

# Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

December 24, 2022



## Trinity Presbyterian Church Palm Coast, Florida

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### Christmas Eve

*An unmarried teenage girl was invited—to carry Christ into this world. An ordinary carpenter was invited—to be a father to a child unlike any other. The shepherds were invited—outcast and isolated, included at the manger. The Magi were invited—foreigners and seekers, included at the manger. And if she was invited, and he was invited, and they were invited—then we can trust that we too are invited. This story is for us. This love is for us. Family of faith, this is our invitation. Welcome home. Amen. †*

Prelude "A Christmas Carol on Greensleeves" arr. Richolson  
"What Child Is This" arr. Rasley

Welcome and Announcements

\* Hymn #133 "O Come, All Ye Faithful" (verses 1 & 4)

Candle Lighting<sup>†</sup> *The Beebe Family*

Over a hundred people, from the ages of two to eighty years old, were asked to fill in the blank for the statement: "My story is. . ."

Hear now their answers:

Amazing! Just beginning. A wee bit messy, with lots of love.

Privileged. Hopeful. Full of silliness. Still unfolding.

Long, but good. One of resilience. Incomplete, thank goodness.

Multilingual. A work in progress.

My story is not just mine, it's tied to yours.

Tonight we tell the story that we tell every year—the story of Christ's birth, the story of love made flesh.

It's a story that weaves through every generation.

It's a story that picks up the bits and pieces of our narrative and braids us together.

So tonight we light the Christ candle, because from generation to generation, our story belongs to God.

Thanks be to God for a love like that. Amen.

Call to Confession<sup>†</sup>

As a kid I used to think the prayer of confession was scary. I thought it was a moment designed to make me feel guilty, intended for eyes cast down and shoulders hung low. But that's not it at all. The prayer of confession is an invitation. It's an opportunity to say, "This is who I've been, and this is who I long to be." So let us pray together. Let us be truth tellers. Let us hold our heads high and speak honestly before God and one another. This is easy to do when we are surrounded by a God who delights in us. Friends, let us pray:

Prayer of Confession<sup>†</sup>

Holy God, We admit—we don't fully understand the Christmas story.

**We are not familiar with angel choruses.**

We have not walked many miles to be counted in a census,  
**and we don't always hear your voice in our dreams.**

We don't fully understand this story, so we admit, sometimes we hesitate to tell it. Instead of running out into the streets to shout that there is a love bigger than we could imagine,  
**we whisper this good news.**

Instead of throwing open the doors and inviting people in,  
**we simply leave them unlocked, hoping folks will figure it out.**  
Instead of telling the next generation why this night matters so much, **we stay quiet, afraid of creating pressure.**  
Forgive us for our silence. **Forgive us for our hesitation.**  
Forgive us for the moments when we fail to share your good news.  
**Plant this story of love so deep in our bones that we cannot help but share it from generation to generation. Amen.**

Words of Forgiveness<sup>†</sup>

Friends, repeat after me:

No matter where we go, **No matter where we go,**

No matter what we say, **No matter what we say,**

No matter what we do, **No matter what we do,**

We belong to God. **We belong to God.**

We are held. **We are held.**

We are loved. **We are loved.**

We are forgiven. **We are forgiven. Amen!**

Anthem

"First Noel"

Handbell Choir

Road to Bethlehem

Poem

"We Tell This Story"

My heart and I have an agreement.

Every year we show up here— here in the sanctuary, here with the candles and the tall ceilings, here with the creaky church pews and the songs of silent nights.

My heart and I have an agreement.

Every year we show up here— at the end of the year, after another 12 months of humanity, of me trying to keep it all together, trying to keep my head above water, trying to keep up appearances. Every year we show up here.

We drop it all. We leave it at the door. We come into this space and I could swear it feels different. It's God. It's hope. It's love. But whatever it is, I need it every year, so we show up here. Tell us again the story of tonight. My heart needs it.

