

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF IONIA
DECEMBER 24, 2017
CHRISTMAS EVE
ORDER OF WORSHIP

PRELUDE

CHIMES OF THE HOUR

INTROIT (INSERT)

“Emmanuel”

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Animals came to prepare your bed.

All: Come, Lord Jesus, Come!

Leader: Shepherds stood guard, marveled and said,

All: Come, Lord Jesus, Come!

Leader: Angels sang to calm your cries.

All: Come Lord Jesus, Come!

Leader: And all the world gave one great sigh!

All: Ah Lord Jesus, you have come!

*THOSE WHO ARE ABLE, PLEASE STAND

LIGHTING OF ADVENT CANDLE

Youth Leaders

*HYMN 44

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(in Unison)

It’s Christmas Eve again, God. We have been so busy getting ready. Our houses are decorated. Our trees are trimmed. We have bought the gifts, wrapped them up, and placed them under the tree. We have parties to attend. We’re in a whirlwind of activity. In the midst of the busyness, we sometimes miss what it is all about — you coming to earth — Emmanuel — God with-us. Help us hear anew your promises of hope and salvation and love as we sing our familiar carols. Forgive us for forgetting the magic of this day, for focusing on ourselves, and what we need to do, instead of on the miracle of Jesus’ birth. Rock us out of our complacency. Let us hear angel voices, see shepherds hurrying to a stable, feel the baby’s soft breath on our cheeks, and

**ponder in our hearts what all this means for the world,
for us.**

KYRIE HYMN 572

*“Lord, have mercy upon us, Christ have mercy upon us,
Lord have mercy upon us.”*

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

PASSING OF THE PEACE OF CHRIST

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Matthew 1:18-2:12

Luke 2:1-20

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

God, we see your light shining in the darkness. We hear
the Christmas Angels. We behold your promises fulfilled in
the birth of this wondrous child. May this magical story be
come real in our lives.

MESSAGE

“Maddie and Lucy’s Version Births”

SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Leader: God of our Salvation, we come to you on this wondrous morning to gather in praise, to lift up your name with friend, family, and stranger. In the beginning, your creative work began with a word, and today, your creation continues with the Word made flesh.

On this holiest of days, we join the everlasting chorus saying:

All: Glory to God on highest! Great is your name in all the earth!

Leader: Like Mary, we ponder these things in our hearts, and wonder how you could love us so much as to actually become one of us, one with us. We re-

member these stories this day that remind us of
your steadfast love, that affirm that you have never,
and will never, give up on your children.

All: Thank you for your steadfast presence in our lives!

Leader: And yet, even on this day on which we celebrate
the fulfillment of love, we recognize that there are
many who are still waiting for fulfillment:

the fulfillment of adequate food and shelter...

the fulfillment of peace and the end of violence...

the fulfillment of reprieve from the fierce grip of
grief...

the fulfillment of a restoration of a broken
relationship...

the fulfillment of a renewing of heart, mind, or
body...

the fulfillment of healing from a chronic illness...

the fulfillment of an end to substance abuse...

All: Giving God, give us the courage to do your work in the world and to share the peace coming to us in the manger this day.

Leader: We pray this day especially for those who have traveled to be here...for those who have lost loved ones in the past year..

for those who struggle with mental illness...

for those who will be traveling in the coming days and weeks...

for those who work on Christmas:
especially medical workers, police, and emergency personnel...

for those who cannot make it home for Christmas...

hear us we pray, O God,

All: Restore us and make your face to shine upon us, that we may be saved.

Leader: In all that we do and in all that we are, send your Spirit to send us forward with the majesty of this day and to share the grace we find with everyone we encounter.

This we pray in the name of your Son, who taught us to pray saying:

All: Our Father...

OFFERING

OFFERTORY MUSIC

Mary Williams

Before the marvel of this night—Carl Schalk & Jaroslav J.

Vajda

Before the marvel of this night adoring, fold your wings and bow, then tear the sky apart with light and with your news the world endow.

Proclaim the birth of Christ and peace, that fear and death and sorrow cease: Sing peace, sing peace, sing gift of

peace!

