



Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 24, 2023
Worship begins at 11 a.m.



Center Christ, by Lauren Wright Pittman

Gathering Around the Word

Prelude

Meditation on Silent Night

David Conte

Welcome and Announcements

Courtney Anne Henry & Susan Landrum

Ringling of the Bell

As the tower bell rings, may it call out to the city and the world that Central Presbyterian Church is worshipping God.

Lighting of the Advent Candles

Fiona Moore-Keish & College Students of Central

How does a weary world practice love?

By sending cards, and picking up the phone.

By practicing empathy, and assuming the best in others. By learning people's stories and finding common ground.

By advocating for justice, and saving a place at the table.

There are a million ways to practice love. So today we light the candle of love as a reminder and a charge.

With God's help, may we bring love into a weary world. Amen.

Hymn Response 85 (Stanza 4)

Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah

TIF IN VELDELE

Light four can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.

5

He is com - ing tell the glad ti - dings. Let your light be shin - ing.

✠ Call to Worship

Rev. Kate Culver

Glory to God in the highest!

And hope to every discouraged heart.

Glory to God in the highest!

And peace to every conflicted soul.

Glory to God in the highest!

And joy to every downcast spirit.

Glory to God in the highest!

And love to everyone.

Let us sing praises to our God.

Let us offer this light against the darkness.

✠ Hymn 136

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

GO TELL IT

✠ When this symbol precedes an element of the service, please stand as you are comfortable. Please silence your phones.

✠ Call to Confession

✠ Prayer of Confession
INSPIRED BY LUKE 1: 46-55

Holy God, you promised to do great things for us, yet we do not trust you. You extend your mercy to us, yet we do not trust you. You lift up the humble, you fill the hungry with good things, and yet we still do not trust you. Forgive us, and help us to trust in the promises you have given us. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray...

(Silent Confession) **Amen.**

✠ Assurance of Pardon
Friends, believe the good news of the gospel.
In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!

✠ Passing of the Peace

✠ Hymn 88 (Stanza 7)

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

VENI EMMANUEL

**O come, Desire of nations, bind
all peoples in one heart and mind;
bid envy, strife, and discord cease;
fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.**

Proclaiming the Word

✠ Hymn 140

Once in Royal David's City
Guy Palmer, soloist; Karen Brown, piano

IRBY

(After the solo, please rise and join in singing stanzas 2-4.)

Once in royal David's city
stood a lowly cattle shed,
where a mother laid her baby
in a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild;
Jesus Christ, her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven
who is God and Lord of all,
and his shelter was a stable,
and his cradle was a stall;
with the poor and meek and lowly,
lived on earth our Savior holy.

Jesus is our childhood's pattern;
day by day like us he grew;
he was little, weak and helpless;
tears and smiles like us he knew;
and he feels for all our sadness,
and he shares in all our gladness.

And our eyes at last shall see him,
through his own redeeming love;
for that child so dear and gentle
is our Lord in heaven above;
and he leads his children on
to the place where he is gone.

The Light of the World: A Children's Pageant

An Adaptation of Luke 1 and Matthew 2

The Friendly Beasts

TRADITIONAL

Jerusalem and Bethlehem Choirs; Thomas Chafin, conductor; Karen Brown, piano
Soloists: Bruno Palmer (sheep); Kai Hilimire (donkey); Amelia Harbert (cow);
Aubrey Johnson (camel); Guy Palmer (dove)

Jesus our brother kind and good was humbly born in a stable of wood,
And the friendly beasts around him stood, Jesus, our brother, kind and good.

"I", said the donkey shaggy and brown, I carried his mother uphill and down.

I carried her safely to Bethlehem town, "I" said the donkey shaggy and brown.

"I", said the cow all white and red, I gave him my manger for his bed;
I gave him my hay to pillow his head, "I", said the cow all white and red.

"I", said the sheep with the curly horn, I gave him my wool for his blanket warm;
He wore my coat on Christmas morn. "I", said the sheep with curly horn.

"I", said the dove from the rafters high, I cooed him to sleep so he would not cry;
We cooed him to sleep, my mate and I. "I", said the dove from the rafters high.

"I" said the camel all yellow and black, Over the desert upon my back
I brought him a gift in the wise men's pack, "I" said the camel all yellow and black.

All of the beasts, remembering it well, in the stable dark were proud to tell ...
Of the gifts they gave Emmanuel, the gifts they gave Emmanuel.

Away in a Manger

MUELLER

Jerusalem and Bethlehem Choirs; Thomas Chafin, conductor; Karen Brown, piano

Responding to the Word

✠ Hymn 134, Stanza 1

Joy to the World

ANTIOCH

✠ Affirmation of Faith

Rev. Shannon J. Kershner

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Offertory Sentence

Music at the Offertory

Rise, Shine!

Marques L.A. Garrett and Tom Trenney

Chancel Choir; Thomas Chafin, conductor; Mason Copeland, organ

Oh rise, shine! For the light is a-comin', my Lord says he's comin' by an' by.

This is the year of jubilee, my Lord says he's comin' by an' by.

My Lord has set his people free, my Lord says he's comin' by an' by.

We or dry, I intend to try, my Lord says he's comin' by an' by.

To serve the Lord until I die, my Lord says he's comin' by an' by.

Oh rise, shine! For the light is a-comin', my Lord says he's comin' by an' by.

