

Covenant-First Presbyterian Church

Sunday, December 31, 2023 • 10:30 AM
Service of Lessons and Carols



Covenant-First's mission is to praise the Father,
proclaim the Son and submit to the perfecting power
of the Holy Spirit.

Welcome to Covenant-First Presbyterian Church

Whether you attend Covenant-First Presbyterian Church on a regular basis or are here for the first time, we are glad you are here. Covenant-First Presbyterian Church was founded in 1790, and has been a part of downtown Cincinnati ever since. Our almost 2,000 pound tower bell is from the Paul Revere Foundry in Boston, and first rang from the steeple of one of our earliest buildings. This building was completed in 1875, and the Austin Pipe Organ dates to 1915, with its approximately 3,500 pipes. We have traditional worship with Bible-based preaching each week. Our music program is enhanced by our Music Scholar program and we are excited to have them lead in worship most Sundays.

If you need help with directions to restrooms, the fellowship hall, or to the lower level nursery, the person who greeted you this morning will be glad to help you.

Children and worship

We delight in children, and your children are always welcome to stay with you in worship. However, if you would prefer nursery care for your infants and toddlers, we do have a professionally staffed nursery in the lower level. We invite children ages 2 years to 5 years to participate in Junior Church. If your child wants to participate in Junior Church, you may escort them to the lower level during the singing of the Doxology. You may then pick your child up following the service from the downstairs classrooms.

Parking

Validated parking is available in the adjacent garage for all worship services. Please pick up a validation sticker and apply the sticker to your parking ticket to use for validation. Then simply scan your ticket with the sticker at the parking gate on your way out of the garage. If you are unsure how to obtain your parking sticker, any greeter or our security personnel will be happy to assist you.

Fellowship Time

After worship, we invite you to gather with us in Metzger Hall for a reception featuring coffee, treats, and encouraging conversation. Many of us travel from a distance to join together in worship on Sunday mornings, and we find this weekly fellowship time to be a valuable and enriching time for us to catch up and meet new people. Please join us!

About us

If you are interested in learning more about Covenant-First Presbyterian Church, please pick up any of the literature located on the back tables, see your morning greeter, contact the church office at 513-621-4144, or visit our website at www.covfirstchurch.org.

Service for the Lord's Day

Pre-Service Music

What is This Lovely Fragrance

Traditional French Carol

Andrew Hackett, Organist

Concerns of the Congregation

Rev. Dan Turis

Call to Worship

Rev. Dan Turis

One: The Word was made flesh,

All: Alleluia, Alleluia!

One: and dwelt among us,

All: Alleluia, Alleluia!

One: Jesus, Son of the living God, splendor of the Father, light eternal:

All: Glory to you, O Lord!

One: Jesus, King of glory, Son of righteousness, born of the Virgin Mary:

All: Glory to you, O Lord!

One: Jesus, Wonderful Counselor, mighty God, everlasting Lord:

All: Glory to you, O Lord!

One: Jesus, Prince of Peace, shepherd of souls, perfect in holiness:

All: Glory to you, O Lord!

Prelude

Improvisation on *Adeste Fideles*

Andrew Hackett, Organist

Ringing of the Revere Tower Bell

Let the ringing of the bell call our attention away from ourselves and
onto the living Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

First Lesson

Genesis 3:8-15, 17-19

Margaret Heidenreich

Adam and Eve disobey God's command and disrupt the order and goodness of creation

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." Then the

(Continued on page 2)

Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” So the Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, “Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat from it,’ “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”

***Carol #121**

O Little Town of Bethlehem

See pg. 7

Evelina Konaniah, piano

***Prayer of Confession**

Rev. Dan Turis

All: Lord, we are reminded about a function that your incarnation serves for us. Lord, we know that you came to replace our condemned lives with yourself. Lord, it is our sin that led you to the cross. However, it is for our redeemed life that you were resurrected. Please forgive us of the sin that led you from the manger to the grave. Make us whole and able to worship you rightly. Have mercy upon us, Lord Jesus.