Hymn #121

"O Little Town of Bethlehem" (verses 1 & 4)

Affirmation of Faith

**We believe that for generations people have gathered together on this holy night, because there is something about this story that speaks to the deepest parts of us. We believe in bundling up this hope, this good news, and passing it on— to our children, to our neighbors, to the world around us. I believe my voice can make a difference, just like I believe this story can make a difference, so I will not stay quiet. I will tell this story—of a love that makes room for all. I will sing this story—of a love that knows our name. I will live this story—because love has come again. I believe that words have power. I will not stay quiet. Amen.**

Prayer for Illumination+

O Holy God, we need this story—this Christmas story. We need this story of ordinary people who were brave. We need this story of love that changed the world. We need this story of angel choruses that give reason to hope, and starlight that reminds us to look up. In a battered and bruised world, we gather around your Word like people gather around a fire to warm themselves. So we are here, gathered together to warm ourselves by your light, because we need this story. We need the truth that lies deep in these holy words. So today we pray: scoop out space in us to truly listen. Quiet our minds. Open our hearts. Kindle the fire. Amen.

Gospel Lesson Luke 2:1-20

Meditation "This Is It" Dr. Jeff Beebe

Offering of our Gifts+

Jesus was not born in a real home. He was born into poverty. He was born into simplicity. He was born into a manger in Bethlehem. And despite the little he might have had, Jesus still spent the rest of his days on earth giving to others. Generosity is in the DNA of our faith. We give what we can, not because we *should* or because scripture says to. We give because we're family. We give because we belong to one another. We give because all are invited into God's house. So might we share our gifts.

Celebration of the Lord's Supper

*Invitation to the Table*

*Prayer of Thanksgiving and The Lord's Prayer*

**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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from Evil. For thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

*Sharing the Bread*

This is the Body of Christ, the Bread of Life—given for you. Amen.

*Sharing the Cup*

This is the Blood of Christ, the Cup of Salvation—shed for you. Amen.

Lighting of Luminaries "Silent Night, Holy Night" (#122) Stille Nacht

Sending Prayer+

Gracious God,  
Your story is one that forever invites us to be our full selves, to take up space, to go where we feel called, and to allow this community to feel like home. So use these gifts to keep building your home here. With gratitude as tall as the ceiling, we pray. Amen.

\* Hymn #134 "Joy to the World"

Postlude "Joy To the World" arr. Rasley

\* Denotes please stand if able.

*"Lord Jesus, master of both the light and the darkness, send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas. We whose hearts are heavy seek the joy of your presence. We are your people, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light.*

*To you we say, 'Come Lord Jesus!'"*

*-Henri Nouwen*



*We at Trinity Presbyterian Church wish you a blessed and joyous Christmas!*

*The old life is gone, and the new life is begun. That has been, that is, and that will be forever the Good news of the Gospel. Merry Christmas.*



WORSHIP NOTES

**Greeters:** Susan Kopyar

**Ushers:** Ron & Penny Weidner, Bill & Sandy Boland, and Ed & Judy Murgitroyde

**Lay Reader:** Carol Corson

**Audio Tech:** Ken Mettler



\*Prayer by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

**CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE**

Join us online or in the Church Sanctuary at 10am for a pre-recorded service to celebrate Christmas Day.

**NEW YEAR'S DAY SERVICE**

Join us on January 1<sup>st</sup> at 10:00am as we welcome the New Year with scripture and song. Special Guest Worship Leader Dr. Barry Davies, Retired Professor of Sacred Music at Columbia Theological Seminary



**TRINITY EPIPHANY CELEBRATION**

The Magi followed a star, which ultimately led them to Jesus. Therefore, we too use all the resources we have available to us to move closer to Jesus.

We invite you to be a part of our second Epiphany Celebration on Friday, January 6, 2022, from 4:30pm-5:30pm. A New Year's opportunity for you to be blessed and to be a blessing to others.

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Rev. Dr. Jeffrey W. Beebe, Pastor  
Brooke Tucker, Director of Faith Formation  
Heasuk Che, Director of Music/Organist  
Lillian Warner, Director of Handbell Choir  
Judy Grady, Financial and Administrative Assistant  
Thomas Buonocore, Sexton  
Jane Pellmann, Clerk of Session  
Jeff Cooke, Ken Mettler & David Wheeler, Visual/Audio