

**Glen Echo Christian Church  
(Disciples of Christ)  
December 31, 2023**

Gathering Music

Welcome and Announcements

Justin

Greeting One Another in Christian Love

*(Please return to your seats to worship when the lights flash.)*

**PRELUDE** “The Holly and the Ivy”

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: With mighty mountains and crashing seas,

**All: Praise the name of the Lord.**

One: With rolling valleys and lush forests,

**All: Praise the name of our God.**

One: With tiny ants and majestic eagles,

**All: Praise the name of the Holy One.**

One: With innocent children and wise elders,

**All: Praise the name of Love.**

**\*HYMN OF PRAISE #143 “Joy to the World” vv. 1-2**

**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 world, 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.**

**\*INVOCATION**

**\*GLORY TO GOD #34**

**Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, gloria, alleluia, alleluia!**

## ADVENT READING

Aaron Brunner

Holy God, too often we feel as if change is hopeless. The problems of this world feel too big, the path forward is unclear, and we are not confident that we can truly make a difference. We give up hope.

*(Liturgist snuffs out the candle of hope.)*

Together we pray:

**Forgive us for extinguishing hope.**

Holy God, too often we believe that peace is a thing of fairy tales. Our spirits are anxious. Our bodies are weary. Our world is fractured. Instead of praying for peace—both in ourselves and in our society—we assume that peace is no longer on the table. We give it up.

*(Liturgist snuffs out the candle of peace.)*

Together we pray:

**Forgive us for extinguishing peace.**

Holy God, too often we paint joy as naive—a luxury reserved for children and pets. We forget that you ate with friends, that you went to weddings, that you laughed and rested and hiked mountains. We forget that you knew joy, and that you want joy for us in this fractured world. Forgive us for turning away from your light.

*(Liturgist snuffs out the candle of joy.)*

Together we pray:

**Forgive us for extinguishing joy.**

Holy God, too often we treat love like a vending machine. We put some coins in and assume that we'll get something back. However, in our wiser moments, we know that love is not meant for keeping score. Love is meant to overflow, to spill out to our neighbors, to transform our world.

Forgive us for holding love so tightly.

*(Liturgist snuffs out the candle of love.)*

Together we pray:

**Forgive us for extinguishing love.**

Family of faith, sin separates us from things like hope, peace, and joy. Sin wiggles its way between us and love, both love of neighbor and love of

self. Fortunately for us, God had something else in mind. God sent God's only son to this world so that we could see another way. So friends, hear and believe the good news of the gospel: no matter how many times we turn our back on hope, or extinguish peace, or snuff out joy—no matter how many times we let love burn out—God continues to light our way. *(Liturgist relights the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love from the Christ candle.)*

We are forgiven. We are seen. We are loved.

The good news of this day—the hope, the peace, the joy, and the love of this day—exists for you.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

## **FIRST READING**

Matthew 2:1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.” When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: ‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.’” Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.”

When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

## **PRAYER HYMN #151 “The First Noel” vv. 1-2**

**The first Noel, the angel did say;  
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;  
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep,  
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.  
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.**

**They looked up and saw a star,  
Shining in the east, beyond them far,  
And to the earth it gave great light,  
And so it continued both day and night.  
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.**

## **PASTORAL PRAYER & LORD’S PRAYER (debts)**

### **SPECIAL MUSIC**

“Somebody Build a Manger”

Joel Raney

Dennis

### **CHILDREN’S MOMENT**

Aaron Brunner

### **SECOND READING**

Matthew 2:13-23

Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, “Out of Egypt I have called my son.”

When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: “A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.”

When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child’s life are dead.” Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, “He will be called a Nazorean.”

**SERMON**

Aaron Brunner

“Are We Willing to Follow Where the Divine Is?”

**HYMN OF PREPARATION**

**#144 “O Little Town of Bethlehem” vv. 1-2**

**O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;  
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.**

**For Christ is born of Mary; and, gathered all above,  
While mortals sleep, the angels keep  
Their watch of wondering love.  
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth.  
Your voices raise to God in praise; and peace to all on earth.**

**Invitation to Commune**

Pam

**Communion Sentences**

One: How can you stay silent in the joy of the Messiah’s birth?

**All: Rejoice and sing God’s praises, for the Lord’s glory is  
with you this day.**

**Prayer of Consecration**

*(Please partake of the Bread of Life and the Cup of Salvation.)*

**Communion Music** “Twas In the Moon of Wintertime” arr. Dale Wood

**\*INVITATION AND HYMN OF DEDICATION**

**#167 “Go Tell It on the Mountain” vv. 1-2**

**Refrain:**

**Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere.  
Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born.**

**While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,  
Behold throughout the heavens, there shone a holy light.**

**(Refrain)**

**The shepherds feared and trembled when, lo! above the earth,  
Rang out the angel chorus that hailed the Savior's birth:**

**(Refrain)**

*(Please be seated for the Postlude.)*

**POSTLUDE  
BENEDICTION**

**“We Three Kings”**

**arr. Bill Wolaver  
Aaron Brunner**

*\*Please stand, if you can.*

*Portions of the worship service were adapted from:*

*The Abingdon Worship Annual 2023: Worship Planning Resources for Every Sunday of the Year. Scifres, Mary and Beu, B.J., Editors. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2022.*

# *News in the Pews*

**Who to Contact:** For general concerns or questions, please contact our President, Kathleen. For pastoral concerns, please contact our Elder Chair, Rosemarie. If you would like to speak with the pastor, please contact Aaron.

**Shampoo for the Outreach Committee:** Outreach is now collecting shampoo for the kids at juvenile detention. If the shampoo contains conditioner, that's fine, but it does need to be shampoo too. They are also looking for ChapStick – 33 of each item is needed.

**Winter Clothes for Kids:** The children at Oak Park Elementary are in need of mittens, gloves and hats.

**Meyer Hall Volunteers Needed:** Come join us as we visit the kids at Meyer Hall tonight. Please sign up on the sheet hanging in the hallway.

**EVENTS FOR THIS WEEK**  
**DECEMBER 31, 2023 – JANUARY 6<sup>TH</sup>, 2024**

<b>Sunday</b>	Worship Coffee Fellowship in Lounge Meyer Hall	10:15 AM After church 6:00 PM
<b>Monday</b>	New Year's Day – Office Closed	

**Today's Serving Schedule**

<b>Accompanist:</b>	Judith Henry
<b>Deacon:</b>	Julie
<b>Elder:</b>	Pam
<b>Interim Minister:</b>	Aaron Brunner
<b>Videographer:</b>	Teresa
<b>Worship Leader:</b>	Justin

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