

Welcome to Philadelphia UMC

December 24, 2023

Christmas Eve Night

PRELUDE

WORDS OF WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: The impossible is about to happen in a stable. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

P: Those who lived in a land of deep darkness; on them the light shown!

L: This is the evening when creation stood still and held its breath, for God was doing the most unbelievable, dangerous thing.

P: This is the evening when God embraced humanity from the inside, as one of us, from birth to death.

L: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

P: And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. Amen.

LIGHTING of CHRIST CANDLE Doug and Kandi Peterson
Isaiah 9:2-6 "We light the Christ candle hoping to become the light, hoping to radiate light by how we live. We light these candles to create a space called home in this place, in inner places.

P: We light these candles to declare that unto us a Savior is born, who is Christ the Lord. Welcomed home by angels singing and shepherds kneeling. Welcome home by those like us who have worshiped for many years.

*HYMN "Silent Night, Holy Night" UMH #239

SCRIPTURE READING Isaiah 9:2-7

SERMON "A Great Light" Rev. Kathy Pryor

HOLY COMMUNION Invitation - All are Welcome

Confession

Gracious God, we would like to be among those who saw the coming of the Christ Child, those who dropped all that they were doing and traveled to worship the coming of God's love into the world. We would like to be those who cared for God in infant vulnerability; who tickled and cuddled and comforted the growing child, that he might know love and safety.

And yet, merciful God, we must recognize all the times we are more like Herod. Whenever we, in our actions or in our inactions, find our own need for control more compelling than the needs of others for health and safety. Whenever we cling to the security of our privilege, Rather than standing up for the rights of the oppressed. Whenever we are complicit in the harming of innocents for the sake of profit, or power, or because we fear to know, and to change, the injustices of this world.

Loving God, we confess our sins against you and one another, and pray that you will fill us with your light, that we may live our lives as true disciples in your name, without counting the cost. In the name of Christ, the one who showed us the way, we pray. Amen.

Leader : In the name of Christ, you are forgiven.

The Great Thanksgiving

Leader: God's light is present in this world. Present in the Christ child, born to lead us out of darkness. Present in the star, in all that guides us to love. Thanks be to God.

People: God's light is in the world, and the darkness did not overcome it. God's grace is in the world, and our missteps will not overcome it. We are loved, we are forgiven. Alleluia! Amen.

Giving the Bread and the Cup

Prayer after Communion

"The Christmas Guest"

Linwood Littlejohn

*THE RECEIVING / PASSING OF LIGHT

Candles lit while singing "Away in a Manger"



*THE BENEDICTION

We need a silent night in here. We need your presence to be near, give us the hope we need, the peace we seek. We need a silent night.

*THE POSTLUDE

**Those who are able, please stand.*

Away In A Manger

James Murray

A - way in a man - ger, no crib for His bed, the
The cat - tle are low - ing, the ba - by a - wakes, but
Be near me, Lord Je - sus, I ask Thee to say close

5

lit - tle Lord Je - sus laid down His sweet head. The
lit - tle Lord Je - sus, no cry - ing He makes. I
by me for - ev - er, and love me, I pray; Bless

9

stars in the sky — looked down where He lay, the
love Thee, Lord Je - sus, look down from the sky, and
all the dear chil - dren in Thy ten - der care, and

13

lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.
stay by my cra - dle till morn - ing is nigh.
fit us for heav - en to live with Thee there.