



EAST LIBERTY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

116 South Highland Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15206 412.441.3800 www.ELPC.church

As a diverse community of believers, we strive to follow God – the Creator who calls us, Jesus who teaches us, and the Spirit who empowers us. We show God's unconditional love by providing a refuge for spiritual growth, ardently pursuing justice, and extending Christ's radical hospitality to all. (Strategic Vision mission statement, 2011)

Christmas Eve Family Service

DECEMBER 24, 2023 — 4:00 PM

TIME OF PREPARATION

O Holy God, we hear the story of shepherds and magi, of maiden and carpenter, of prophets and angels, and we too come to Bethlehem for a blessing. You are born in our hearts because you have chosen the weakness of our bodies for your birth. We are filled with love because you have taken upon yourself our humanity; we are filled with hope because you have offered us your Spirit, your life and your light; we are filled with faith because all that is meek and lowly and humble in us and in creation becomes holy this night.

Our salvation has come into this holy time and we gather to say together, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace and goodwill to all.”
— Maren C. Tirabassi

PRELUDE

“In Dulci Jubilo, BWV 729”

Johann Sebastian Bach
Dr. Edward Alan Moore, *organ*
Adolphe Adam
Cody Conley, *violin*

“O Holy Night”

WELCOME & CHURCH NEWS

The Rev. Patrice L. Fowler-Searcy

* SHARING GOD’S PEACE

The Rev. Fowler-Searcy

Leader: La paz de Cristo esté con ustedes.

The peace of Christ be with you.

People: Y también contigo.

And also with you.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Barbara Griffin and Kira Mukogosi

Leader: On this holy night we gather – to stand with shepherds, amazed at your glory;

People: To sing with angels, rejoicing in your work;

Leader: To wait with Joseph trusting in your promise;

People: To sit with Mary cradling your love.

Leader: May the good news of this night inspire us to tell the world of our great joy: for to us is born a Savior who is Christ our Lord.

* HYMN #133 (*music printed in bulletin*)

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

ADESTE FIDELES

OPENING PRAYER

Jan and Elijah Herzer

Leader: Tonight we rejoice in God’s promise kept: in Jesus, God forgives our sins, heals our wounds, welcomes us all. God’s love for us is so strong that God entered this world as one of us to show us once and for all that God is with us, always. Let us pray together.

People: We thank you, Gracious God, for your gift to us this night. Fill our hearts with the good news of Jesus’ birth, that we might love others as you have loved us. This we pray in the name of your love with us: Jesus, Emmanuel. Amen.

* Indicates where you may please rise in body or spirit.

Dec 24 • Christmas Eve Service

* Indicates where you may rise in body or spirit.

HEARING GOD'S WORD

Luke 2:1-7

The Rev. Ashley DeTar Birt
The Rev. Fowler-Searcy

HYMN #112 (vs. 1 and 4; music printed in bulletin)

SUSSEX CAROL

“On Christmas Night All Christians Sing”

GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 2:1-14

The Rev. DeTar Birt

SERMON

“Wonderful Christmas”

The Rev. DeTar Birt

TIME OF SILENT REFLECTION

OFFERING INVITATION

Bruce, Patricia, Melissa and Caroline Bancroft

Leader 1: We give our gifts as an act of worship – praising God who is the source of all good things.

Leader 2: We give our gifts as an act of faith – trusting that God is with us always.

Leader 3: We give our gifts as an act of hope – hoping that we may embody the love of God in Christ, and
that through us, God's love might be revealed.

Leader 4: Let us receive this evening's offering.

OFFERTORY MUSIC

“Gesù Bambino”

Pietro Yon
Cody Conley, *violin*

* HYMN AT THE PRESENTATION #132 (music printed in bulletin)

IN DULCI JUBILO

“Good Christian Friends, Rejoice”

— THE LORD'S SUPPER —

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE

The Rev. DeTar Birt

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Rev. Fowler-Searcy

Leader: El Señor esté con ustedes.

The Lord be with you.

People: Y también contigo.

And also with you.

Leader: Levantemos nuestros corazones.

Lift up your hearts.

People: Lo tenemos levantado al Señor.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Leader: Demos gracias al Señor nuestro Dios.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: Es justo dar gracias y alabanzas a Dios.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

The Rev. Fowler-Searcy

*The Lord's Prayer can be found on pg. 35 (English), on pg. 40 (Español) or on pg. 45 (한국어) in the
Glory to God hymnal.*

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

The Rev. DeTar Birt and The Rev. Fowler-Searcy

SHARING THE BREAD & THE CUP

The communion elements are gluten-free bread and grape juice. The congregation is invited to come forward by using the center aisle to the communion servers where each may receive the bread and the cup, then returning to their seats via the side aisles to partake of the elements. Those seated in the transepts are asked to join the procession to the front to receive communion by entering one of the pews from the outside and proceed to the center aisle after those seated in the row. Those not able to come forward will be served in their seats.

