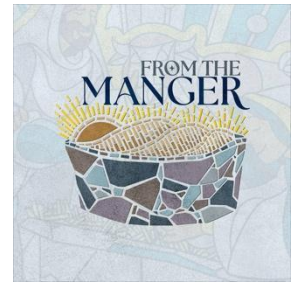


**The Presbyterian Church of Okemos
December 18, 2024
Longest Night Service**



Centering Music

Words of Welcome

Lighting the Advent Candles

- One: Friends, in the Advent season, we light the candle of hope.
Tonight, we light it for all who feel hopeless.
Tonight, this light shines bright for prisoners, for patients with chronic illness,
for individuals fighting to get out of debt, for refugees waiting for a safe place to rest,
and for relationships that have no clear way forward.
- Two: As we light this candle we are reminded that, from the manger, hope is growing . . .
growing to be God with us. May God's hope find us now.
- All: Hope entices the people of God to come together in unity,
emboldens us to plan and plant for the future,
persuades us to anticipate and endure challenges that will arise.
When anxieties and circumstances overwhelm us, or we are tempted to fall into
despair, we remember the hope that comes from the manger.**

Moment of Silence

- One: In this season, we light the candle of peace.
Tonight, we light the candle of peace again for all who need peace.
This light shines bright for the anxious and unsettled—for those in seasons of transition
and discernment, for all who struggle with mental health, and for people navigating
rocky, new beginnings.
- Two: As we light this candle, we are reminded that, from the manger, peace is growing . . .
growing to be God with us. May God's peace find us now.
- All: Peace is humble and willing to apologize;
Peace is intentional and slow;
Peace is brave and has boundaries;
In our lives and in the world, when chaos, turmoil, war, divisiveness, and discord
threaten to overwhelm us, we remember the peace that comes from the manger.**

Moment of Silence

- One: In this season, we light the candle of joy.
Tonight, we light the candle of joy for all who need it.
May this light shine for those who are overburdened, overstretched, worn out, and worn
down. May this candle shine for those who need a good laugh, even in seasons of grief.

Two: As we light this candle, we are reminded that, from the manger, joy is growing . . .
growing to be God with us. May God's joy find us now.

**All: Everyone was made for joy, but life circumstances make joy more elusive for some.
The joy of the Lord may be found both on mountaintops and in valleys, in seasons of
plenty and seasons of want. When joy seems impossible, we remember the joy that
comes from the manger.**

Moment of Silence

One: In this season, we light the candle of love.
Tonight, we light the candle of love again for all who need it.
May this light shine for loved ones lost, for love that has been betrayed, for love that has
been neglected or forgotten, and for all who long for love and find themselves lonely.

Two: As we light this candle, we are reminded that, from the manger, love is growing . . .
growing to be God with us. May God's peace find us now.

**All: Love was born into this world as a tiny child,
Love embraces us in our joy and our sorrow, holding us closely and never letting go.
Love is expansive and inclusive, guiding us to see the humanity in each other.
When we mourn those we love, including ourselves, we remember the love that
comes from the manger.**

Moment of Silence

Opening Song: Hymn #90 *Wait for the Lord*

The image displays a musical score for the hymn "Wait for the Lord" (Hymn #90). The score is written for a two-part setting, featuring a treble and bass staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/2. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below the notes. The first system of music covers the first line of the hymn, and the second system covers the second line. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.

Wait for the Lord; be strong; take heart!

Old Testament Scripture

Isaiah 9:2-7

Moment of Silence

Cloth for the cradle

As we approach Christmas, we buy presents in preparation to give to our friends and neighbors. But how can we prepare to welcome Jesus who is at the heart of the season? Help us create a cradle for Jesus.

You are also welcome to take a strip of cloth as a reminder of God's hope, peace, joy and love that holds you even when you forget.

