



**Christmas Eve Service**  
**St. Paul's UMC - December 24, 2025**  
**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: Duane Dillard/Minister of Music, Mark Holden/Photos & Curator  
Liturgist - Ellie Leuliette

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE: Ellie Leuliette and St. Paul's Children

One: Tonight, we gather to remember 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. Great will be his authority, 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 9:6-7).*

**All: We gather to once again bask in the glory that visited a stable and a manger, shepherds watching their flocks, and a young couple cradling the newborn Messiah.**

One: We light the Christ candle as a sign of the glory that came among us in unexpected places and to unexpected people, that we may be people who seek and follow the glory of the Christ child here and now.

**All: Sing a new song of God's glory and strength, of lives made new!**

**All Singing: Walk in the light, beautiful light; come where his love and his mercy are bright. Shine all around us by day and by night, Jesus the Light of the World. (Green Hymnal, 3056) 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 (all praying): We have waited for a long time for your hope, your joy, your love to shine in the darkness of this world, Almighty God. Even now, in our gathering here, we await you. In our hearts, we still hope that your light will blaze forth, banishing the shadows of this world and guiding all people back to you. God with us, kindle your spark within us, that together we might shine forth your light, that we might put away the shadows of this world, that we might be the continuation of the Christmas miracle: Emmanuel is in this world, God is with us, now and evermore. 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.*

Ellie Leuliette will share a blessing with our children!

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

**Singing:** 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:

What Would We Say?

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

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Pastor Linda Ray and Ellei Leuliette

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: It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth. You created light out of darkness and brought forth life on the earth. You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast. You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God, and spoke to us through your prophets. In the fullness of time you gave your only Son Jesus Christ to be our Savior, and at this birth the angels sang glory to you in the highest and peace to your people on earth. And so with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Musical Response:**

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

Reader Two: Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ. As Mary and Joseph went from Galilee to Bethlehem and there found no room, so Jesus went from Galilee to Jerusalem and was despised and rejected. As in the poverty of a stable Jesus was born, so by the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit. As your Word became flesh on that night long ago, so, on the night in which he gave himself up for us, Jesus took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Reader One: When the supper was over Jesus took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to the 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." And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Musical Response: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.**

Reader Two: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and cup. 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. By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and forever.

**Musical Response: Amen. Amen. Amen. Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.**

*You received a pre-packaged set of communion elements as you entered the service. We will share the holy meal together from the pews. 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**

***Thank you for your presence here this evening. May you and your family have a blessed Christmas season and a Happy New Year!***