COMMUNION CAROLS

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

Elijah Herzer, *clarinet*

HYMN #145 (music printed in bulletin)

“What Child Is This”

GREENSLEEVES

“Away in a Manger”

Elijah Herzer, *clarinet*

Dec 24 • Christmas Eve Service

* Indicates where you may rise in body or spirit.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Elijah Herzer

Loving God, thank you for feeding our bodies and our spirits in this Communion Meal. As you came to us in Christ so that we might know your love, help us to be the Body of Christ, loving others in your name. In the name of Jesus, Emmanuel, we pray. Amen.

* LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE & SHARING OF THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

The Rev. Fowler-Searcy

John 1:1-5

* HYMN #122 (*music printed below*)

“Silent Night, Holy Night!”

STILLE NACHT

1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm, all is bright
2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake at the sight;
3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God, love's pure light
4 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Won - drous star, lend thy light;

'round yon vir - gin moth - er and child! Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and
glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far, heav - en - ly hosts sing "Al - le - lu -
ra - diant beams from thy ho - ly face, with the dawn of re - deem - ing
with the an - gels let us sing Al - le - lu - ia to our

mild, sleep in heav - en - ly peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
ia: Christ the Sav - ior is born; Christ the Sav - ior is born!"
grace, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth.
King: Christ the Sav - ior is born; Christ the Sav - ior is born.

Text: Joseph Mohr, 1816; stanzas 1-3, English trans. John Freeman Young, 1863;
stanza 4, English trans. Jane Montgomery Campbell, 1863, alt. Music: Franz Xaver Gruber, 1818. Public domain.

STILLE NACHT
Irregular

* CHARGE & BENEDICTION

The Rev. DeTar Birt

POSTLUDE

“In Dulci Jubilo”

Marcel Dupré
Dr. Moore, *organ*

As part of ELPC's mission to extend radical hospitality to all, our full worship service is now being livestreamed on Facebook and archived at www.ELPC.church.

This notice is to inform you that by being in attendance, you give permission for incidences where you appear within the video. Should you have any questions, please see one of our pastors.

Please turn off all electronic devices before the service begins.

♦ PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE

Preaching: The Rev. Ashley DeTar Birt
Participants: The Rev. Patrice L. Fowler-Searcy
Bruce, Patricia, Melissa and
Caroline Bancroft
Barbara Griffin and Kira Mukogosi
Sara Hackett
Jan and Elijah Herzer
Simone Mathers
Musicians: Dr. Edward Alan Moore, *Organist and
Music Director*
Cody Conley, *Violin*
Elijah Herzer, *Clarinet*
Cantors: Chancel Choir Section Leaders
Beadles: Mario Seneca and Ian Kuchera
Crucifer: L. Cowan
DOD: David Cowan
Sound: Tim Benedict
Wayne Gaines

♦ CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

10 pm.....Candlelight Service. Prelude music with
The Brass Roots begins at 9:30 pm. The
Rev. Patrice L. Fowler-Searcy preaching.

♦ WORSHIP FLOWERS

The poinsettia plants in the Sanctuary are in loving
memory of the Honorable Andrew W. Mellon and Mr.
and Mrs. Richard Beatty Mellon.

♦ SUNDAY WORSHIP

*There will be no Journey service on Sunday, Dec 31.
This worship service will resume on Sunday, Jan 7, 2024.*

11 amSanctuary Worship. Our largest service
with a multi-cultural congregation and
music from organ, piano and choir.
*Dec 31 — The Rev. Henk Bossers
preaching.*

♦ WEEKDAY WORSHIP

Taizé: Prayerful Song and Quiet Meditation
Chants and periods of meditative silence modeled after
the Taizé community in France. Rev. BJ Woodworth
leads this service in the Chapel.

Wednesdays, 7 pm

Note: No service will be held on Dec 27.

Prayer Room (*in Highland Ave hallway*)

Come to sit and pray in silence. Come to experience
the quiet in the midst of the wonderful busyness.

Available everyday

♦ WEEKLY SPIRITUAL LIFE OFFERINGS

Contemplative Prayer

Rev. BJ Woodworth will lead a time on Zoom of 30
minutes of communal silence and guided meditation
on scripture. We will meditate on the Psalms, using the
translation *Psalms for Praying* by Nan C. Merrill.

Mondays, 7:30 to 8 am

Meeting ID: 959 8065 3992 • Passcode: bestill

Meditation Hour

Join John Benedict, retired psychologist and practitioner
of insight meditation, in the Chapel for an hour devoted
to meditation, which includes an opening reading, silent
sitting, and walking. All are welcome!

Tuesdays, 6-7 pm

Cathedral Yoga (*no yoga on Dec 27*)

Yamuna will lead yoga in-person in the Sanctuary.

