

Olean First Presbyterian Church
Christmas Eve 2025

Prelude ~ *Creator Alme Siderum* ~ Pietro Yon

Welcome ~ *Please remain seated during the hymns. We will stand for the Doxology.*

Good Evening Saints

Hymn ~ *Angels, from the Realms of Glory* ~ No. 143 (*verses 1, 2 & 4*)

Angels, from the realms of glory,
wing your flight o'er all the earth;
you, who sang creation's story,
now proclaim Messiah's birth:
come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king!

Shepherds, in the fields abiding,
watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing;
yonder shines the infant light:
come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king!

All creation, join in praising
God the Father, Spirit, Son,
evermore your voices raising
to the eternal Three in One:
come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king!

Call to Worship ~ Adapted from Luke 2:1-14

In those days, in the beginning, Joseph and Mary traveled to Bethlehem. He was to be registered, and she was expecting a child. The time came for Mary to give birth, so she delivered her child, wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger.

And the angels sang, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth, peace to all whom God favors."

Let us worship our with-us God.

Let us sing and praise God.

The lighting of the Advent and Christ Candles ~ Lynn and Louie McClure

A: In a weary and worn world, how do we begin again? Where do we start?

B: Let us begin with hope. Let us begin with peace. Let us begin with joy.

Let us begin with love.

A: Yes, let us begin with love, for surely love knows your name.

B: Today, in addition to the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love, we light the Christ Candle. For surely God is in this place. Surely the Spirit is near. Surely love knows our name.

A: May we rest in that good news. Unto us a child is born. A light shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it. Glory to God in the highest heaven! Amen.

Advent Song ~ *Light One Candle* ~ Natalie Sleeth

Light one candle for hope, one bright candle for hope.
He brings hope to ev'ry heart. He comes! He Comes!

Light one candle for peace, one bright candle for peace.
He brings peace to ev'ry heart. He comes! He comes!

Light one candle for joy, one bright candle for joy.
Ev'ry nation will find salvation in Bethl'em's baby boy.

Light one candle for love, one bright candle for love.
He brings love to ev'ry heart. He comes! He comes!

Light one candle for Christ, one bright candle for Christ.
He brings life to ev'ry heart. He comes! He comes!

Hymn ~ *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* ~ No. 119 (*verses 1 & 3*)

Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn king.
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful all ye nations, rise;
join the triumph of the skies;
with the angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn king!"

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn king!"

Evening Prayer

God of new beginnings,
Our hearts are full to the brim.
In a world with long nights
and cold winters,
in a world that constantly feels like it is ending,
we need this new beginning.
We need this story of a baby wrapped in swaddling cloth, lying in a manger.
We need this story of the angels and the shepherds.
We need Mary's song and Joseph's faith.
We need this night to remember how to begin again.
So with hope in our hearts and love in our veins,
we turn toward you in prayer.

Hymn ~ *Good Christian Friends, Rejoice* ~ No. 132 (*verses 1 & 3*)

Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
give ye heed to what we say:
Jesus Christ is born today;
ox and ass before him bow,
and he is in the manger now.
Christ is born today!
Christ is born today!

Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
now ye need not fear the grave:
Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all
to gain the everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save!
Christ was born to save!

Offering

*Doxology

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

We give you thanks, Holy One, for the world of wonder you have made—forest and field,
sea and sky and for the gift of grace that you have given—a little child, lying in a manger.
Receive these gifts of tenderness and love, of gratitude and praise, and use them for your
glory; in the name of Jesus Christ, the child of Bethlehem, we pray. Amen.

Hymn ~ *What Child is This* ~ No. 145 (verses 1 & 3)

What child is this, who, laid to rest,
on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud,
the babe, the son of Mary!

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;
come, one and all, to own him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
let loving hearts enthrone him.
Raise, raise the song on high.
The virgin sings her lullaby.
Joy, joy, for Christ is born,
the babe, the son of Mary!

