



<sup>6</sup> 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*

## Abington Presbyterian Church

December 24, 2022

7:30 p.m. Celebration Worship

Christmas Eve

**ORDER OF WORSHIP**  
**Christmas Eve Service**  
**December 24, 2022**  
**7:30 pm**

PRELUDE	Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying	<i>Johann Sebastian Bach</i>
	Noel X	<i>Louis-Claude Daquin</i>
	The Infant Jesus	<i>Pietro Yon</i>
	Go, Tell It! From a Spiritual Pair	<i>Dan Locklair</i>
	The Shepherds' Farewell	<i>Hector Berlioz</i>
	Fantasy on Good King Wenceslas	<i>Karen Keene</i>
	Paean on Of the Father's Love Begotten	<i>John Cook</i>

GREETING

INTROIT Once in Royal David's City *Henry John Gauntlett*

Once in royal David's city stood a lowly cattle shed,  
where a mother laid her baby in a manger for his bed:  
Mary was that mother mild; Jesus Christ, her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven who is God and Lord of all,  
and his shelter was a stable, and his cradle was a stall;  
with the poor and meek and lowly, lived on earth our Savior holy.

\* CALL TO WORSHIP

This night helps us to know deep in our hearts  
**that God is much more than just an idea.**  
This night gives us every indication  
**that God is not distant or uncaring.**  
We rejoice, for a child is born  
**to bring divine presence, peace, and righteousness.**  
God comes to be with us,  
**transforming us and this world with love.**  
**Glory to God in the highest!**

\* LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

\* PRAYER

**O God, may the story of Christmas not be just a narrative of long ago,  
but one that touches us in the here and now.  
Come to us, be born in us with such glory and power  
that we cannot miss your visitation.  
Allow that your light would shine forth in and through our lives. Amen.**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

O God, the purity of your light in Christ Jesus  
reveals once more the gloom we have invited into our lives.  
Our daily routines, as we pander to the expectations of others,  
have dimmed our vision and our commitment.  
We have ignored the signs of your presence.  
We have settled for a dull existence  
instead of the joy of your engagement  
that penetrates our defenses and brings new life.  
Enable us to leave the narrow constraints of our own experience  
to venture into the vast reaches of your love  
revealed to us in the birth of the Christ Child.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

No matter where we go, no matter what we say, no matter what we do, we belong to God.  
**We are held. We are loved.**  
Through the One who personifies God's grace –  
**We are forgiven!**

\* GLORIA HYMN

Angels We Have Heard on High

*Hymn 113*

\* THE PEACE OF CHRIST

The peace of Christ be with you.  
**And also with you.**

BELL VOLUNTARY

O Sanctissima – Sicilian Mariners' Hymn

*arr. Jason Krug*

SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 9:2-7

The Word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

ANTHEM

How Sweet is Love

*Michael Paget*

A child is born in Bethlehem;  
awaiteth him all Jerusalem.

*\*Amor, amor, quam dulcis est amor. (\*Love, love, how sweet is love.)*

The angels above were singing then;  
below were rejoicing the shepherd men.  
*Amor, amor, quam dulcis est amor.*

Now let us all with the angels sing;  
Yea, now let our hearts for gladness spring!  
*Amor, amor, quam dulcis est amor!*

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 2:1-20

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

Personify

*The Rev. Kirby Lawrence Hill*

\* HYMN 119

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

MENDELSSOHN

CHRISTMAS PRAYER AND 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.**

OFFERTORY SENTENCE

(You can leave your offering in the plates or use the QR code to go to APC's giving page or you can mail your gifts to the church office.)

OFFERTORY

A Child is Born in Bethlehem

*Phillip Stopford*

A child is born in Bethlehem, Alleluia!

And joy is in Jerusalem, Alleluia!

Rejoice, rejoice sing high, sing low, Alleluia!

*\*Benedicamus Domino, Alleluia! (\*Let us bless the Lord)*

To thee O Lord be glory paid, Alleluia.

Thou Son of Mary , Mother maid, Alleluia!

To Holy Trinity give praise, Alleluia, Alleluia!

With *\*Deo gracias* always, Alleluia! (*\*Thanks to God*)

\* DOXOLOGY HYMN 143

Angels, from the Realms of Glory

REGENT SQUARE

*All are invited to sing the hymn rising for the final stanza*

\* SPREADING OF THE LIGHT

At this point in the service, candlelight will be spread throughout the sanctuary by worship assistants lighting candles at the end of pews. You are invited to pass your light to whoever is sitting next to you. There will be containers at the exits to return your candle.

\* HYMN 122

Silent Night, Holy Night!

STILLE NACHT

1. Silent night, holy night!  
All is calm, all is bright  
'Round yon virgin mother and child!  
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,  
Sleep in heavenly peace,  
Sleep in heavenly peace.

2. Silent night, holy night!  
Shepherds quake at the sight;  
glories stream from heaven afar,  
heavenly hosts sing "Alleluia:  
Christ the savior is born,  
Christ the savior is born."

3. Silent night, holy night!  
Son of God, love's pure light  
radiant beams from thy holy face,  
with the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord at thy birth,  
Jesus, Lord at thy birth.