Awake the sleeping world with song, this is the day our God
has made. Assemble here, celestial throng, in royal splen-
dor come arrayed.

*Give earth a glimpse of heav'nly bliss, a teasing taste of
what they miss: sing bliss, sing bliss, sing endless bliss!*

The love that we have always known, our constant joy and
endless light, now to the loveless world be shown, now
break upon it deathly night.

*Into one song compress the love that rules our universe
above: **Sing love, sing love, sing God is love!***

*DOXOLOGY

Hymn 592

"Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow"

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

*HYMN 53

"What Child Is This?"

*BENEDICTION

*POSTLUDE

Please sign the red attendance folder in your pew, sharing your name with those near you and making formal your gift to God of this hour. If you give your complete address and phone number, we will keep you informed about upcoming events.

Serving in Worship Today:

Youth Leaders: Caitlin Rozich, Emily Rozich, and Justin VanSyckle; ***Greeters and Ushers:*** Marcia and Ernie Ross, Norma Kilpatrick; ***Fellowship:*** Linda Heinicke; ***Flowers:*** Linda Hood and Worship Committee

Serving in Worship next Sunday:

Guest Speaker: Dr. Chris Dorn; ***Liturgist:*** Megan Ransom
Greeters and Ushers: Warren & Sue Thompson, Keith Sterner
Fellowship: Pat Gustafson and Norma Kilpatrick; ***Flowers:*** Linda Hood and Worship Committee

Elders serving on Session: Dr. Jan Arnold, David Hanson, Lavonna Hoover, Evelyn Ransom, Sue Reglin, Cindy Rozich, Dr. Keith Sterner, Dr. Warren Thompson, Kathy VanSyckle

Music Fund: Elder Bill Robinson
Shaver Children's Fund: Elder Judi Emlinger
Head Start Initiative: Elder Sue Thompson
Clerk, Margaret Gregory
Treasurers, Barb Klenk and Norma Kilpatrick

Music Leader
Harkness Handbell Choir Director
Administrative Assistant
Custodian

Mike Kaufman
Cindy Rozich
Deb Montgomery
Steve Slaughter

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thank You! “I am deeply grateful for the generosity you have shown to me throughout this past year. Your Christmas gift to me is yet another outstanding expression, for which I thank you. You have truly embodied the spirit of giving, which is appropriate to the Advent/Christmas season I have been privileged to celebrate with you. Blessed holidays to all of you! Dr. Chris.”

Thank You for the generous gift card to Meijer and all your prayers of support for me this past year. I love working for you all and wish you all a Merry Christmas and Joyous New Year! Deb

CALENDAR

- 12/24 8:30 A.M. Harkness Hand Bells practice
 10:00 A.M. Worship - Children's Christmas Pageant
 11:00 A.M. Fellowship and Refreshments
- 12/25 Merry Christmas
- 12/28 2-4 P.M. Prayer Shawl Group
- 12/31 8:30 A.M. Harkness Hand Bells practice
 10:00 A.M. Worship – Guest Speaker, Dr. Chris Dorn
 11:00 A.M. Fellowship and Refreshments
- 1/3 9:30 A.M. Quilters
- 1/4 10:30 A.M. Travelogue for Presbyterians on the Go
 2-4 P.M. Prayer Shawl Group
- 1/7 8:30 A.M. Harkness Hand Bells practice
 10:00 A.M. Worship - Guest Speaker, Dr. Chris Dorn
 Missions offering
 11:00 A.M. Fellowship and Refreshments
- 1/10 9:30 A.M. Quilters

1/11

2-4 P.M. Prayer Shawl Group

SEE WHO WE ARE

Christian Service Center

clothing and household goods we donate for neighbors

Crop Walk

walking or rocking we help to feed the world

Souper Bowl of Caring

homemade soup prepared and served to collect funds for local soup kitchen

March Into Reading

books we give to Head Start youngsters

Faithful Friends

Head Start classroom volunteers & family support

Ionia County Food Pantry and Soup Kitchen

groceries we collect and food we serve for a neighborhood center

Bear Buddies

near Christmas, we collect small stuffed animals for use in hospital emergency room, patrol cars of police officers, and spouse abuse center