



**BEDFORD**  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



*Ukrainian Mother of God*  
by Maria Harasowka-Daczyszyn

**December 24, 2023**  
**Morning Worship**  
**Christmas Eve**

**Prelude** *Where Are These Happy Shepherds Going?* J. Dandrieu

**Welcome**

**\*Opening Sentences**

Leader: In the beginning, there was the Word.

**People: The Word was with God, and the Word was God.**

Leader: Through the Word, all things came into being.

**People: In the Word was life, and that life was humanity's light.**

Leader: And the Word became flesh and lived among us,

**People: Filled with grace and filled with truth.**

**\*Carol 41**

*O Come, All Ye Faithful*

**Lighting the Advent and Christ Candles**

Reader 1: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

Reader 2: Mary felt joy and pondered it in her heart at the birth of her son.

(Relight the first, second, third, and fourth candles.)

Reader 1: The shepherds believed the angel of the Lord and the multitude of the heavenly host who praised God!

Reader 2: We do good in the world, glorifying and praising God for all that has been told to us.

**All: We light the Christ candle, celebrating the arrival of the Light that shines in lost and broken places.**

(Light the Christ candle.)

**All: Gracious God, grant us the ability to see the light of Christ, to feel the quiet presence of the Holy Spirit, to believe in the Great Mystery of this season, and to do in the world actions that only reflect the hope of the babe born in the manger. Amen.**

**First Reading**

*Isaiah 9:2-7*

The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—  
on them light has shined.  
You have multiplied exultation;  
you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you  
as with joy at the harvest,  
as people exult when dividing plunder.  
For the yoke of their burden  
and the bar across their shoulders,  
the rod of their oppressor,  
you have broken as on the day of Midian.  
For all the boots of the tramping warriors  
and all the garments rolled in blood  
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.  
For a child has been born for us,  
a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders,  
and he is named  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
Great will be his authority,

and there shall be endless peace  
for the throne of David and his kingdom.  
He will establish and uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time onward and forevermore.  
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

**Anthem Solo**

*Gesù Bambino*  
Jeremy McEvilly, Tenor

Pietro Yon

**Second Reading**

*Luke 1:46-55*

And Mary said,  
"My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant.  
Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed,  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name;  
indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.  
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones  
and lifted up the lowly;  
he has filled the hungry with good things  
and sent the rich away empty.  
He has come to the aid of his child Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

**\*Carol 44**

*O Little Town of Bethlehem*

## **Time with the Children**

*The children are welcome to stay for the service or they may leave for Sunday Spirit.*

## **Third Reading**

*Luke 2:1-20*

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room.

Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." 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 those whom he favors!"

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem

and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us."

So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them, and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.

### **Meditation**

Rev. Carol Howard

### **Offering**

#### **Anthem Solo**

*O Holy Night*  
Jeremy McEvilly, Tenor

Adolphe Adam

### **\*Doxology**

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.  
Praise God, all creatures here below.  
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;**

### **\*The Prayer for Christmas**

**O God, grant us such love and wonder that with shepherds and magi and pilgrims unknown, we may come to adore the holy child. As you came in the stillness of the night long ago, so enter our lives and world again this night. Overcome our doubts and our fears with the light of Christ's presence that we may see clearly the way to walk, the truth to speak, and the life you would have us live. Amen.**

### **\*Carol 40**

*Joy to the World*

Antioch

**\*Blessing**

**\*Postlude**

*In Dulci Jubilo*

J. S. Bach

\*Please stand, if able



*With immense gratitude,*

we would like to thank the following people for their wonderful contributions to our Christmas Eve services:

Richard Clymer, Trumpet  
Michelle Eames, Soloist  
Abbot Fleur, Timpani  
Brian Hiller-Dupont, Soloist  
Don Hiller-Dupont, Soloist  
and Joyful Noise Director

Brian Kanner, Trumpet  
Jeremy McEvilly, Soloist  
Frank Moore, Tenor  
And all of our wonderful  
choir members who make  
beautiful music year-round!

Additional thanks to Mary Lou Pappas for her help making BPC so beautiful throughout the year and at Christmas.

Finally, a very happy birthday to Rev. Carol Howard!



# **Our Leadership**

## **Session**

**Clerk of Session, Michelle Gosh, President Brian Hiller-Dupont,**

Anne Bentzen, Linda Burpee (Mission),  
Jessica Cunningham (Personnel & Generosity Team),  
Amy Drabek, Danielle Gamar (Christian Education),  
Ashley Glod-Hayes, Maria Andrea Laverde (Nativity Farm),  
Sarah Ryan (Property & Maintenance),  
& Bart Tyler (Members & Friends and Generosity Team)  
Moderator Reverend Carol Howard

## **Deacons**

**Chair Kim Lapple,** Sarah Alley, Marcy Carlson,  
Kathy DiBiasi, Michele Eames, Pat Ferguson, Andres Mejía,  
Diane Palmento, and Lisa Sayre

## **Staff**

The Reverend Carol Howard, Pastor

The Reverend Courtney Steininger, Minister of Christian Education

John Lettieri, Director of Music

Jessica DeAlto, Administrative and Financial Manager

Elyssa Michaels, Director of Congregational Life & Digital Ministries

The Reverend Thomas A. Hughart, Pastor Emeritus

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