

**We Believe:  
An Affirmation of Faith at Christmas**

We believe in God,  
the creator and giver of life,  
who brought all creation to birth,  
who mothers us and fathers us,  
protecting, nurturing,  
and cherishing us.

We believe in Jesus Christ:  
God born among us as a fragile baby,  
embodying both love and the need for love,  
and calling us to rest in God  
as trustingly as a tiny child.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,  
breathed into us at our birth,  
always drawing us on to be born again,  
encouraging, exhorting, comforting,  
nourishing our growth  
and inspiring our living.

\*Medley of Christmas Carols (see insert)  
Charge and Benediction  
Choral Response  
Postlude

*A Joyous Christmas*

John Leavitt

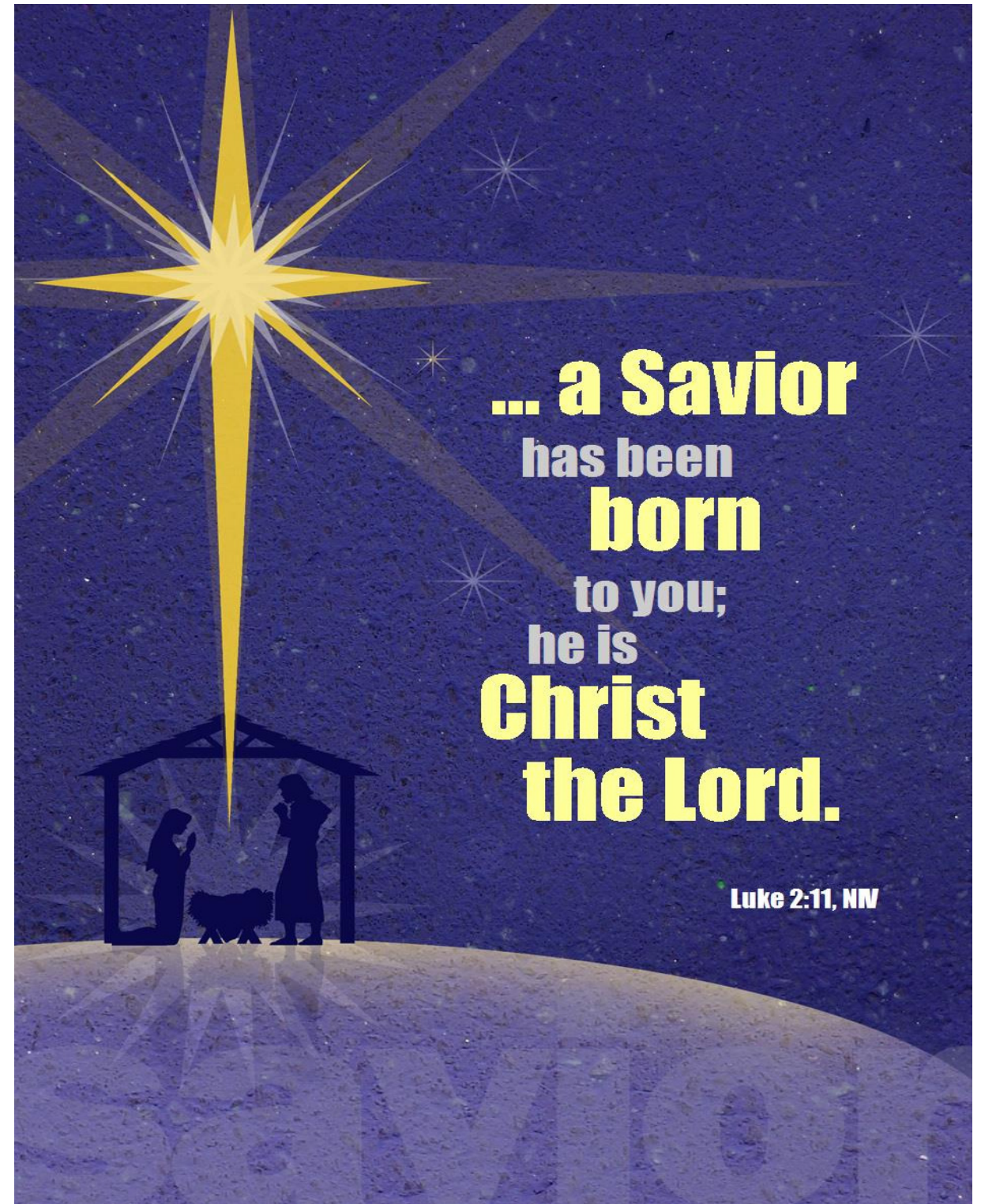
**\*All who are able may stand**

We believe in the reconciliation  
of the world to God, through Christ.  
Hunted at birth  
and humiliated at death,  
Christ entered our fearful darkness  
so that we might enter his glorious light  
and share the life of his resurrection.

And we believe that each new child  
is a glimpse of the face of God,  
a sign of the life to come,  
and a call to live in peace  
and celebrate living together.  
Glory to God in the highest,  
and peace to God's people on earth. Amen.

Written by Nathan Nettleton, 1999, incorporating some  
lines from "Midwife of our lives" by Kathy Galloway  
published in Kathy Galloway (ed.) *The Pattern of Our  
Days*, Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, 1996, p.138.