Wednesdays, 6 to 7 pm (*before Taizé; no yoga on Dec 27*)

WELCOME VISITORS!

We are grateful to have you join us for worship
this morning and ask you to register your name
in our red Friendship Books.

*To learn more about our programs, church
activities and volunteer services, we invite you to also:*

Pick up a copy of our newsletter, the *Reaching Out*,
either in the Narthex or at the Hospitality Desk
near the Highland Avenue doors.

Attend an *Inquirers' Class* to learn more about
ELPC, Presbyterian theology, and to explore
membership. Please contact Megan Leisher for
info on future classes (MeganL@coh.net), or
speak to one of the Pastors.

Call the Church Office (412.441.3800), or visit the
ELPC website at www.ELPC.church.

#133 — O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL

1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant; O come
 2 True God from true God, Light from light e - ter - nal, born
 3 Sing, choirs of an - gels; sing in ex - ul - ta - tion; sing,
 4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py morn - ing; Je -

ye; O come ye to Beth - le - hem! Come, and be - hold him,
 of a vir - gin, a mor - tal he comes; ver - y God, be -
 all ye cit - i - zens of heaven a - bove! Glo - ry to God, all
 sus, to thee be all glo - ry given; Word of the Fa - ther,

Refrain

born the King of an - gels!
 got - ten, not cre - at - ed! O come, let us a - dore him; O come, let
 glo - ry in the high - est!
 now in flesh ap - pear - ing!

us a - dore him; O come, let us a - dore him, Christ, the Lord!

From its Roman Catholic origins, this 18th-century hymn has spread to worldwide use by many denominations in both Latin and vernacular versions. Once popular with a wide range of hymn texts, this tune is now firmly associated with this Christmas text from which it is named.

#112 — ON CHRISTMAS NIGHT ALL CHRISTIANS SING (*verses 1 and 4*)

Capo 3: (D) F (G) B \flat (D) F (A7) C7 (D) F

1 On Christ - mas night all Chris - tians sing, to hear the
 2 Then why should we on earth be sad, since our Re -
 3 When sin de - parts be - fore his grace, then life and
 4 All out of dark - ness we have light, which made the

(G) B \flat (A) C (D) F (G) B \flat

news the an - gels bring; on Christ - mas night all
 deem - er made us glad; then why should we on
 health come in its place; when sin de - parts be -
 an - gels sing this night; all out of dark - ness

(D) F (A) C (D) F (G) B \flat (A) C (D) F

Chris - tians sing, to hear the news the an - gels bring,
 earth be sad, since our Re - deem - er made us glad,
 fore his grace, then life and health comes in its place;
 we have light, which made the an - gels sing this night:

(A) C (Em) Gm (D) F (A) C

news of great joy, news of great mirth,
 when from our sin he set us free,
 heav - en and earth with joy may sing,
 "Glo - ry to God in high - est heaven;

(D) F (G) B \flat (A) C (G) B \flat (D) F

news of our mer - ci - ful King's birth.
 all for to gain our lib - er - ty?
 all for to see the new - born King.
 peace on earth and good - will. A - men!"

The words of this carol first appeared in 1684 in a collection by an Irish bishop, Luke Wadding. Whether they were his own work or something gleaned from popular use is not clear. The tune name recalls that the tune was collected in 1904 from Mrs. Verrall of Monk's Gate, Sussex.

#132 — GOOD CHRISTIAN FRIENDS, REJOICE

1 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;
 2 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;
 3 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;


give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to-day;
 now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!
 now ye need not fear the grave: Je - sus Christ was born to save!

ox and ass be - fore him bow, and he is in the man-ger now.
 He has o-pened heav-en's door, and we are blest for - ev - er - more.
 Calls you one and calls you all to gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.


Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!
 Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!
 Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

Carols using two languages, like this one dating from at least the 14th century, belong to a special group called "macaronic," the original languages here being German and Latin. Though the present version is only in English, it is sung to the traditional German folk melody.


#145 — WHAT CHILD IS THIS



1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar-y's lap is sleep-ing?
 2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - ing?
 3 So bring him in-cense, gold, and myrrh; come, one and all, to own him.



Whom an - gels greet with an-thems sweet while shep-herds watch are keep-ing?
 Good Chris-tian, fear; for sin-ners here the si - lent Word is plead-ing.
 The King of kings sal - va-tion brings; let lov - ing hearts en-throne him.



This, this is Christ the King, whom shep-herds guard and an - gels sing;
 Nails, spear, shall pierce him through; the cross be borne for me, for you.
 Raise, raise the song on high. The vir - gin sings her lul - la - by.



haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
 Hail, hail, the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
 Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y!

This Victorian text gains scope and power by having the original second halves of stanzas two and three restored. They give a stark forward glimpse of what lies ahead for this "babe, the son of Mary!" The tune is much older, dating from Tudor England.