4. Silent night, holy night!  
Wondrous star, lend thy light;  
with the angels let us sing  
Alleluia to our King:  
Christ the savior is born,  
Christ the savior is born.

\* HYMN 134

Joy to the World

ANTIOCH

1. Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her king;  
let every heart prepare him room,  
and heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

2. Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!  
Let all their songs employ,  
while fields & floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

3. No more let sins and sorrows grow,  
nor thorns infest the ground;  
he comes to make his blessings flow  
far as the curse is found,  
far as the curse is found,  
far as, far as the curse is found.

4. He rules the world with truth and grace,  
and makes the nations prove  
the glories of his righteousness  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders, wonders of his love.

\* BENEDICTION

\* POSTLUDE

Finale from Symphony II

*Louis Vierne*

**Worship Leaders:**

**Preacher:** The Rev. Kirby Lawrence Hill

**Liturgist:** Carolyn Koch

**Candle Lighters:** The Colt Family

**Festive and Celebration Ringers (combined):** Nathan Lazurus, director

**Christmas Choir:** John Sall, Director

**Organ:** Erik Meyer

**Christmas Gifts presented to Abington Presbyterian Church in 2022 to enable beautifying the sanctuary with flowers, special decorations, and musicians “In Memory and In Honor of loved ones”, by members and friends:**

- ✚ Sally & Bob Adams ~ In Memory of our parents.
- ✚ Zene & Jennie Colt ~ In Memory of our mothers, Bianca Gray & Diana Sowers.
- ✚ Carol Gabay ~ In Memory of my husband, David Gabay and my mother, Gladys Showalter.
- ✚ Amy Gould ~ In Honor of baby Maeve Louisa, daughter of John (JJ) & Cara Beck, granddaughter of Ian and Amy Beck and great-granddaughter of Amy Gould.
- ✚ Jack & Dorothy Graham ~ In Memory of our parents, Kenneth & Anna Graham, and Edwin & Sybil Schatz.
- ✚ M-M Harris & Family ~ In Memory of Herbert Latham Harris.
- ✚ Karen & Ben Hoyle ~ In Memory of David Hoyle.
- ✚ Janet Easlea Kemp ~ In Memory of Michael Kemp.
- ✚ The Freeman Family ~ In Honor of Elizabeth Wilson.
- ✚ William Gustafson ~ In Memory of Linda M. Gustafson.
- ✚ Barb & Marty Krempasky ~ In Memory of our parents and In Honor of our children & grandchildren.
- ✚ The McMahan Family ~ In Memory of Thomas and Claire Morrin and Lois McMahan.
- ✚ Alice & Bill Price ~ In Memory of our parents and our sister, Kit.
- ✚ Edie, Jim & Bill Sautter ~ In Memory of Elizabeth Sautter.
- ✚ Tim & Kathy Waite ~ In Memory of Jack & Lynne Waite.
- ✚ Margaret & Skip Wiegand ~ In Memory of Major Matthew M. Wiegand, USMC.
- ✚ Cindi Willis ~ In Memory of my mother, sister and stepmother.

## **Bulletin Cover Art artist statement**

How God Shows up

by Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity

Inspired by Luke 2:1-20 | Silk painting with digital drawing and collage

This year, I come to this story with deep reverence for the complexity and beauty of childbirth. At the time of creating this art, I am about 6 weeks away from giving birth to my first child — who will be born in the same hospital where my mom died from cancer 20 years ago. My daughter will take her first breath in the same place where I heard my mother's last exhale. Much of my pregnancy has been a journey of healing—of inviting joy into the house where my grief lives, of preparing to become a mother as a motherless child. The more I learn of others' experiences around birth, I realize how closely joy and grief can coexist in each of our stories.

And so, as I return to Jesus' birth story, my imagination leads me to wonder about how Mary experienced both grief and joy. Apart from Elizabeth, did she have support throughout her pregnancy? Was her own mother involved? Did she have generational trauma she needed to grieve? Did the stress of their travels to Bethlehem cause her labor to happen sooner than expected? As she labored, did a midwife come? Was she afraid?

In this image, as if looking past a curtain, we peer into this threshold moment when excruciating pain gives way to ecstatic joy as Mary draws her baby to her chest and he takes his first breath. As Mary holds her baby, additional hands reach in to support them both. Maybe these are the hands of strangers, of Joseph, or of a midwife who was summoned. Perhaps they are simply the hands of angels.

Each year, we tell this story because it is raw with joy, pain, and the complexities of being human. No matter how your story is unfolding, may you find that this sacred story holds space for you. For this is how God shows up—in a child who cries, in hands that hold, in human flesh, in life and in death.

—Lisle Gwynn Garrity

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Abington Presbyterian Church celebrates God's infinite love and believes all people are equal in the eyes of God. We welcome all to worship and serve with us. We seek to work together to oppose intolerance, racism, and injustice that threaten the unity of humankind.

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**The Reverend Dr. Kirby Lawrence Hill, *Head of Staff***

**Ruth Ideen-Sall, B.M., *Interim Director of Christian Education***

**John Sall, M.M., *Director of Music Ministries***

**Eric Meyer, *Organist***

**The Rev. Ashley Rossi & Justin Feil, *Youth Fellowship Coordinators***