

Christian Service of Worship



Christmas Eve, December 24, 2020

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Decatur, Georgia

Gentle Spirit Christian Church, Atlanta, Georgia

Organ Prelude of Carols at 5:45 PM

Service Liturgy Begins at 6:00 PM

Order of Worship

Welcome

Rev. Dr James Brewer-Calvert

Carol

"It Came Upon a Midnight Clear"

153

*It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to all,
from heaven's all-gracious King."
The world in solemn stillness lay,
to hear the angels sing.*

*Still through the cloven skies they come
with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heavenly music floats
o'er all the weary world;
above its sad and lowly plains,
they bend on hovering wing,
and ever o'er its Babel sounds
the blessed angels sing.*

*And you, beneath life's crushing load,
whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way
with painful steps and slow,
look now, for glad and golden hours
come swiftly on the wing.
O rest beside the weary road,
and hear the angels sing!*

*For lo, the days are hastening on,
by prophet seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years
shall come the time foretold
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendors fling,
and the whole world send back the song
which now the angels sing.*

Lighting of the Christ Candle

Tom Rosenberger and Rose Szymanski

One: For God so loved the world that God sent to us a Messiah, so that everyone who believes in God may not perish but may have eternal life.

Many: **Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Christ.**

One: Tonight, we light all the candles of the Advent wreath. Each candle has a meaning. The first candle is Hope, the second candle is Peace, the third candle is Joy, and the fourth candle is Love. The center candle is the Christ candle.

(The candles are lit)

Unison: “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Creator, Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6)

O God of hope, peace, joy, and love. As Mary and Joseph welcomed you into the world, now help us welcome you into our lives. Give us courage to hope and strength to seek peace. Fill our spirits with joy and our hearts with love. Through Jesus Christ, the Lord of all, who taught us to pray:

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Carol

“One Candle Is Lit”

128

*Come surely, Lord Jesus, as dawn follows night,
our hearts long to greet you, as roses, the light.
Salvation, draw near us, our vision engage.
One candle is lit for the hope of the age.*

*Come quickly, shalom, teach us how to prepare
for a gift that compels us with justice to care.
Our spirits are restless till sin and war cease.
One candle is lit for the reign of God's peace.*

*Come, festively sing while awaiting the birth,
join angels in dancing from heaven to earth.
Wave banners of good news, lift high thankful praise.
One candle is lit for the joy of these days.*

*Come, wander where lion and lamb gently play,
where evil is banished and faith takes the day,
a babe in a manger to fool the world's eyes.
One candle is lit for God's loving surprise.*

*Come, listen, the sounds of God-with-us ring clear,
and signs of a cross in the distance appear.
The Word once made flesh, yet the Word ever near.
One candle is lit for the Christ-birthday here.*

We Receive and Respond to the Word

Lessons from Holy Scripture

Isaiah 9:2-7

William Pabst

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined. ³ You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. ⁴ For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. ⁵ For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶ 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. ⁷ His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Luke 2:1-14

The Birth of Jesus

Rose Szymanski

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴ Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵ He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

The Shepherds and the Angels

⁸ In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah,^[a] the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host,^[b] praising God and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"^[c]

Footnotes

Luke 2:11 Or *the Christ*

Luke 2:13 Greek *army*

Luke 2:14 Other ancient authorities read *peace, goodwill among people*

One: This is the Word of the Lord.

Many: Thanks be to God.

Anthem

"O Holy Night"

Solo Allison Woolridge

*O Holy night! The stars are brightly shining
It is the night of our dear Savior's birth
Long lay the world in sin and error pining
'Til He appears and the soul felt its worth
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn
Fall on your knees; O hear the Angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born
O night, O Holy night, O night divine!*

*Led by the light of Faith serenely beaming
With glowing hearts by His cradle we stand
So led by light of a star sweetly gleaming
Here come the Wise Men from Orient land
The King of kings lay thus in lowly manger
In all our trials born to be our friend
He knows our need, to our weakness is no stranger
Behold your King; before Him lowly bend
Behold your King; before Him lowly bend*

*Truly He taught us to love one another;
His law is love and His Gospel is Peace
Chains shall He break, for the slave is our brother
And in His name, all oppression shall cease
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we
Let all within us Praise His Holy name
Christ is the Lord; O praise His name forever!
His power and glory evermore proclaim
His power and glory evermore proclaim*

Christmas Eve Meditation

Rev. Dr. James Brewer-Calvert

Hymn

"What Child is This"

162

*What Child is this, who, laid to rest,
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
While shepherds watch are keeping?*

Chorus:

*This, this is Christ, the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring him laud,
The Babe, the Son of Mary!*

*Why lies he in such mean estate,
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear: for sinners here
The silent Word is pleading. [Chorus]
So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh,
Come, peasant, king to own him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
Let loving hearts enthrone him. [Chorus]*

Communion Prayer for the Bread and Cup

Tom Rosenberger and William Pabst

Words of Institution

One: For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said,

Many: This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

One: In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying,

Many: This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

One: For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

Christ invites you to partake of Holy Communion.

As part of the one body of Christ,

we welcome all to the Lord's Table as God has welcomed us.

Unison Prayer of Commission

God our help: We thank you for this supper, shared in the spirit with your son Jesus, who makes us new and strong, who brings us life eternal. We praise you for giving us all good gifts in Him and pledge ourselves to serve you, even as in Christ you have served us.

Charge for Bearers of the Light

Rev. Dr James Brewer-Calvert

Jesus said he was the Light of the World. Now he sends us out to be light to the world, sharing the gifts of God's love to all people. "Let your light shine before all people that they will glorify God in heaven."

Hymn

"Silent Night, Holy Night"

145

*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.*

*Silent night, holy night,
wondrous star, lend thy light;
with the angels let us sing,
alleluias to our King;
Christ, the Savior, is born, Christ the Savior is born.*

Benediction

Rev. Paul Turner



Mark your Calendar

Pastor James is on vacation until January 11. **Pastor Paul Turner** and the **Elders** are on call during this time.

ONLINE GIVING



First Christian Church of Decatur is a spiritual community that transcends physical distance. In this unprecedented time, online giving is a way that the community can be supported.

As we often say in worship at the Invitation to Faithful Stewardship, "Those in need, please take; those with abundance, please give." If and when you find yourself in need, please let us know so we might be of assistance. You matter to your Church, which is the Body of Christ. The missions of our church are imperative to nurture a hurt and hurting world.

For those of us who would like to give out of gratitude for all the Lord is doing for us click the following link: <https://www.osvonlinegiving.com/4142>

You can create an account or download the Online Giving app. Please send us an email on: fccdecaturn@gmail.com if you have any questions.

Blessings and peace!

Welcome Statement

First Christian Church of Decatur (Disciples of Christ) is an open and affirming congregation. We welcome everyone into full participation in the life and membership of the church.

Inspired and informed by God's love, mercy, and justice, we are purposefully involved in healing and helping our community and our world. We covenant with God and the greater community to nurture a spirit of love and service to neighbors, honor one another's differences, and fellowship in the breaking of bread.

Actively striving to honor each other's race, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, nationality, ethnicity, marital status, physical or mental ability, family configuration, political affiliation, economic circumstance, or theological perspective, we truly do welcome all.

Ministers: All the People

Your Church Staff:

Rev. Dr James L. Brewer-Calvert, *Senior Pastor*
Russell Broomfield-Ranney, *Church Bookkeeper*
William E. Garner, *Director of Music*
Rebecca Shaw, *Church Administrator*
Ron Smith, *Facilities Manager*
Kathy Westbrook, *Church Organist*