



LAUREL
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

Welcomes You to Worship!

Christmas Eve

December 24, 2022 Noon

Where Love is Known

PRELUDE

Don Moro

RINGING OF THE HOUR

Vickie Chaplin

WELCOME BELOVED ONES

The Rev. Ann D. Cherry

GATHERING AROUND LOVE

MUSICAL CALL TO WORSHIP

Don Moro

ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING

The Christ Candle

The Choir

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Michael Henderson

Leader: Receive The Gift!

People: Glory to God in the highest!

Leader: Hope is born!

People: Glory to God in the highest!

Leader: The Joy is ours!

People: Glory to God in the highest!

*HYMN

O Come All Ye Faithful

No. 133

RECEIVING LOVE

CALL TO CONFESSION

The Rev. Ann D. Cherry

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of Wonder, you are come to us as both a small and wiggly newborn and also as a Wonderful Counselor and a Mighty God. You come to us as a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and also as the Everlasting Father and the Prince of Peace. You come to us in straw and barn dust, and also as the King of Kings and the Messiah. Let the paradox of human child/God wash over us with awe. Let the surprise of your birth

move us and transform us as we receive this gift. Dismantle our barriers and our obstacles to claiming your goodness in ourselves and from seeing your goodness in each other. Birth us inside of your forever love, that pierces even our deepest darkness and our biggest doubt, with endless light, joy, and stardust for the messy human journey that you inhabited and called good, for we pray this in the name of that One who has come, and who is and was and always will be, our Christ. Amen.

SILENT PRAYER OF CONFESSION . . . Amen

FORGIVENESS OF SIN

Leader: Beloved, hear the good news: Jesus came to show us the face and the way of Love. A way of love that cannot be denied. Friends, believe this good news!

People: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!

*OUR RESPONSE

Gloria Patri

Hymn No. 581

PROCLAIMING LOVE

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Michael Henderson

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 9: 2-7 (NRSVue)

MUSICAL OFFERING

Laurel Choir

SCRIPTURE

Luke 2: 1-18 (NRSVue)

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

SERMON

"The Gift"

The Rev. Ann D. Cherry

RESPONDING IN LOVE

*HYMN

Silent Night, Holy Night!

No. 122

TIME FOR THE YOUNG AT HEART

*HYMN

Away in a Manger (vs. 1)

No. 115

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE

PRAYER OF GREAT 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.

Leader: Lord of Lords, you commanded light to shine out of darkness, divided the sea and dry land, created the vast universe, and called it good . . . Therefore, we praise you, joining our voices with the heavenly choirs and with all the faithful of every time and place, who forever sing to the glory of your name:

People: Wonderful Counselor, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Glory to God in the highest. Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord. Glory to God in the highest.

Leader: Prince of Peace . . . As you raised our Lord from death and call us with him from death to life, we give ourselves to you to live for him in joy and grateful praise. All praise to you, Lord Jesus:

People: Dying you destroyed our death, Rising you restored our life, Lord Jesus, come in glory.

Leader: Mighty God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us ... Amen.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

BEARING LOVE INTO THE WORLD

*HYMN

Joy to the World

No. 134

*THE CHARGE

Michael Henderson

Michael: Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Those who follow me shall never walk in darkness. They will have the light that leads

to new life" (*John 8: 12*)

People: "The light shines inside the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." (*John 1:5*)

Ann: Go therefore, all peoples, and take The Gift of this One who has come, into our lives, and into our world.

People: For unto us a Savior has been born, and he is Christ our Lord!

*THE BLESSING

The Rev. Ann D. Cherry

*POSTLUDE

Don Moro

*RECESSION AND GREETING

The Rev. Ann D. Cherry

***Please feel free to stand and move during our worship service.**

Lay Reader: Thank you to Michael Henderson for serving as our liturgist today.

Don Moro, Guest Organist: Don has been a substitute organist in the Richmond area for over 14 years. He studied at Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY, where he received organ lessons from Dr. David Craighead. He lives in North Chesterfield with his wife, Deborah, and three sons.

Chancel Poinsettias: are given today by your love to the Glory of God. Please see the insert for our list of those honored or remembered by this gift of love.

Advent Wreath Lighters: Thank you to our "Choir" small group for serving as our Advent wreath lighters today, and to Glenda Miller for coordinating this group of voices and lighters. This year we have asked our small groups of the church to serve as our Advent Wreath Lighters.

Ring Out Your Joy: Please ring out your joy generously as we sing our last hymn today. Bells can be found where you picked up your bulletin.

God's Gift to You: Please take a moment at the beginning and at the end of worship to receive God's gift for you. There is a birch wood heart ornament on the communion table with sharpies. Pray about the gift that God is giving to you personally this Christmas and note it on the ornament with this year's date. Let this symbol serve as an outward sign of how God is loving you in particular this year.

Choir Shout-Out: Thank you to the choir and to Howard Lawrence for directing the choir this day.

No Service on Christmas Day: We will gather again to worship on New Year's Day.

Church Office Closed: We will be closed in observance of Christmas next week.

New's Year Day Service: We will kick off the new year on Sunday, January 1st with a **noon** service. Please "come as you are." We are going to ease into this new year with joy and good vibes. Give some thought to your 2023 "word" for the year.

Vote for Laurel's Tag Line: Take a moment to register your vision for Laurel summarized in our new tag line. In the Narthex you will see a ballot box and the 4 possibilities on a poster board. Here are your options:

Enter to Worship, Leave to Serve
Come as a Guest, Leave as a Friend
Homecoming for Your Heart
Let the "Laurel Love" Light Shine on You

Not to late for Pledge Cards: If you have not turned in your pledge cards yet, it is not to late. Just drop in the church house in the narthex or mail it in using our PO Box. Many thanks to those of you who have already pledged.

