CHRISTMAS EVE
A SERVICE OF LESSONS
AND CAROLS

Laurinburg Presbyterian Church
December 24, 2018
5:30 P.M.
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Preparation For Worship

“Want to keep Christ in Christmas? Feed the hungry, clothe the naked, forgive the guilty, welcome the unwanted, care for the ill, love your enemies, and do unto others as you would have done unto you.”

— Steve Maraboli, Reflections on Life and the Human Experience

“Blessed is the season which engages the whole world in a conspiracy of love.” — Hamilton Wright Mabie

The Welcome

W. Robert Martin, III

The Lighting of the Christ Candle

David, Heather, Walt & Poppy Bounds

This candle is lit as a sign of God-with-us—born of a poor woman's body as hope and healing for the nations!

The Response

O Come, O Come Emmanuel (Verse 1)

Red Hymnal # 88

The Welcome

W. Robert Martin, III

The Call to Worship

We who have dwelled in shadows have seen a great light!

Glory from heaven embraces the earth, like a mother’s arms around a newborn child.

On this night of nights, may we be innkeepers ready to find a place for the hurt and hopeless—

Laying the earth in a cradle of care, like a baby entrusted to a manger!

May we be bold enough to follow a star—

That we might give thanks for the birth of this child, through whose young life promise shines for all! May we be like shepherds, ever-open to the possibility of miracles—

That we might find a kneeling place, this night, in Bethlehem’s stable!

O come, O come, Emmanuel! Enter here! Enter now—

And spark in us the angels’ alleluias!

The Prayer of Invocation

W. Robert Martin, III

The First Lesson

Gibson McLaurin

Isaiah 9: 2b-7

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

*Congregational Carol

O Come, All Ye Faithful

Red Hymnal # 133 (verses 1,3 & 4)

Reflection

W. Robert Martin, III

Musical Reflection

Oh Holy Night!

The Second Lesson

T. P. Sellers

Luke 1:26-45

In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel

Reflection

W. Robert Martin, III
In the Bleak Midwinter

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind may moan,
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter, long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign;
In the bleak mid-winter a stable place sufficed
the Lord God incarnate, Jesus the Christ.

Angels and arch angels may have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;
But his mother only, in her maiden bliss,
Worshiped the beloved with a kiss.

What can give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man, I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give him: give him my heart!

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?
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.
Nails, spear, shall pierce him through; the cross be borne for me, for you.
Haste, haste, to bring him laud, the Babe, the Son of Mary!

So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh; come, one and all, to own Him;
The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone Him.
Raise, raise the song on high. The virgin sings her lullaby.
Haste, haste, to bring him laud, the Babe, the Son of Mary!

Mary, Did you Know?

Mary, Did you Know?

Jose Rivera and Skye Kigley

There were shepherders camping in the neighborhood

The First Nowell

The first Nowell the angels did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay a-keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter’s night that was so deep.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell! Born is the King of Israel!
They looked up and saw a star
Shining in the east beyond them far,
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night.

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell! Born is the King of Israel!

This star drew nigh to the northwest
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest,
And there it did both stop and stay,
Right over the place where Jesus lay.

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell! Born is the King of Israel!

The Fifth Lesson
Matthew 2: 1-12

A band of scholars arrived in Jerusalem from the East

*Congregational Carol
We Three Kings of Orient Are

(All)
We three kings of Orient are, bearing gifts we traverse afar,
Field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star.
O-Oh, star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright;
Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to that perfect light!

(Women)
Born a King on Bethlehem's plain, gold I bring to crown him again,
King forever, ceasing never, over us all to reign!
O-Oh, star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright;
Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to that perfect light!

(Men)
Frankincense to offer have I: Incense owns a Deity nigh;
Prayer and praising, we are raising, worshipping God Most High!
O-Oh, star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright;
Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to that perfect light!

(All)
Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume, breathes a life of gathering doom;
Sor'rowing, sighing, bleeding, dying, sealed in a stone-cold tomb.
O-Oh, star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright;
Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to that perfect light!

(All)
Glorious now behold him arise, King and God and Sacrifice;
Alleluia, Alleluia! Sounds through the earth and skies.
O-Oh, star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright;
Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to that perfect light!

The Sixth Lesson
Isaiah 11: 1-9

A green shoot will sprout from Jesse’s stump

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Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to that perfect light!
Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Hark! The herald angels sing: ‘Glory to the new-born King!’
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinner reconciled!
Joyful, all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the new-born King!”

Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold Him come, off-spring of the virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh the God-head see; hail the incarnate Deity,
Pleased in flesh with us to dwell, Jesus our Emmanuel,
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the new-born King!”

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the sun of righteousness,
Light and life to all He brings, risen with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by, born that we no more may die,
Born to raise us from earth, born to give us second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the new-born King!”

The Celebration of Communion

The Invitation to the Table

The Prayer of Thanksgiving & The Words of Institution

The Sharing of the Bread and Cup

Communion Music  Sean McDonald

The Blessing  W. Robert Martin, III

*Spreading the Light into the World

During the singing of ‘Silent Night’, worship leaders will move into the congregation and light the candles of the persons nearest the center aisle. Please light the candle of the person next to you in the pew.

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, all is calm, all is bright,
Joy streams down from heaven above, all are filled with Christ-like love,
Jesus, gift to us all, Jesus gift to us all.

Silent night, holy night, world aglow, filled with light!
Let our voices rise in song, singing praise the whole night long
Christ, alive with us here, Christ, alive with us here!

The Benediction  W. Robert Martin, III
How many observe Christ's birthday! How few, His precepts!"
   — Benjamin Franklin

“Those who have not Christmas in their hearts will never find it under a tree.”
   — Roy L. Smith

“And in despair I bowed my head;
There is no peace on earth," I said;
“For hate is strong,
And mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!”

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
“God is not dead, nor doth he sleep!
The Wrong shall fail,
the Right prevail,
With peace on earth, good-will to men!”

— Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

“And when we give each other Christmas gifts in God's name, let us remember that God has given us
the sun and the moon and the stars, and the earth with its forests and mountains and oceans—and all
that lives and move upon them. God has given us all green things and everything that blossoms and
bears fruit and all that we quarrel about and all that we have misused—and to save us from our foolish-
ness, from all our sins, God came and gave us God’s self.''

— Sigrid Undset

“The reality of loving God is loving him like he's a Superhero who actually saved you from stuff rather than a Santa
Claus who merely gave you some stuff.”

— Criss Jami, Kilosophy
There are many things from which I might have derived good, by which I have not profited, I dare say, returned the nephew. ‘Christmas among the rest. But I am sure I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round—apart from the veneration due to its sacred name and origin, if anything belonging to it can be apart from that—as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time; the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys. And therefore, uncle, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good, and will do me good; and I say, God bless it!”

— Charles Dickens, A Christmas Carol

“The smells of Christmas are the smells of childhood”

— Richard Paul Evans, The Christmas Box

“Yet as I read the birth stories about Jesus I cannot help but conclude that though the world may be tilted toward the rich and powerful, God is tilted toward the underdog.”

— Philip Yancey

“Are you willing to stoop down and consider the needs and desires of little children; to remember the weaknesses and loneliness of people who are growing old; to stop asking how much your friends love you, and to ask yourself if you love them enough; to bear in mind the things that other people have to bear on their hearts; to trim your lamp so that it will give more light and less smoke, and to carry it in front so that your shadow will fall behind you; to make a grave for your ugly thougts and a garden for your kindly feelings, with the gate open? Are you willing to do these things for a day? Then you are ready to keep Christmas!”

— Henry Van Dyke

“Christmas, my child, is love in action.”

— Dale Evans Rogers

“To the American People: Christmas is not a time or a season but a state of mind. To cherish peace and good will, to be plenteous in mercy, is to have the real spirit of Christmas. If we think on these things, there will be born in us a Savior and over us will shine a star sending its gleam of hope to the world.
As Jesus was born into poverty with “no room in the inn,”
we stand with people who are poor or homeless.

As Jesus was a refugee, whose family fled violence in their homeland,
we stand with people who are refugees and immigrants.

As Jesus respected women and honored their leadership and intellect,
we respect and honor all persons, regardless of gender or orientation.

As Jesus reached across divisions of race, color, and creed to welcome all,
we also seek to “love our neighbor” and advocate for justice.

As Jesus welcomed children and blessed them,
we affirm our care for all God’s children and their right to education, equality, and care.

As Jesus was “The Prince of Peace” who told his disciples to put down their swords,
we stand against violence and bullying and commit to being “makers of peace.”

As Jesus looked to the lilies of the field and the birds of the air to speak of God’s love,
we regard all creation not as a resource to be exploited, but as a sacred gift of the Creator to be shared wisely and used justly.

As people of faith in this season and all seasons, we recommit ourselves to

-- United Church of Christ, Santa Fe, NM