

Carlisle Christian Church

Christmas Eve, December 24, 2025

**Please stand if you are able.*

Welcome & Call to Worship

L: We gather together in this place:

P: prophets and dreamers, singers and poets,

L: we who dare to imagine a world renewed;

P: we who dare to dream God's dream.

L: We ponder with Mary;

P: we marvel at Christ's birth.

L: God comes to us, a vulnerable child,

P: heaven and earth, meeting in a manger.

L: The angels sing, the shepherds dance.

P: We treasure these things in our hearts.

L: Come and worship, all you who dream and imagine.

P: We have come to wonder and praise.

Opening Prayer

God of the vulnerable, you come to us in ways that defy expectation: as a fragile baby, not a trampling warrior; birthed in a stable, not a palace; born in the quiet stillness of night. Teach us to look for you in the tender things. Make our hearts soft and our spirits generous, living the way of Christ, born to us this night. Amen.

***Hymn 148**

O Come, All Ye Faithful

Lighting of the Advent Candles

The birth of Jesus has been told and retold a thousand times and in a thousand ways. Its impact cannot be contained in any one perspective. The element of the story we focus on changes how we hear it, how we imagine it, and how we experience it. There are new parents excited to meet their son. A king terrified he might lose power and influence. Shepherds in awe of all they have seen and heard. We hope when we believe something good is on the horizon. We hope when we recognize all is not yet as it should be. Our world is not what is should be, but with Jesus we have hope that one day it will be. We light the candle of hope because hope creates a path for a new, unknown story to unfold.

Hope allows us to set down, even temporarily, our anxiety and worry for much-needed peace. Peace allows for a respite, bringing much-needed restoration. And restoration is needed to act without becoming numb or burned out. We light the candle of peace because peace requires us to pay attention to the needs of those around us.

When we are at peace, we can see joy in the most unexpected of places. Mary and Joseph found joy in a warm and dry manger. We can find joy in small acts of kindness and beauty in a harsh world. We light the candle of joy because joy sustains us in the midst of uncertainty.

From joy we move on to love. Love for God, love for family, for our neighbors, and for this world. Love motivates us to protect others and this world for generations to come. Love is far more than an emotion; it is the foundation of the gospel that is good for all. We light the candle of love because love makes the impossible possible.

Tonight we light the Christ candle. May we acknowledge the new light it provides, breaking through the darkness, disrupting what is, lighting the path for our dreams to come. Give us the will to dream, O God. May all be true in your name.

***Hymn #150**

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Prayer for Illumination

Holy God, when your Spirit moves, the dust of everyday life becomes alive with promise. In Bethlehem, you transformed a humble space into the magnificent birthplace of a king. You empowered a young mother to bring the Prince of Peace into the world. You charged an everyday carpenter to protect his new family, shielding them and caring for them as they grew. You take the ordinary stuff of life and transform it into good news for the whole world. So we surrender the everyday dust of our own lives to your liberating power. May our humble stories reflect the glory of Christmas today and every day. Amen.

Hymn #144

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Scripture Readings **Isaiah 9:2-7 & Luke 2:1-20**

Daphne Sayers and Jacob Mott

Message

Affirmation of Faith

Let us affirm God's gift of courageous care and loving embodiment through the incarnation: **We believe the birth and incarnation of Jesus changes everything. In a world that pushes out the vulnerable, erases the poor, and forgets the weary, we worship a God who is birthed in humility, cares for the overlooked, and shelters with peace. We believe that in a world that prizes wealth, domination, and force, we choose to kneel before a God who chose poverty and embraces with welcome. We believe peace, justice, and care can start small – just like the manger. We claim we don't need worldly power to be part of God's story. Real power looks like care, not control. We believe with Mary as our model of courageous care and loving embodiment, we too can commit ourselves to grow in Christ this Christmas. We give ourselves as spaces where love grows and grace breathes. We believe peace will come when we let the sides of our own souls stretch so we might become large with God's promise. We believe in allowing the Spirit to push us to the furthest rims of who we are, so the imagination of a new kingdom expands with life. We fully give ourselves to the Christmas miracle that Jesus may be born in us, to us, and through us.**

Hymn #147

Away in a Manger

Communion

Prayers of the People & The Lord's Prayer

Hymns During Communion - #160, #163, #164

Prayer after Communion

***Candlelight Vigil**

Remember friends the journey of Advent. Small, resilient lights of hope, peace, joy, and love have flickered to remind us of God's faithfulness through work, waiting, and lament. Tonight, in the precious glow of a dream fulfilled, we pause our lament, our work, and our waiting to celebrate the birth of Jesus. As we take the light from the Christ candle, we remember Jesus, who demonstrates the fulfillment of God's dream for all of us. And this dream, proclaimed by Mary, cherished by Joseph, celebrated by Elizabeth, and witnessed by the world, now fills us with promise. The light of Christ does not end in this room. We share the light of Christ among us because the good news, the dream, is large enough to share and bright enough to show us the way, no matter what comes next. Receive the light of Christ, born this day for the liberation and peace of the whole world.

*** Hymn by Candlelight #145**

Silent Night

*** Charge & Benediction**

May the Christ, who, by his incarnation, gathered into one the things of heaven and earth, fill you with the sweetness of inward peace and goodwill, and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always.

Postlude