

Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service



(Image by pikisuperstar: freepik.com)

December 24, 2023

7:00 pm

We Practice Just Peace: doing justice, seeking peace
We are Open and Affirming: welcoming LGBTQ+ people
We Listen for the Still Speaking God
We are striving to be a Racial Justice Church
Our faith is 2000 years old; our thinking isn't.

*A compassionate community, intentionally inclusive, openly searching,
joyfully serving in the way of Christ.*

Lighting of the Candelabras by Wesley and Abigail Ball

Prelude

Soli Deo Gloria

arr. Timothy Shaw

The prelude is an invitation to silent, personal preparation for the worship of God.

Words of Welcome

Rev. Ruth Martz

A special welcome to any guests or church family who has been away for some time – we are delighted to celebrate Christmas with you! Please know that ‘wiggling worshippers’ are always welcome. While we do not have childcare this evening, we are happy to hear children in our service. There is a nursery on the lower level if it is needed for a respite. Also, through the doors by the piano, a lovely chapel and parlor may be found.

If this is your first time here, please join us again on a Sunday morning at 9:30 am.

Introit

I Am Bringing You Good News of Great Joy. Alleluia

John Ferguson

Lighting the Advent Wreath and the Christ Candle

Rev. Ruth Martz & Steve Majeski

Unison Advent Prayer

We thank you, God, for your gift of Jesus Christ to the entire world. We thank you that Christ’s coming makes hope, peace, love, and joy possible for every person in every nation. Encourage us to do our part to bring goodwill and peace to our families, our churches, our neighborhoods, and the world. Now let your Spirit put us in touch with you, the living God, through the words and music we hear tonight. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

**Please note, those who are able and willing may stand.*

***Opening Litany**

Sabrina Tedeschi, liturgist

One: Dazzling light on a dark night.

ALL: Angelic songs on a silent night.

One: Wonderful news!

ALL: Surprising Good News.

One: A child is born!

ALL: Emmanuel, God-with-us!

One: Rejoice! The Prince of Peace has come.

ALL: All is calm, all is bright.

One: The holy is revealed in the midst of the ordinary.

ALL: A new melody emerges out of the darkness.

One: Do you hear what I hear?

ALL: Rejoice! On this holy night, the angels still sing.

***Hymn**

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
Verses 1 & 2

PH(red) #120

Unison Prayer of Invocation

Holy God, come into this wondrous night
with stars to light our way to the One called
“Wonderful Counselor, Prince of Peace.”

Come with angels to sing us to a deep joy.

Come to this moment and open our hearts,
so that we may hear the familiar story
in new and fresh ways.

Surprise us and remind us

that the child in the manger is Immanuel –
God with us, now and always. Amen.

Hymn

The First Nowell
Verses 1 & 2

PH(red) #141

First Lesson: Psalm 96 (selected verses)

Sabrina Tedeschi

ALL: O sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth!

Message for Young People

Second Lesson: Isaiah 9: 2–7

Natalie Boyer

Anthem

On Christmas Night

arr. R. Vaughn Williams

On Christmas night all Christians sing to hear the news the angels bring;
on Christmas night all Christians sing to hear the news the angels bring:
news of great joy, news of great mirth, news of our merciful King's birth.

When sin departs before His grace, then life and health come in its place;
when sin departs before His grace, then life and health come in its place;
angels and all with joy may sing, all for to see the newborn King.

All out of darkness we have light, which made the angels sing this night;
all out of darkness we have light, which made the angels sing this night:
"Glory to God and peace to all, now and forevermore. Amen."

Third Lesson: Luke 2: 1-7

Troy Tedeschi

Hymn

In The Bleak Midwinter

NCH (black) #128

Verses 1 & 2

Fourth Lesson: Luke 2: 8 - 14

Anna Boyer

ALL: *And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host,
praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth
peace among all people!"*

One: The Word of God for the people of God. May the Holy Spirit fill
our hearts with hope, peace, love, and joy.

All: Amen.

Christmas Eve Message

Rev. Ruth Martz

***Hymn**

O Come, All Ye Faithful

PH (red) #132

Verses 1-3

Anthem

Hark, Now, O Shepherds

Czech. Carol

Hark now, o shepherds, great news do we bring. Mighty the Monarch whose praises we sing.
Lo, in the manger lies Jesus holy, Son of the gentle maid, Mary lowly, Shepherds, rejoice!
See now in beauty, sweet mother and child. God's tender light o'er them, glowing yet mild.
O'er all the world the star, brightly beaming, Soft sheds its loving rays, gently streaming,
Shepherds rejoice!