I intend to shout an' never stop, my Lord says he's comin' by an' by.
Until I reach that mountaintop, my Lord says he's comin' by an' by.

Oh rise, shine! For the light is a-comin', my Lord says he's comin' by an' by.

✠ At the Presentation

Doxology

GREENSLEEVES

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.
Praise God, all creatures here below.
Praise God above, ye heavenly host.
Creator, Son, and Holy Ghost.**

✠ Prayer of Dedication

Prayers of the People and The Lord's Prayer

TRADITIONAL PC(USA)

**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.**

Bearing and Following the Word into the World

✠ Hymn 134, Stanzas 2-4

Joy to the World

ANTIOCH

✠ Charge and Benediction

Courtney Anne Henry & Susan Landrum

Postlude

Improvisation on Antioch

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Special Participants in Today's Worship

Central Presbyterian Church Staff

Tower Bell Ringer: Bobbie Paul
Choir Guild: Ellen Thompson
Dean Hammond,
Volunteer Technology Director

Hospitality Team

Beth Grashof
Ben Evans
Bettie Hardin
Kathy Harben
Mike Sizemore

Give

You may give via the envelope in the pew, online at www.cpcatlanta.org or using the QR code.



The Rev. Shannon Johnson Kershner,
Senior Pastor and Head of Staff
The Rev. Kate Culver, Associate Pastor
Susan Landrum, Director of Family Ministries
Dr. Jennifer Sengin, Director of Musical Arts
Mason Copeland, Organist/Music Associate
Kristie Johns, Business Administrator
Mark Wallace Maguire, Director of Communications
Melissa Johnson, Executive Assistant & Event Coordinator
John White, Facilities Manager
Abraha Diedre, Custodian
Christin Bland, Communications Associate
Linda Massengill, Part Time Assistant
Karen Brown, Pianist, Bethlehem & Jerusalem Choir
Courtney Anne Henry, Children & Youth Fellow
Thomas Chafin, Interim Choir Director
Elizabeth Daly, Music Intern
Patrick Maguire, Video Assistant
Josh Smith, Audio Engineer

Pageant Cast

Constellation - Courtney Anne Henry & Susan Landrum
Opening Prayer - Guy Palmer
Storyteller 1 - Susannah Tusher
Storyteller 2 - Kaitlyn Hilimire
Storyteller 3 - Ellie Harbert
Isaiah - Zac Hilimire
Angel Gabriel - Amelia Harbert
Mary - Beth Szymanski
Joseph - Daniel Figueroa
Emperor's Herald - Sam Sutton
Innkeeper's Child - Brianna Stewart
Angel Child - Cameron Dake
Shepherd Narrator - Aubrey Johnson
Excited Shepherd - Hannah Hilimire
Angel of the Lord - Phoebe Hunter
Little Angels - Freya Holden, Quin Jefferson, Penelope Lines
Little Shepherd/Sheep - Autumn Richards, Carmen Holden, Calder Stewart
Wiseperson 1 - Finley Sutton
Wiseperson 2 - Sam Sutton
Wiseperson 3 - Leland Jefferson
Herod - Kai Hilimire
Herod's Advisor - Bruno Palmer
King's Attendant - Marshall Dake
Star - Gabby Szymanski
Friendly Beasts - Bruno Palmer (sheep), Kai Hilimire (donkey),
Amelia Harbert (cow), Aubrey Johnson (camel), Guy Palmer (dove)

A Special Thanks

Worship this morning is led by the children and youth of Central. Many thanks to pageant directors Emily Hilimire and Vanessa Hunter, music staff Thomas Chafin, Elizabeth Daly, Mason Copeland and Karen Brown as well as the many parent volunteers who have made this Christmas pageant possible! The pageant is an adaptation of an original script by Paul Osborne, a former Christian Educator at Central. Co-director Emily Hilimire has had a child in the pageant since 2007! She was a shepherd wrangler, moved to costumes, assisted director Sharon Bray, co-directed with Melanie Bliss, adapted the pageant for COVID Zoom and live stream pre-recording, brought it back LIVE last year and is now assisted by Vanessa Hunter. Vanessa has been co-directing the pageant since 2019. We couldn't do this without Emily and Vanessa's leadership!

Church offices will be closed the week of Christmas, December 25 to December 30.

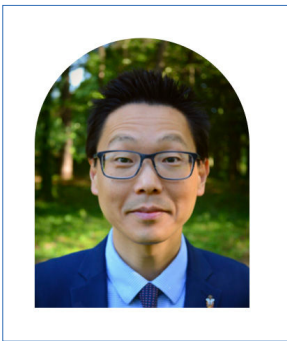
Central will not be publishing our e-newsletters this week.

We're Social!

Follow us on Facebook,
Youtube or Instagram to
stay up-to-date on church
life.



Coming in January!



A past we cannot ignore:

Anti-black racism in the Presbyterian Church

9:45 to 10:45 a.m.

Sundays in January

Sessions will take

place from 9:45 to 10:45 a.m.

on each of the four Sundays in January

The 2024 Central Presbyterian Winter Studies program will take place in the Oglesby Atrium space, where the OAC is located. The program's four sessions will all be led by Dr. William Yoo, Professor of Church History at Columbia Theological Seminary. Dr. Yoo will base his teaching on his recently published book, *What Kind of Christianity: A History of Slavery and Anti-Black Racism in the Presbyterian Church*.



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