***Moments of Silent Confession**

***Assurance of Pardon**

Rev. Dan Turis

One: Hear this, the best news we could possibly hear. The Lord loves us. Even though he came, resulting in our sin killing him. He didn't turn from that reality. He asked for the cup to pass from him, yet he stayed faithful to the Father all the way to death. Trusting in the Father's goodness to enliven him with the Holy Spirit. In doing so, Jesus beats death, which is creation's biggest enemy. This little baby whom we gather around has beaten the worst enemy of humanity. Let us praise the God who became a human and so many years ago, was born in the lowest of states for us.

All: Thanks be to God.

***Gloria Patri #575**

Glory Be to the Father

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen, Amen.

Second Lesson

Genesis 22:15-18

Hugh Ralston

God promises that, through Abraham, all the peoples of the world will be blessed

The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, "I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."

*Carol #100

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

See pg. 8

Andrew Hackett, organ

Prayers of the People

Rev. Dan Turis

The Lord's Prayer

All: 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 for give 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.

Third Lesson

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

Rev. Dan Turis

The people who walk in darkness receive the promise of the Messiah

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

Offertory

How Brightly Shines the Morning Star, BWV 739

J.S. Bach

Andrew Hackett, organ

*Doxology #572

Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow

At this time all children are invited to go to Children's Church

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*Prayer of Dedication

Rev. Dan Turis

Fourth Lesson

Luke 1:26-35, 38

Marney Weis

An angel appears to Mary and announces that she will bear a holy child

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end. How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

*Carol #104

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

See pg. 9

Evelina Konaniah, piano

Fifth Lesson

Luke 2:1-7

Paul Kramer

Joseph and Mary travel to Bethlehem, where Mary gives birth to her child

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

*Carol #108, vs. 1-3

The First Noel, the Angel Did Say

See pg. 10

Andrew Hackett, organ

Seventh Lesson

Luke 2:8-16

Tracy Kramer

Angels appear to shepherds in the fields and announce the birth of the Messiah

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.” So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

*Carol #106

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

See pg. 11

Andrew Hackett, organ

Eighth Lesson

Matthew 2:1-11

Eli Maxwell

Magi from the East come seeking the Messiah and offer gifts to the baby Jesus

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written: “‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.’” Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.” After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

***Carol #108, vs. 4-6**
Andrew Hackett, organ

The First Noel, the Angel Did Say

See pg. 10

Ninth Lesson

John 1:1-14

Rev. Dan Turis

The Word of God becomes flesh and lives among us, full of grace and truth

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

***Carol #113**
Evelina Konaniah, piano

Angels We Have Heard on High

See pg. 12

***Benediction**

Rev. Dan Turis

Postlude
Christie Lee, Organ Scholar

Venite adoremus

Lefébure-Wély

*Those who are able, please stand.

**Note: There will be no Fellowship Time after worship today.
We will look forward to returning to Fellowship Time on Sunday, January 7, 2024!**

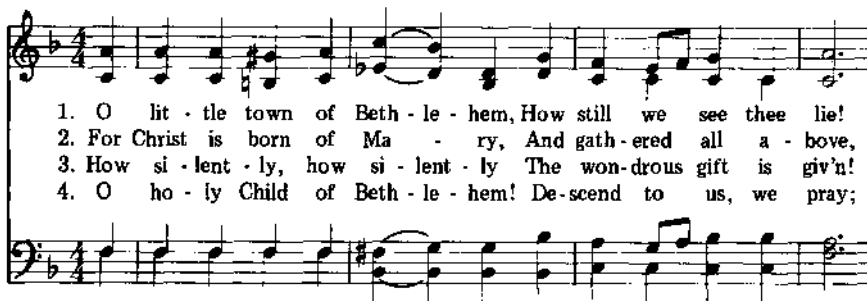
O Little Town of Bethlehem 121

Thou, Bethlehem . . . though thou be little . . . out of thee shall He come. Micah 5:2

