

## WE GATHER IN GOD’S NAME

### PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

A decree. A census. A man and a woman arrive in Bethlehem to obey an emperor’s wish. Shepherds on the night shift tend their sheep. In the midst of these ordinary events a baby’s birth is announced with extraterrestrial fanfare. Glory is given to God in the highest; peace is promised on earth. Henceforth, the world shall be enlightened by God’s Word made flesh.

### PRELUDE

### WELCOME

### \* LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES AND CALL TO WORSHIP TIM AND LAURA MAHER

The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not overcome it.

**He was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him.**

The Advent wreath helps us recollect the miracle of God’s becoming human for our sake. The wreath is a circle, causing us to remember the eternity of God’s love for us and for all humanity. Its greenery causes us to remember the newness of life we have in Christ Jesus.

**The first candle reminds us of the prophet’s hope for God’s salvation to come.** [Pause while candle is lit.] **The second candle reminds us of the angels’ song of peace for all the earth.** [Pause while candle is lit.] **The third candle reminds us of the joy of the shepherds as they heard the good news of Jesus’ arrival.** [Pause while candle is lit.] **The fourth candle reminds us of the love poured out for the world on that night so long ago.**

We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

**Come, let us go and see this that has happened!**

## WE PRAISE GOD IN SONG AND PRAYER

### \* HYMN OF PRAISE #41 *O Come, All Ye Faithful* ADESTE FIDELES

### LITANY FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

Like pilgrim shepherds we have gathered tonight. Like children of royalty we have come together to celebrate the birth of true royalty.

**Our Savior comes to us as a babe, wrapped in swaddling cloths. He lays aside his crown to dwell among us and share the joy and sorrow of our pilgrimage. He passes through the curtain around God’s love and, holding it aside, invites us in.**

Oh, the humanity of God, the divinity of God’s children.

**What child is this? What love is this that seeks to share our burdens and lead us on in kindness towards a glory that is gentle and peaceful like a meadow in spring?**

O God, roll away the stone in our hearts and let our spirits soar into that realm where angels laugh, martyrs weep for joy, and

God’s infinite love dances among the singing throngs of those who have gone before us.

**That we may know what has been accomplished in this child, that we may see the world as you see it, Lord, sanctified, cleansed, and sojourning towards a healing so great we are almost afraid to hope in it.**

Jesus says: “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest upon your souls.”

**What shall we render to the Lord for all God’s bounty to us? We shall lift the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord.**

**This Christmastide let our spirits so entwine that we form a wreath of joy, a circle of light from which God’s precious and fragile love will shine out into the darkness of this world and into our own hearts. It is in the strong name of Jesus, who came to us as a child that we ask this. Amen.**

### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

We begin with such great hopes, such great dreams. We are going to be better, to treat others more fairly, to love more deeply. But we come to the manger once again, knowing our failings, and aware of our brokenness. Let us confess to the One who comes, that our lives might be made new.

**God who comes to us: forgive us . . . when our shadowed lives dim your Light; when the tinsel of Christmas means more to us than your truth; when our hearts of stone resist the pain and brokenness around us; when we care more about what is under the tree, than the damage we do to your creation and to your children. Have mercy on us, Healing God, so we might tear down the walls we have built to keep your love away; so we could seek your justice for our sisters and brothers; so our hearts would become cradles for your Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.**

### SILENT CONFESSION

### ASSURANCE OF GOD’S GRACE

Go, go through the city, preparing for the people; repair, repair all the roads, filling in the holes, raising a banner for all to see. God has spoken to all people, saying to sons and daughters: 'See, your Savior comes; to make good on my promises, to bring redemption to all people.'

