



**Christmas Eve Service**  
**St. Paul's UMC - December 24, 2024**  
**5:00 PM Family Service**  
**Pastor Linda Ray 406 Main Street, Odessa, DE 19730 302-378-2420**

**WE ENTER GOD'S GATES WITH PRAISE**

GATHERING MUSIC AND PHOTOS

Jin Kyung Seo, Music Ministry

Mark Holden – Photos& Curator, Liturgist – Garrett Ray

**LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE:**

**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 220

**OPENING PRAYER (all praying):** 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**

**PASS THE PEACE:** (safely share words and signs of blessing)

O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

For He alone is worthy, For He alone is worthy, For He alone is worthy, Christ the Lord. We give you all the glory, We give you all the glory, We give you all the glory, Christ the Lord.

FIRST LESSON: *Isaiah 9: 2-7*

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.

\*GOSPEL LESSON: *Luke 2: 1-20*

<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.

One: May this story inspire us all. ALL: **To walk in the way that leads to life.**

HYMN OF PREPARATION:

*Away In A Manger*

Red Hymnal 217

THE MESSAGE:

"Joy"

Pastor Linda Ray

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE (*You may speak aloud your joys and concerns.*)

### WE GIVE THANKS

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

OFFERTORY PRAYER:

Pastor Linda Ray

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

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Communion Server: Mary Ingram

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.**

Pastor Linda: 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.**

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.

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.

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.*

### WE GO IN THE SPIRIT

\*CANDLELIGHT HYMN:

*Silent Night, Holy Night*

Red Hymnal 239

*(Before the singing begins, everyone is invited to form a circle around the outside of the seats in the sanctuary. As we are singing, we will pass the light of Christ around the circle as we light each other's candles.)*

BENEDICTION/BLESSING

Pastor Linda Ray

POSTLUDE

Jin Kyung Seo