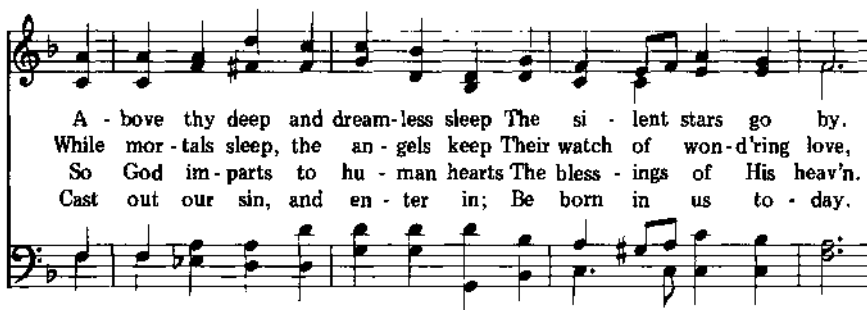
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Phillips Brooks, 1868

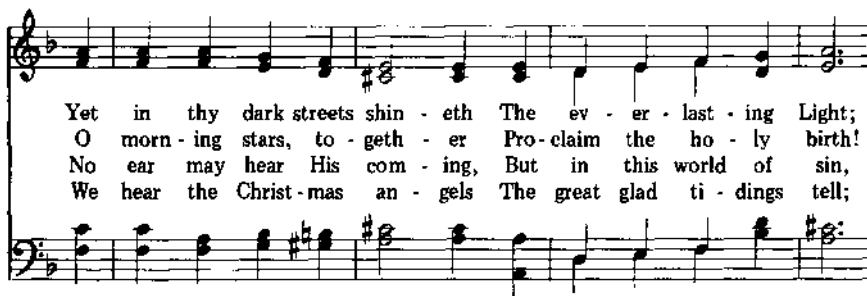
Lewis H. Redner, 1868



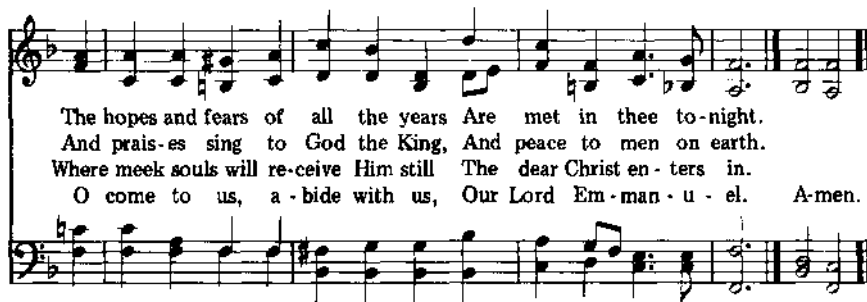
1. O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, How still we see thee lie!
2. For Christ is born of Ma - ry, And gath - ered all a - bove,
3. How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly The won - drous gift is giv'n!
4. O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - hem! De - scend to us, we pray;



A - bove thy deep and dream - less sleep The si - lent stars go by.
While mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep Their watch of won - d'ring love,
So God im - parts to hu - man hearts The bless - ings of His heav'n.
Cast out our sin, and en - ter in; Be born in us to - day.



Yet in thy dark streets shin - eth The ev - er - last - ing Light;
O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er Pro - claim the ho - ly birth!
No ear may hear His com - ing, But in this world of sin,
We hear the Christ - mas an - gels The great glad ti - dings tell;



The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee to - night.
And prais - es sing to God the King, And peace to men on earth.
Where meek souls will re - ceive Him still The dear Christ en - ters in.
O come to us, a - bide with us, Our Lord Em - man - u - el. A - men.

HIS BIRTH

100 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Behold a virgin shall . . . bear a son, and shall call His name Emmanuel. Isa. 7:14

VENI EMMANUEL 888888

Latin hymn.