**And we will be called God's Beloved, the Redeemed of the Lord; God will seek us out to live in the New Jerusalem, where no one is left behind. Amen.**

### \*RESPONSE *Angels We Have Heard on High (refrain only)* GLORIA Glo ----- ri-a in excelsis Deo; Glo ----- ri-a in excelsis Deo;

### PRESENTATION OF GIFTS, TITHES, AND OFFERINGS

### OFFERTORY

### \* DOXOLOGY (WITH ALLELUIAS) LASST UNS ERFREUEN

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Him, all creatures here below, Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly hosts;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!*

### \* PRAYER OF DEDICATION

## WE PROCLAIM GOD’S WORD

### PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION #5 *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence* PICARDY

*Let all mortal flesh keep silence,  
And with fear and trembling stand;  
Ponder nothing earthly minded,  
For with blessing in His hand,  
Christ our God to earth descendeth,  
Our full homage to demand.*

### THE WORD SPOKEN

A Reading from Isaiah 9:2-7 PEW BIBLE, OT, PAGE 638

A Reading from Psalm 96 (*Responsive Reading*) PEW BIBLE, OT, PAGE 550

### \* HYMN #23 *Angels We Have Heard on High* GLORIA

### THE WORD SPOKEN

A Reading from Luke 2:1-14 PEW BIBLE, NT, PAGE 58

For the Word of God in Scripture, for the Word of God among us, for the Word of God within us;

**Thanks be to God.**

### CHRISTMAS MEDITATION: *DECISIVE BABIES OF OUR TIME* BILL HAMILTON

### \* HYMN OF PREPARATION #25 *Away in a Manger* MUELLER

## LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

### LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE TIM AND LAURA MAHER

Why do we now light the Christ Candle?

**The Christ Candle reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world, come into our darkness to enlighten us and give us the light of God which we share with others, as he says in John’s gospel: “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.”** (John 8:12)

### SPREADING OF THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

*Please light your candle as instructed by the ushers. Please keep them lit throughout the remainder of the service, carrying the light of Christ out into the world!*

### \* HYMN #60 *Silent Night, Holy Night* STILLE NACHT *(Bob Zeliff is going to tell us about this hymn and sing the first verse in German then we will all join in)*

## WE GO IN GOD'S NAME

\* **CHARGE AND BENEDICTION** – John 1:1-5, 9-14

\* **CLOSING HYMN #40** *Joy to the World!*

ANTIOCH

\* **POSTLUDE**

*\* You are invited to stand if you are able*

## WELCOME TO FAITH PRESBYTERIAN

**Welcome to Faith Presbyterian Church.** We are so pleased that you have joined us for worship on this most holy of nights – Christmas Eve. If you are a visitor, please join us again for worship each Sunday at 11:00 a.m. If you have an interest in joining Faith Presbyterian, please speak to the pastor or call the church at 336.292.5704. Please visit our website at [www.faithpresgso.org](http://www.faithpresgso.org) or Facebook at [www.facebook.com/faithpresgso](http://www.facebook.com/faithpresgso).

### **Worship Notes:**

- All worshipers should have received a small candle upon entering the sanctuary. If you didn't receive one, please see an usher. Please use caution in lighting your candle at the end of the service. You may place the candle in the basket by the door, or keep it as a memento.

The Church Office will be closed tomorrow, Christmas Day and the Day after Christmas.



## Christmas Eve



***We are a loving faith family,  
worshipping and serving God,  
and testifying in word and deed  
as disciples of Jesus Christ.***

### **Pastoral Team**

Bill Hamilton, Interim Pastor  
Jim Rissmiller, Pastoral Visitor  
Libby Inman, Young Adult Ministries  
Jeremy Corn, Music Director  
Lois Bazhaw, RN, Congregational Nurse  
Lynn Wright, Office Administrator

December 24, 2013  
6:00 p.m.

Service for the Lord's Day  
Christmas Eve

[www.faithpresgso.org](http://www.faithpresgso.org) ♦ [www.facebook.com/faithpresgso](http://www.facebook.com/faithpresgso) ♦ [Twitter @faithpresgso](https://twitter.com/faithpresgso)  
6309 W. Friendly Ave. ♦ Greensboro, North Carolina 27410 ♦ 336.292.5704