



**First Presbyterian Church
Las Cruces, New Mexico
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
Receive Christmas Joy Offering
December 24, 2023 – 7 P.M.**

PRELUDE

“Christmas Musette” (Based on a Bohemian carol)

Henry B. Kihlken (1939-2017)

“Gesù Bambino”

Robert J. Hughes (1916-1999)

“The Birthday of a King”

Chester Nordman (1895-1973)

WELCOME AND GREETING

MEDITATION

What came into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift! (John 1:4, Col. 1:13-14, 2 Cor. 9:15)

CHORAL INTROIT

“Before the Marvel of the Night”
Choral Scholars and Chancel Choir

Marvel

***CALL TO WORSHIP (Isaiah)**

Rev. Norm Story

Leader: The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God. The Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.

People: **Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come. He will come and save you."**

Leader: They shall know that I, the LORD their God, am with them, and that they are my people, says the Lord GOD. You are my sheep, the sheep of my pasture and I am your God, says the Lord GOD.

People: **Comfort, O comfort my people, says our God. He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.**

***HYMN**

#133 “O Come, All Ye Faithful”

Adeste Fideles



*O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant;
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come, and behold him, born the King of angels!
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!*

*True God from true God, Light from light eternal,
born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;
very God, begotten, not created!*

*Sing, choirs of angels; sing in exultation; sing,
All ye citizens of heaven above! Glory to God, all glory in the highest!*

*Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be all glory given; Word of the Father,
Now in flesh appearing!*

*PRAYER OF ADORATION AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Eternal God, this holy night is radiant with the brilliance of your one true light. May that light illuminate our hearts and shine in our words and deeds. May the hope, the peace, the joy, and the love represented by the birth in Bethlehem this night fill our lives and become part of all that we say and do. On this night of glory and wonder, we pray for the troubled and lonely, for all who long for the promise of Christmas joy and blessings. May all receive the true light of your comforting arrival into their dark and fearful places of dread or regret. We pray this night you will speak to us, that we may welcome and receive the Christ-child afresh. Praying as Jesus taught his disciples, **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**

PLEASE BE SEATED

CAROL OF ANTICIPATION #115 "Away In A Manger" (vs. 1&2) Mueller

**Away in a manger, now crib for his bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**

The cattle are lowing; the poor baby wakes,



**but little Lord Jesus no crying he makes
I love thee, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,
And stay by my side until morning is night.**

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Sherman Family

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

#115 "Away In A Manger" (vs. 3)

Mueller

**Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay
close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
and fit us for heaven to live with thee there.**

**Lesson 1
Carol**

**John 1:1-14, 17-18
#113 "Angels We Have Heard on High"**

**Debra Smith
Gloria**

**Lesson 2
Carol**

**Isaiah 7:14, 9:2-7
#119 "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"**

**Jimmy O'Neal
Mendelssohn**

**Lesson 3
Carol**

**Luke 1:26-38
"Gentle Mary Laid Her Child"
Handbell Ensemble**

**Patricia Adu-Mensah
Arr. Bill Ingram**

**Lesson 4
Carol**

**Matthew 1:18-25
"Away in a Manger"
Handbell Ensemble**

**Rev. Nick Koontz
Arr. Bill Ingram**

**Lesson 5
Carol**

**Luke 2:1-7
#123 "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"**

Judith Ames

**Lesson 6
Carol**

**Luke 2:8-20
#121 "O Little Town of Bethlehem"**

**Trish Carter-Anderson
St. Louis**

ANTHEM

" Sing Gloria"

Katherine K. Davis

CHRISTMAS MEDITATION

Rev. Norm Story



LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

The ushers will light their candles from the white candle in the center of the Advent wreath, which stands for Christ, the Light of the World. The ushers will then light the candle of the worshipper nearest the aisle on each row. Each worshipper will light the candle of the next person until the Sanctuary is full of light. As the unlit candle is tipped into your flame, you are spreading the light of Christ, and it is appropriate to say, "Jesus is the light of the world". Think about Christ's light in you as you share your light with the one next to you, and remember that we are sharing Christ's light with family, friends and strangers.

CELEBRATING JESUS CHRIST, THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

CAROL

"Silent Night"

Stille Nacht

*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.*

*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."*

*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.*

CHRISTMAS PRAYER

BENEDICTION

Leader: Merry Christmas!
People: Merry Christmas!

HYMN RESPONSE

"Joy to the World"

Antioch

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

*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.*

*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.

POSTLUDE

Carol Improvisation

Howard A. Smolleck

Liturgist-Rev. Norm Story Deacon Captain- Patricia Adu-Mensah

Sound System-Rusty Smith Video-Brent Brewer

Greeting Before Worship Service:

Linda Pearson-E Patricia Adu-Mensah-W Dennis Thomas-Johnson-S

Greeting after Worship Service:



Patricia Adu-Mensah-E

Rev. Norm Story-W Rev. Nick Koontz-S

Rev. Dr. Norm Story	Pastor	Rev. Pyong San Yu	Korean Congregation
Dr. Janet Loman, CP	College Ministry	Dr. Howard A. Smolleck	Organist
Ada Castle	Commissioned Pastor	Karen Candusso	Salt & Light Coord.
Dr. Paul Deason	Commissioned Pastor	Karen Candusso	Youth Group Sponsor
Beth Borchert-Thomas	Dir. of Music & Bells	Veronica Giron	Secretary
Rev. Nick Koontz	Dir. of Family Ministries	Miranda Baker-French	Bookkeeper



“Christmas is not a time

nor a season,
but a state of mind.
To cherish
peace and goodwill,
to be plenteous in mercy,
is to have the real
spirit of Christmas.”

-Calvin Coolidge