

NEW COVENANT COMMUNITY CHURCH

Akron, Ohio
Christmas Eve



December 24, 2019

5:30 p.m.

The Gathering of God's People

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

Jim Strandberg

Reader 1: As the Advent Candles of hope, peace, joy, and love shine among us, we gather this evening to celebrate the birth of the Christ Child.

Reader 2: In Him, God's Word became flesh and lived among us.

Reader 1: In Him, God's Love became flesh and embraced all humanity.

Reader 2: In Him, God's Light became flesh and illumined the world.

People: 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. (Isaiah 9:2)

Reader 1: In Him, God's Way became flesh and revealed the path of life.

Reader 2: In Him, God's Grace became flesh and blessed us with new beginnings.

Reader 1: In Him, God's Power became flesh and shattered the chains of injustice and inequality.

Reader 2: In Him, God's Salvation became flesh and brought hope to the world.

People: 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. (Isaiah 9:6)

Reader 1: This evening we light the Christ Candle to remind us that the Light of the world was born into the darkness of the world. Let us pray: God of radiant glory, as we celebrate the birth of the Holy Child, grant that our lives will be changed through the infinite grace that was found in a manger.

Reader 2: Through the One who is the Light of the world, illumine the horizons of humanity with Your justice, truth, and love. Through the Word who became flesh and lived among us, speak to us of Your new reality.

People: And through the gift of the Savior of the world, enable us to allow this little Child to lead us along the path of new life and true life, for we ask it in the name of the One who was born a child and yet a king, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*HYMN

Angels from the Realms of Glory

#22

PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

Jim Strandberg

Leader: In Matthew's gospel, when the angel spoke to Joseph about the child who would be born to Mary, the angel informed Joseph that he was to name the Child, "Jesus," for He would save the people from their sins. On this Christmas Eve night, we gather to celebrate the birth of Jesus, for He does indeed save us from our sins. And so at this time of worship let us join our voices and confess our sin to the One who cleanses us from the sin that stains our lives, and then following our corporate prayer we will have a moment to offer our silent confessions as well. Let us pray:

People: Gracious and merciful God, although Your light illumines our path, we have often chosen to follow our own course. We have wandered from Your word; we have sought to increase our pleasure while ignoring the needs of others and we have heard the songs of "Peace on earth" but have remained in our old patterns. Forgive us, Lord, and restore us again to Your way of light. Grant that the Wonderful Counselor would guide us from our sinful wanderings and into Your wisdom. Help us to cling to the love of the Everlasting Father who embraces us with newness. Instill within us the commitment to follow the Prince of Peace so that all people may walk along the path that leads to abundant life, for the sake of the Child born at Bethlehem, Jesus Christ our Lord.

(Silent)

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS (adapted from Galatians 4:4)

Jim Strandberg

Leader: When the fullness of time had come, God sent the Son, born of a woman, and born under the law.

People: God sent the Son in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as God's children.

Leader: Friends, believe the good news of the gospel:

People: Through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!

*CANTICLE

He Came Down

– Cameroon

**He came down that we may have love;
He came down that we may have love;
He came down that we may have love,
Hallelujah forevermore.**

**He came down that we may have peace;
He came down that we may have peace;
He came down that we may have peace,
Hallelujah forevermore.**

**He came down that we may have joy;
He came down that we may have joy;
He came down that we may have joy,
Hallelujah forevermore.**

***PASSING THE PEACE**

Jim Strandberg

Leader: At the birth of the newborn Savior who changed the world forever, the angels sang of peace on earth and goodwill to all people. In the spirit of the season, let us also greet one another with the peace of Christ.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD’S PRAYER

HYMN

The First Nowell

#56

READING FROM THE WORD

Isaiah 9:2-7

ANTHEM

All Is Well

Ken Heischman

READING FROM THE WORD

Luke 2:1-20

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

Have You Heard That a Child Has Been Born?



***HYMN**

What Child Is This

#53

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

from *A Declaration of Faith*

**Jesus, the long expected deliverer, came into the world as a child,
descended from David, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of Mary, a virgin.**

He lived as a Jew among Jews.

He announced to his people the coming of God’s kingdom of justice and peace on earth.

**We affirm that Jesus was born of woman as is every child,
yet born of God’s power as was no other child.**

In the person and work of Jesus,

God and a human life are united but not confused, distinguished but not separated.

The coming of Jesus was itself the coming of God’s promised rule.

Through his birth, life, death, and resurrection,

Jesus brings about the relationship between God and humanity that God always intended.

HYMN

While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks

#58

TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Star Light, Star Bright

– Combined Worship Teams

***DOXOLOGY**

(tune: Regent Square, *Angels from the Realms of Glory*)

**Gratefully in adoration
we praise our dear Savior’s birth
whose divine illumination
shines God’s love through all the earth.
Here we share our gifts and talents
Worshipping the newborn King.**

– lyrics by Tom Ulrich



***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

SACRAMENT OF THE LORD’S SUPPER (*The Lord’s Supper will be served by intinction. Please come forward by the center aisle and return to your seat by the outer aisles.*)

Invitation to the Table

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise . . .

Words of Institution and Communion of the People

Prayer after Communion and the Lord’s Prayer

We have “open” communion, and therefore all who desire a closer relationship with God and want to share in the love of Jesus Christ are invited to participate fully in the sacrament.

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

HYMN

Silent Night

#60

***BENEDICTION**

***RESPONSE**