**The Christmas Joy Offering** is one of the four special offerings designated by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church USA. The offering provides congregations with a direct way of supporting two important groups. Fifty percent of the receipts of the Christmas Joy offering are distributed to the Board of Pensions for assistance programs that provide support to retired and active church workers, their spouses and families. The other fifty percent supports Presbyterian-related ethnic education through the General Assembly Council.



**... a Savior  
has been  
born  
to you;  
he is  
Christ  
the Lord.**

**Luke 2:11, NW**

## Order of Worship

Christmas Eve  
December 24, 2016

5:30 p.m.

Prelude

String Quartet

Ross Amkraut - violin 1  
Michael Simpson - viola

Lisa Hopko - violin 2  
Jennifer Haber - cello

Welcome

Scripture Reading

John 1:1-14, NT page 86

Lighting the Candles of Advent

Processional of Christ Candle

\*Hymn (insert)

*While We Are Waiting, Come*

Call to Worship

With eyes wide open and our ears on edge,

**we look for shepherds and listen for the songs of angels.**

In the light of winter's moon, with the Cross lighting the way,

**we gather outside the door of a mystery, wondering if we dare go enter.**

With folks and friends we love, with strangers we have just met,

**we gather, becoming the holy family for this time and in this place.**

Prayer of Praise and Adoration

\*Hymn of Response No. 31

*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

Scripture

Isaiah 52:7-12, OT page 642

Call to Reconciliation

This is the night we are reminded that God loves to be with us. Yet all too often – by our choices, our words, our silence – we choose not to be with God. Join me as we pray on this holy night to the One who was born to gift us with mercy and hope.

Unison Prayer of Confession

**This was going to be the year, God of silent nights, when we were going to give away more than we spent, but we didn't. This was going to be the season when we spent more time with others, but we filled our calendars with meetings. This was going to be the Christmas when we wrote personal letters to friends and family, but spent too much energy filling out our to-do lists. This was going to be a truly holy season, but it just got too harried and hurried.**

**Forgive us, Love Gifter, and draw us closer to the Baby born not into wealth and power, but into poverty and weakness; to the One who loves unconditionally and welcomes all; to the Child who gathers other children to him, to bless them and serve them; to the One who drew near to us, so we might be drawn to your heart – Jesus Christ, our Brother, our Lord.**

*(moment of silent confession)*

Assurance of Pardon

Into the valleys of our death, Jesus comes with life;

into the shadows of our world, Jesus brings light;

into the brokenness of our lives, Jesus brings forgiveness and peace.

**Thanks be to God for the gift of the Baby of Bethlehem, who brings joy and peace to us in these moments of forgiveness and in all the days to come. Amen.**

\*Hymn of Response No. 27

*Gentle Mary Laid Her Child*

\*Passing the Peace

One: The peace of Christ be with you.

All: **And also with you.**

Scripture Reading

Luke 2:1-7, NT page 54

Gathering of the Children

Anthem

*Still, Still, Still*

Austrian carol, arr. Norman Luboff, 1960

Chancel Choir

Words, Marilyn Keith & Alan Bergman

*Still, still, still; one can hear the falling snow*

*for all is hushed, the world is sleeping; holy star its vigil keeping.*

*Still, still, still; one can hear the falling snow.*

*Sleep, sleep, sleep; 'tis the eve of our Saviour's birth.*

*The night in peaceful all around you. Close your eyes, let sleep surround you!*

*Sleep, sleep, sleep; 'tis the eve of our Saviour's birth.*

*Dream, dream, dream of the joyous day to come.*

*While guardian angels without number watch you as you sweetly slumber,*

*Dream, dream, dream of the joyous day to come.*

Joy Gift Offering

Offertory

*Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming*

arr. Brian L. Hanson, 2016

ES IST EIN ROS, 16th Century German carol, trans. Theodore Baker

Chancel Choir

*Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming from tender stem has sprung.*

*Of Jesse's lineage coming, as men of old have sung.*

*It came, a floweret bright, amid the cold of winter, when halfspent was the night.*

*The shepherds heard the story proclaimed by angels bright.*

*How Christ, the Lord of glory, was born on earth this night.*

*To Bethlehem they sped and in the manger found him, as angel heralds said.*

*This Flower, whose fragrance tender with sweetness fills the air,*

*Dispels with glorious splendor the vast darkness everywhere.*

*True man, yet very God, from sin and death he saves us, and lightens every load.*

*O Savior, Child of Mary, who feels our ills and woe.*

*O Savior, King of heaven, who rains his goodness below.*

*Bring us at length, we pray, to your bright courts of heaven, and to eternal day!*

*Lo, how a Rose has sprung!*

Scripture Reading

Luke 2:8-20, NT page 54

Solo

*O Holy Night*

Elizabeth Ingram

# 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.

## Medley of Carols & Lighting of the Congregational Candles

\*Carol

*It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*

It came upon a 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 men, 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.

Carol

*O Little Town of Bethlehem*

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.

How silently, how silently The wondrous gift is given!  
 So God imparts to human hearts The blessings of His heaven.  
 No ear may hear his coming, But in this world of sin,  
 Where meek souls will receive Him, still the dear Christ enters in.

Carol

*Silent Night! Holy Night!*

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, alleluia to our King;  
 Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born.



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