

HOMILY

BENT, BROKEN AND WANING

Pastor Bill Wassner

Isaiah 9: 2 (CEV)

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

Bill Barrett, Daryl Helfert, Sharon Hoslck

THE RESPONSE

"One Candle is Lit" (v 5)

**Come, listen, the sounds of God-with-us ring clear,
and signs of a cross in the distance appear.**

The Word once made flesh, yet the Word ever near.

One candle is lit for the Christ-birthday here.

*THE PASSING OF THE LIGHT

*CLOSING CAROL

"Silent Night"

89

Accompanied by *Brass Ensemble*

(At the end of the carol, please extinguish your candle
and SILENTLY leave the sanctuary and the building.)



**ST. PAUL'S
UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



Rev. Dr. William J. Wassner, Senior Pastor † Rev. Mary Hurley, Associate Pastor

Andrea Williams, Director of Traditional Music

Kasey Gathercole & Katie Maurer, Co-Directors of Discovery Music

Lisa Wassner, guest organist † Katie Maurer, pianist

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*Christmas Eve
Candlelight Service*

*ALL
Hearts
COME HOME
FOR
Christmas*

December 24, 2017 - 10 p.m.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tonight, we celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Tonight's service is one of scriptures and carols. We are glad that you came to join the celebration!

OPENING MUSIC *"Christmas Joy"* Handbell Choir

*CALL TO WORSHIP Pastor Mary Hurley

Leader: Rejoice, for God is with us — Emmanuel.

People: In the darkness of our world shines God's holy Light.

Leader: Now there is reason to Hope, to grasp Peace, to feel Joy,
and to Love.

People: God is truly with us. We are not alone.

Unison: Thanks be to God!

*OPENING CAROL *"Joy to the World!"* # 92 (1, 2)
 Accompanied by Brass Ensemble

*UNISON INVOCATION Pastor Mary Hurley

Gracious God, with Joy and Love, we gather as Your people. We have come to hear again the timeless story of Christ's birth. In the excitement of this night, quiet our hearts that we may know the Peace and Hope of this holy time. Shine Your Light in the darkness of our world. This we pray in the name of the Child of Bethlehem. Amen.

ANTHEM *"The Gift" (Cutter)* Traditional Choir

PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Merciful God, We confess that often we find darkness more comfortable than light. We confess that we find Your Good News frightening and unsettling, especially when we consider its demands as well as its promises. We confess that Christmas has become more to us than the birthday of the Christ, partly because we do not want a Christ-Child in our lives or in our world. Forgive us, break us, bend us, remake us. Give us the courage to lay ourselves open to the wonder and healing of Your coming. Be born again into our world, be born again into our hearts and lives. Hear now our silent and personal confessions as we prepare ourselves for Your nativity. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Leader: The true Light that enlightens all has come into the world.
That Light shines on in the darkness,
and the darkness has never been able to put it out.

This is the Good News:

All: God has heard our confession.

God has forgiven our sin.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

THE COMING OF JESUS IS SHARED WITH MARY Luke 1: 26-38 (CEV)

In accordance with Mary's faith, let us sing
"O Come, All Ye Faithful" # 90 (1, 6)
Accompanied by Brass Ensemble
(As congregation sings, the Mary Candle is lighted.)

THE BIRTH OF JESUS Luke 2: 1-7 (CEV)

In honor of Joseph's preparations, let us sing
"O Little Town of Bethlehem" # 95 (1, 3)
(As the congregation sings, the Joseph Candle is lighted.)

THE ANGELS ANNOUNCE THE BIRTH Luke 2: 8-14 (CEV)

"It Came Upon the Midnight Clear" # 100 (1, 5)
(As congregation sings, the Angels Candle is lighted.)

THE VISIT OF THE SHEPHERDS Luke 2: 15-20 (CEV)

Let us go with the shepherds and visit the child
"Away in a Manger" # 105 (1, 3)
(While congregation sings, the Shepherd Candle is lighted.)

THE RESPONSE OF SIMEON AND OURS Luke 2: 25-32 (CEV)

Let us ponder alike who this Child is for us and respond with generous gratitude
"What Child Is This?" # 110 (1, 3)
(While congregation, the Simeon Candle is lighted
and the offering is received.)