



*We are a community of believers who seek
to grow in our faith and understanding as
we live the Way of Jesus Christ.*

The First Baptist Church

A Welcoming and Affirming Church

Worcester, Massachusetts

December 24, 2009

7:30 PM



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*Please turn pagers and cell phones to silent mode.
Nursery care is available for children during the worship service.
Please speak to one of the ushers for assistance.*

PRELUDE *In the Bleak Midwinter* Mark Lochstamphor
Pastorale on Silent NightWilbur Held
b. 1914
The Holy BoyJohn Ireland
1879-1962
Coventry CarolWilliam Lloyd Webber
1914-1982

***PROCESSIONAL CAROL 182** *O Come, All Ye Faithful* Adeste Fideles

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Leader: Like pilgrim shepherds we have come together tonight to celebrate the birth of something wondrous.

People: **The Savior comes to us as a babe, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.**

Leader: After counting the weeks of Advent, we have come to Christmas Eve.

People: **The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.**

Leader: The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

People: **And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory full of grace and truth!**

***INVOCATION (Unison)**

Eternal God, you have declared your love to humanity by the birth of the Holy Child in Bethlehem. Help us to welcome him with gladness and to make room for him in our common days; so that we may live at peace with one another and in good will with all your family. Give us Christ's peace as we worship in his name. AMEN

Choir Response:

*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!*

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

What child is this? What love is this that seeks to share our burdens and lead us on in kindness toward a better way of living?

O God, let our spirits soar into the realm where angels sing, 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 was accomplished in this child, that we may see the world as you see it, Lord, moving toward a healing so great that we are almost afraid to hope in it.

This Christmas Eve, let our spirits so entwine that we form a wreath of joy, a circle of light from which God's precious and holy love will shine out into the darkness of this world and into our own hearts.

We light this Christ Candle to celebrate the light that God has sent into the world, a light that will never be extinguished!

CAROL 215 Were You There on that Christmas Night.....Juxtaposition

THE READING OF THE CHRISTMAS STORY: Luke 2:1-14 (pg. 832)

ANTHEM *I Am So Glad Each Christmas Eve*Michael Burkhardt
b. 1957

MEDITATION *Investing in Christmas*Thomas R. McKibbens

***CAROL 198** Good Christian Friends, Rejoice..... In Dulci Jubilo

CHRISTMAS PRAYERS

THE OFFERING OF OUR GIFTS

Offertory Anthem *Coventry Carol* Martin Shaw
1875-1958

***Doxology** Dix

*As they offered gifts most rare at that manger rude and bare,
so may we with holy joy, pure and free from sin's alloy,
all our costliest treasures bring, Christ to you, our heavenly King.*

***Prayer of Dedication**

(Continued on next page)

***SHARING THE LIGHT OF CHRISTMAS**

*The congregation is invited to form a circle around the Sanctuary
and share the light of the Christ Candle until all candles are lit.*

SOLO *O Holy Night*Adophe Adam
1803-1856

***CAROL 186** *Silent Night! Holy Night!* Stille Nacht

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 the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

***BENEDICTION**

***CAROL 179** *Joy to the World!* Antioch

Joy to the world! The Lord is come; let earth receive her King;
let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! The Savior reigns; let all their songs employ;
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy.

He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness, and wonders of his love.

POSTLUDE *What Child is This?*Peter Pindar Stearns
b. 1931

**Those who are able may stand.*

Yumi Brusco, soprano
Chancel Choir
William Ness, Minister of Music & Arts