirit**

\*CLOSING HYMN WITH CANDLELIGHT

*Silent Night*

Red Hymnal 239

BENEDICTION AND TAKING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST INTO THE WORLD

POSTLUDE:

**Ministers Of Celebration**

Pastor:	Linda Driver Ray
Director of Music Ministry	Thomas Maloney
Organist/Accompanist	Jin Kyung Seo
ASL Interpreter	Gail Garner

***Thank you for sharing Christmas Eve with us. May you and your family have a blessed Christmas season and a Happy New Year!***