Affirmation of Faith

**We believe that on a night like this one,
a baby was born and placed in a manger.
We believe that baby was God's love in the flesh,
who grew up to love the outcast and change the world.
We believe that Jesus' love was so big and so personal
that the world will never be the same.
So despite the mystery of this holy night,
we believe that a star shone,
that the shepherds ran,
that the angels sang,
and that love was born.
Yes, we believe it when the prophets say
that unto you,
unto us, a savior is born.
Glory to God in the highest heaven!
We believe.**

Anthem ~ *Angel Carol* ~ Anna Laura Page

Prayer for Illumination ~ No. 455

Listen to the word that God has spoken;
listen to the One who is close at hand;
listen to the voice that began creation;
listen even if you don't understand.

Scripture

Luke 2:1-20

¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph 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. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And 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.

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!” ¹⁵When 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.” ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Christmas Eve Message

Music for Meditation

Christmas Communion

Invitation to the table

Come to this Table.
Come with your faith and your doubt.
Come with your questions and your hopes.
Come with your grief and your love.
Just come, because there is room for you here.
This is Christ's table. All are welcome.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Loving God,

We come to this Table this evening longing for a new beginning.

In a world that so often feels like it's ending,

we crave the hope of a new beginning.

We long to heal from the endings and crash landings of our hurting world and start again, rooted in your good news.

So week by week, bit by bit, we return to your Word.

Week by week, bit by bit, we return to each other.

Week by week, and bit by bit, we repeat the truths that we so often need to hear, trusting that by your grace, it is never too late to start again.

So in this spirit of beginnings, we come to your Table.

Once more we ask that you would meet us here.

Pour out your Spirit on this ordinary meal, that in this bread and cup we may glimpse a new day.

May the sight of everyone being welcomed at this Table remind us that all are loved by you.

May the evidence that there is food for all

remind us that no one is meant to go hungry.

May the fact that our own sin, shame, and doubt do not keep us from this Table remind us that you welcome and love us as we are.

And may all of these Communion truths serve as building blocks for a new day, for a new beginning.

With hope in our hearts, we pray.

With hope in our hearts, we gather.

With hope in our hearts, we begin again.

Meet us here.

Allow this joyful feast to be the start of something new.

With joy and hope, we weave our voices together

to pray the words your son taught us to pray, saying:

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, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Partaking of the Elements

Prayer after Communion

Nourishing God,

Sometimes we tell ourselves that too much has taken place to begin again.

We think the world is too far gone.

We think we have made too many mistakes.

We tell ourselves that we couldn't possibly begin again.

But then we come to this Table and we get a glimpse of your kingdom.

We come to this Table and all are welcomed, all are seen, all are fed.

And just like that, we have hope.
Just like that, we begin again.
Thank you for the gift of this fresh start.
Thank you for planting hope deep in our bones.
Thank you for meeting us in ordinary bread and juice to remind us that it's never too late to
build your kingdom here.
We are grateful.
We are so grateful.
Amen.

Lighting of the Candles

Hymn ~ *Silent Night* ~ No. 122

**Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright.
Round yon Virgin, Mother and Child.
Holy infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace**

**Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia,
Christ the Savior is born!
Christ the Savior is born**

**Silent night, holy night!
Son of God love's pure light.
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
With dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth**

Pastoral Blessing

2025 Christmas Memorials

*In loving memory of Helen McCully
~ families of Don, John, Dean, Jean and Joan*

*In loving memory of John and Carol
Weinhold
~ Diane Trippany and John Weinhold*

*In loving memory of James and Elaine
Trippany
~ Diane Trippany and John Weinhold*

*In loving memory of
All My Loved Ones
~ Lanna Waterman*

*In loving memory of Lucile and Richard
Galey
~ Martha Nenzo*

*In loving memory of Our Parents and
Grandparents
~ Dave & Kay Shults*

*In loving memory of my sister, Kathy
McGonnell
~ Patricia Smith*

*In honor of Carol Bess and Cindy Shaver and
their FPC friends
~ Bob and Letty Mason, cousins from Ohio*

*In loving memory of Our Parents
~ Dale and Cindy Dutton*

*In honor of Our Granddaughters
~ Dale and Cindy Dutton*

*In loving memory of Patricia Bowersox
Goodnite, Tom's sister
~ Karen and Tom Bowersox*