New Testament Scripture

John 1:1-14

Moment of Silence

Hymn #92:

While we are waiting

(see page 5)

Responsive Prayer

God, we are waiting for love,

Not the simple kind or the sweep-you-off-your-feet kind,

But the absurd kind.

The kind wrapped in rags, resting in a bucket of animal feed.

Love enough to save us all.

Blessed are we who look for Love

Deeper, fuller, truer-than we have known, than we could have ever hoped for.

Blessed are we who seek you,

the light that dawned so long ago in that dark stable.

Love given.

Love received.

Receive this gift, dear one. Love has come for you.

Candle Lighting

Please take a moment to pray in silence, naming any needs you wish to acknowledge to God.

When you are ready, you are welcome to come forward and light a candle

Time of silence

Closing Song Hymn #230

Joyful is the Dark

(see page 6)

Benediction

Depart in silence

Christmas Eve Services Sunday, December 24: 7:00 p.m. Candlelight Communion
Christmas Day Meal: 2:00 p.m. Ham provided, bring your appetite and a dish to share!

Worship Leaders: Pastor Lisa Schrott, Rebecca Mattern, Gail Lytle Lira

The liturgy is adapted from words by the Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed. A Sanctified Art LLC - *A Weary World Rejoices*, sanctifiedart.com and Illustrated Ministry. © 2024 Illustrated Ministry, LLC. *From the Manger*, illustratedministry.com The art is from Illustrated Ministry.

The responsive prayer is from Kate Bowler, *The Lives We Actually Have*.

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Rebecca Mattern (she/her), Interim Director of Faith Formation

Dr. Marlene Brewbaker, Organist

Westin Sorrel (he/him), Chancel Choir Director

Irene Shutt, Handbell Choir Director

Edward Ennen, Sexton

Anna Thiel, Office Manager

Gabrielle Shelton (she/her), Media Specialist

92 While We Are Waiting, Come

1 While we are wait - ing, come;
 2 With power and glo - ry, come;
 3 Come, Sav - ior, quick - ly come;

while we are wait - ing, come.
 with power and glo - ry, come.
 come, Sav - ior, quick - ly come.

Je - sus, our Lord, Em - man - u - el,

while we are wait - ing, come.

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Joyful Is the Dark

Capo 1: (C) D^b (F) G^b (Dm7) E^bm7 (G) A^b (C) D^b



1 Joy - ful is the dark, ho - ly, hid - den God,
 2 Joy - ful is the dark Spir - it of the deep,
 3 Joy - ful is the dark, shad - owed sta - ble floor;
 4 Joy - ful is the dark cool - ness of the tomb,
 5 Joy - ful is the dark depth of love di - vine,

(Dm) E^bm (Dm7) E^bm7 (Em) Fm (Gsus) A^bsus (G) A^b



roll - ing cloud of night be - yond all nam - ing:
 wing - ing wild - ly o'er the world's cre - a - tion,
 an - gels flick - er, God on earth con - fess - ing,
 wait - ing for the won - der of the morn - ing;
 roar - ing, loom - ing thun - der - cloud of glo - ry,

(Dm) E^bm (C) D^b (F) G^b (Dm) E^bm (G) A^b (C) D^b



maj - es - ty in dark - ness, en - er - gy of love,
 silk - en sheen of mid - night plum - age black and bright,
 as with ex - ul - ta - tion, Mar - y, giv - ing birth,
 nev - er was that mid - night touched by dread and gloom:
 ho - ly, haunt - ing beau - ty, liv - ing, lov - ing God.

(Dm) E^bm (Em7) Fm7 (Dm) E^bm (Gsus) A^bsus (G) A^b (C) D^b



Word - in - flesh, the mys - ter - y pro - claim - ing.
 swoop - ing with the beau - ty of a ra - ven.
 hails the in - fant cry of need and bless - ing.
 dark - ness was the cra - dle of the dawn - ing.
 Hal - le - lu - jah! Sing and tell the sto - ry!