Angels, bright shining, great tidings you bring. News of sweet Mary and Jesus our king.
Straight will we journey, forth gladly bringing all our devotion, fervently singing,
Christ now is born!

text: Cordelia Fenno

Prayer for Christmas

There will be a time of silence during which you may offer your personal prayers to God.

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 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.

**We believe that God is revealed in persons of all genders and sorts; we also honor tradition.

Offertory Anthem *The offering this evening will go to Pemi Valley Habitat for Humanity.*

Come to Bethlehem

Peter Warlock

Come to Bethlehem and see the newborn king;
Come and lay your heart before him while you sing.
He, the God of earth and heaven, Lord of all, Lies within the manger of an ox's stall.
Born of God the Father in the bliss above, Born a Baby in a stable for our love.
Lord of all creation ere our race began. Loves to be and call himself "The Son of man."
Holy Mary, Virgin Mother, gave him birth; See her meekly kneel before him on the earth.
Let us kneel with her and lovingly adore Christ her Son, our God and king for evermore.

- Dom Gregory Murray

***Doxology**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow
Praise God, all creatures here below
Praise God above, you heavenly host:
Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost. Amen.

***Unison Prayer of Dedication**

**ALL: Gracious One, tonight we can see more clearly
that everything is a gift. Thank you.**

**Bless the offerings that we return here,
so that families may find comfort and joy
in their new homes.**

**Bless us also, that our words, our choices,
and our relationships may serve as a gift to the world.**

We pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Poem: “The First Coming” by Madeleine L’Engle

(We will be spreading the candlelight throughout the sanctuary. Please be careful with every flame, and tend to the young people. May the warmth and glow of these candles remind us of the Holy Spirit embodied in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. If you are on Facebook, we invite you to light a special candle at home).

***Hymn**

Silent Night

PH (red) #138

Verses 1 & 2; then, please hum the song once.

***Benediction**

Choral Benediction

Alleluia

John Ferguson

Postlude

Adeste Fidelis, Variations

Harold Rutz

The Postlude ends our gathered worship.

When the service ends, we are invited to carry the love of Christ into the world! Merry Christmas!

If you purchased a poinsettia, feel free to take one home, all but the white poinsettia.

Update from the Pemi-Valley Habitat for Humanity

Dale Mosher, Board member, and a crew of dedicated workers are currently building a house at 61 Pleasant St. in Plymouth. Drop by on a Thursday, Friday or Saturday, and say hello! If you would be willing to prepare a hot lunch in the coming months, please contact our church office or Ruth Martz for the details (ruthm.joy@gmail.com/603-630-7936).

Warmest thanks for your donation this evening.

Poinsettia Dedications 2023



In Loving Memory of:

Jean & Kit Adams and Bob & Fran Keith
Herbert Bartron, father of Dawn Shimberg
Elizabeth Beckley
Mac Bownes
Elizabeth Cheney
Rick Fabian
Gerry Gontarz
Cynthia Howe
Gary Lance Johnson
Mae & Douglas Larson
Rev. W. Robert Miller
Connie (Howe) Payne
Dina Repasy, dear friend & nanny, missed forever
Toni Sweedler, beloved friend, mother, & grandmother
Lynda & Lenny Swenson
Ed Wixson
Evan Wolff, dear friend
Deceased members of the Arsenault & Pirnie families
Loved ones in the Pierson, Hahn, Love, and Torres families
Our mothers
Our parents and grandparents
Muriel & Robert W. Pollock Sr., Julia Ada Merriam, Caroline K., Arthur J. Anderson Jr.

Submitted by:

Peter & Robbin Adams
Dawn & Jim Shimberg
Susan Miller
Arline Bownes
Ann Thurston
Georgene Fabian
The Gontarz Family
Ken Howe & Michele Giggi-Howe
Lynn Johnson Morrison
Rebecca & Jerry Larson
Bob & Sue Miller
Fran Taylor
Jenny Thibeault, Caleb Sweedler, & Family
Jenny Thibeault, Caleb Sweedler, & Family
Megan Magrauth
Marilyn Wixson
Jenny Thibeault, Caleb Sweedler, & Family
Diane Arsenault & Pete Pirnie
Carol Hahn
Ruth Martz & Steve Majeski
Butch & Donna Castor
Chris & Bob Pollock

In Thanksgiving of:

Sage Pirnie's continued presence in our lives
Family and friends
Family and friends
Our family and church family

Diane Arsenault & Pete Pirnie
Linda & Jim LaPrad
Margot W. & Robert Swift
Eileen & Bill Torrey

In Celebration of:

The birth of Maren Danielle Pirnie
Sunday School

Diane Arsenault & Pete Pirnie
Sarah Campbell

* The White Poinsettia is a gift of our choir members to honor all who are now members of the heavenly choir.

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