Trans. by John M. Neale, 1851

St. 5 Henry Sloane Coffin, 1916

Thomas Helmore, 1854

Based on plainsong phrases

Unison

1. O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, And ran - som cap - tive
2. O come, Thou Rod of Jes - se, free Thine own from Sa - tan's
3. O come, Thou Day-spring, come and cheer Our spir - its by Thine
4. O come, Thou Key of Da - vid, come, And o - pen wide our
5. O come, De - sire of na - tions, bind All peo - ples in one

Is - ra - el, That mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here
tyr - an - ny; From depths of hell Thy peo - ple save
ad - vent here; And drive a - way the shades of night,
heav'n - ly home; Make safe the way that leads on high,
heart and mind; Bid en - vy, strife and quar - rels cease;

Un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
And give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave.
And pierce the clouds and bring us light! Re - joice! re - joice! Em -
And close the path to mis - er - y.
Fill all the world with heav - en's peace.

man - u - el Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el! A - men.

JESUS CHRIST

104 It Came upon the Midnight Clear

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace . . . Luke 2:14

Edmund H. Sears, 1849

CAROL C.M.D.
Richard S. Willis, 1850



1. It came up - on the mid - night clear, That glo - rious song of old,
2. Still through the clo - ven skies they come, With peace - ful wings un - furled,
3. And ye, be - neath life's crush - ing load, Whose forms are bend - ing low,
4. For lo, the days are has - tening on, By proph - et seen of old,



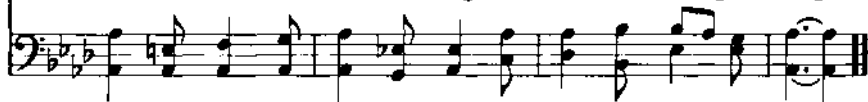
From an - gels bend - ing near the earth To touch their harps of gold:
And still their heav'n - ly mu - sic floats O'er all the wea - ry world:
Who toil a - long the climb - ing way With pain - ful steps and slow,
When, with the ev - er - cir - cling years, Shall come the time fore - told,



"Peace on the earth, good-will to men, From heav'n's all - gra - cious King": The
A - bove its sad and low - ly plains They bend on hov - ering wing: And
Look now! for glad and gold - en hours Come swift - ly on the wing: O
When the new heav'n and earth shall own The Prince of Peace their King, And



world in sol - ernn still - ness lay To hear the an - gels sing.
ev - er o'er its Ba - bel sounds The bless - ed an - gels sing.
rest be - side the wea - ry road, And hear the an - gels sing.
the whole world send back the song Which now the an - gels sing.



JESUS CHRIST

108 The First Noel, the Angel Did Say

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field . . . Luke 2:8

THE FIRST NOEL. Irreg. Ref.

W. Sandys' *Christmas Carols*, 1833

Arr. by John Stainer, 1871

Traditional English carol

1. The first No - el, the an - gel did say, Was to cer - tain poor shepherds in
 2. They look - ed up and saw a star Shin - ing in the east, be -
 3. And by the light of that same star Three wise men came from
 4. This star drew nigh to the north - west, O'er Beth - le - hem it
 5. Then en - tered in those wise men three, Full rev - rent - ly up -
 6. Then let us all with one ac - cord Sing prais - es to our

fields as they lay; In fields where they lay keep - ing their sheep, On a
 yond them far, And to the earth it gave great light, And
 coun - try far; To seek for a king was their in - tent, And to
 took its rest, And there it did both stop and stay, Right
 on their knee, And of - fered there in His pres - ence Their
 heav'n - ly Lord, That hath made heav'n and earth of naught, And

Refrain

cold win - ter's night that was so deep.
 so it con - tin - ued both day and night.
 fol - low the star wher - ev - er it went. No - el, No - el, No -
 o - ver the place where Je - sus lay.
 gold, and myrrh, and frank - in - cense.
 with His blood man - kind hath bought.

el, No - el, Born is the King of Is - ra - el.

JESUS CHRIST