Weekly Tithes and Our Offerings: We have placed a small church house on the table in the back of our outdoor worship and invite you to leave your gifts to support God's work as you depart. You can also mail in your pledges and weekly offerings using our post office address: P.O. Box 1280, Glen Allen, VA 23060-1280

Online Giving is Active: Online giving allows a donor to make contributions using a credit or debit card through a safe portal. You can use the QR code (quick response) by opening your camera app on your phone and scanning it. The QR code is found in the pews and on the back of this bulletin, and it will link you to the secure donation site. You may also choose the new "Online Giving" tab at LaurelPres.com and follow the link there, or the instructions for downloading the giving app.

Paperwhites: If you will be visiting someone who is not able to get out to worship, please stop by the kitchen and pick up a paperwhite and deliver it with a heap of "Laurel Love." The Wednesdays at Laurel service group prepared the clay pots and potted the plants with extra love.

Interested in Joining Laurel?: . If you are interested in joining this sweet church, please contact Rev. Ann Cherry at (804) 508-3850.

A COVID PSA: The COVID Task Force would like us to remember that if we do test positive, to let the people around us know, specifically the people we had contact with at church and/or sat nearby at worship. Free COVID tests are now available through the government and or with Medicare. We encourage frequent testing with cold like symptoms.

Kettle o'Fish Counseling: Each of us is created by God with purpose and infused with meaning no matter our season of life. If you are interested in exploring yours, please reach out to Chris Rhoden at (804) 220-1582. "Be known. Be loved."

We want you to be comfortable: You are invited to stand, stretch, and move during our worship service or even to remain seated as the spirit moves you.

Bulletin Announcements Best Guide: Please use this as your church event planner for our life together. Sometimes the schedule needs to shift from what is posted in our newsletter.

December Shepherd of the Month: Our December Shepherd of the Month is Kathy Boyce. You can reach Kathy at 804-755-4260. Our shepherds provide member care and TLC.

Call to Prayer: Let us be in prayer for all those impacted by the recent college campus violence, for the many shopping and nightclub tragedies, for those suffering in the Ukraine/Russia war or from any violence, those who are fighting addiction, battling cancer, healing from COVID, carrying heavy burdens, grieving, suffering, homeless, finding it hard to feed their families or undocumented. We pray also for our Director of Music Search, for our stewardship campaign, for Laurel to embody the bold vision God has set for us, for all of us to claim our gratitude in God, and for all of us who are struggling to claim the love that claims us as beloved ones, and to live it out in this world.

Laurel Presbyterian Church

The Rev. Ann D. Cherry, Minister
Chris Rhoden, Kettle o'Fish Counselor-in-Residence
Duane Berger, Clerk, Elder, WE
Michael Henderson, Documentarian, WE
Linda Coulson, Elder, MCM Team
Diane Jackson, Elder, MCM Team
Brenda MacRae, Elder, MCM Team

Rob McBane, Treasurer
Peter MacRae, Bookkeeper
Tod Balsbaugh, Elder, SP Team
Gladys Bowles, Elder, SP Team
Denis Ramdas, Elder, SP Team
Stephen Scarce, Elder, SP Team

You can contact Rev. Ann Cherry at (804) 508-3850 or at laurelpres.cherry@gmail.com

You can reach Chris Rhoden at (804) 220-1582 or at chris@kettleofish.com

You can reach Gingerbread Cottage Preschool at (804) 755-1667 or gingerbreadcottagepreschool@gmail.com

Where Love Is Known

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Luke: 2: 1-18, *The Message*

The Birth of Jesus

² ¹⁻⁵ About that time Caesar Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Empire. This was the first census when Quirinius was governor of Syria. Everyone had to travel to his own ancestral hometown to be accounted for. So Joseph went from the Galilean town of Nazareth up to Bethlehem in Judah, David's town, for the census. As a descendant of David, he had to go there. He went with Mary, his fiancée, who was pregnant.

⁶⁻⁷ While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. She gave birth to a son, her firstborn. She wrapped him in a blanket and laid him in a manger, because there was no room in the hostel.

An Event for Everyone

⁸⁻¹² There were shepherds camping in the neighborhood. They had set night watches over their sheep. Suddenly, God's angel stood among them and God's glory blazed around them. They were terrified. The angel said, "Don't be afraid. I'm here to announce a great and joyful event that is meant for everybody, worldwide: A Savior has just been born in David's town, a Savior who is Messiah and Master. This is what you're to look for: a baby wrapped in a blanket and lying in a manger."

¹³⁻¹⁴ At once the angel was joined by a huge angelic choir singing God's praises:

Glory to God in the heavenly heights,
Peace to all men and women on earth who please him.

¹⁵⁻¹⁸ As the angel choir withdrew into heaven, the shepherds talked it over. "Let's get over to Bethlehem as fast as we can and see for ourselves what God has revealed to us." They left, running, and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. Seeing was believing. They told everyone they met what the angels had said about this child. All who heard the shepherds were impressed.

¹⁹⁻²⁰ Mary kept all these things to herself, holding them dear, deep within herself. The shepherds returned and let loose, glorifying and praising God for everything they had heard and seen. It turned out exactly the way they'd been told!

Isaiah 9:2-7, New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

^[a]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.

³You have multiplied exultation;^[b]
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.

⁴For the yoke of their burden
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors
and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

⁶For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders,
and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷Great will be his authority,^[c]
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

