

TIMBER RIDGE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



Advent Candle Lighting Christmas Eve December 24, 2021

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The Advent Candle Wreath

Christmas Eve Service

The wreath is a circle - reminding us of the perfection and eternity of God. Many wreaths are decorated with evergreen branches. The evergreen, like the circle, is a symbol of eternity - but also of life. Holly is sometimes used instead of evergreen. The sharp points of the holly remind us of Christ's crown of thorns.

Christ is the light of the world – and the candles are to represent that light. Please join us today in our responsive reading as we relight the Advent candles of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love; and as we light the fifth candle, the Candle of everlasting light...The Christ Candle.



LEADER: We gather to celebrate the birth of the one who is the light of the world.

PEOPLE: *We are here to worship God and his Son Jesus, born this night in Bethlehem of Judea.*

LEADER: We light the candle of hope to remind us of the promises made by all the prophets that God would raise up a savior for his people Israel.

PEOPLE: *Christ is our hope and our salvation. He calls us to share our hope in him with each other.*

LEADER: We light the candle of peace to remind us that it is only with God and by following in his path that true peace can be found.

PEOPLE: *Christ brings the peace of God to us. He calls us to share the peace he gives with each other.*

LEADER: We light the candle of joy to remind us that God gives joy to every heart that abides in him.

PEOPLE: *As Mary rejoiced in the birth of Jesus - so his birth brings us joy. God calls us to share the joy he gives with each other.*

LEADER: We light the candle of love to remind us that Jesus is God's gift of love to us - and that in him, the light of love triumphs over darkness.

PEOPLE: *Love never fails - it transforms all those who give it and receive it. God calls us to share his love with each other.*

Lighting The Christ Candle

LEADER: We light the Christ candle to remind us that the light of the world was born this night.

PEOPLE: *Jesus Christ, the son of Mary, the son of God is born this night.*

LEADER: May this light illuminate our hearts and shine in our words and deeds.

PEOPLE: *May the hope, the peace, the joy, and the love represented by the birth in Bethlehem this night fill our lives and become part of all that we say and do.*

Unison Prayer

EVERYONE: *Almighty God - you have made this night holy by the gift of your son, born of the Holy Spirit and of Mary. Upon him rested all your grace, through him has come all your mercy. Let his light shine within our hearts tonight even more brightly than it shines from the candles in this place. Help us to hear your word and to celebrate your everlasting love through him. Amen.*

Luke 2:1-20 (NRSV)

The Birth of Jesus

In those days a decree went out from Emperor 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 for them in the inn.

The Shepherds and the Angels

In that 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. But 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, as it had been told them.