

Port Williams United Baptist Church

Christmas Eve Family Service Christmas ABC's

Sunday, December 24, 2017
4:00 p.m.

We extend a warm welcome to all who have gathered in worship tonight. As a church we wish you the joy of this holy season, and the blessings of God throughout the coming year!

Welcome

Rev. Barbara Bishop

Prelude

(All music by PWUBC children)

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Reader One: Jesus, you came to be light in our darkness.

Reader Two: Jesus, you came to be peace in our conflicts.

Reader One: Jesus, you came to be joy in our sadness,
And to bring your love in the midst of our fears.

Reader Two: Today we celebrate your birth.

(Please pause as we light the candles, then respond.)

All: Loving God, come and shine your light in the world!

A Candle is Burning

(vs 5) 6

We honour Messiah with Christ candle's flame,

Our Christmas Eve candles glad tidings proclaim.

O Come, all you faithful, rejoice in this night,

As God comes among us, the Christian's true light.

(Pay close attention . You never know what might happen on Christmas Eve!)

Hint:

Shepherds: “Let’s go see!”

Wise Ones: “Look, a star!”

Angel: “Hallelujah!”

A is for ANGEL. The ANGEL Gabriel began the story by telling Mary and amazing thing.

Scripture: Luke 1:28-33

(We thank Don and Anita Flowers for reading the Christmas story as found in our Holy Scriptures this evening. It is a meaningful moment for us all.)

B is for Bethlehem, where our story takes place. People traveled from far and wide to get to Bethlehem, which was not a very big village.

C is for Census, which means an official counting of all the people. The reason so many people came to Bethlehem.

D is for Donkey. A donkey carried the family on their long journey. Mary and Joseph had to travel 107 miles along the Jordan River to get from Nazareth to Bethlehem. That’s a pretty long journey.

E is for Exhausted. That’s how everyone must have felt when they arrived. It would take about 36 hours of walking to go that far. That’s three days in a row of doing nothing but walking.

Song: O Little Town of Bethlehem

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by,
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light,
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

F is for Family. Mary and Joseph and their new baby Jesus created a new family, one that would bless the whole world.

Scripture: Luke 2:6-8

Moment for Music

G is for the Good News about to be shared with all the earth. This is what the ANGELS said:

Scripture: Luke 2:10-14

I is for Imagine. If we close our eyes and imagine the scene, we can see the beauty and wonder of the ANGELS proclaiming good news to all men and women. We can see the SHEPHERDS, first terrified, but then overcome with joy as they hear the good news. If we try even harder, we can imagine a world where God's peace reigns, where there is no war or hunger. And if we can imagine it, we can do it with God's help.

J is for Joy. Joy is a kind of happiness that comes from God. It cannot be dampened, and is always shared. The birth of Jesus gives us joy.

Song: Joy to the World

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

K is for King. Though Jesus would be King, he was not the kind of King people were used to. Most kings are born in palaces, surrounded by servants. He was born in a stable, surrounded by dirty, smelly SHEPHERDS. Most kings rule with power and fear. Jesus rules with mercy and love.

L is for Lost. When Jesus grew up he told a lot of stories, and three of them were about lost things that were found. He loved to find lost things, and when you are with Jesus, you will never be lost. He is the good SHEPHERD, who do anything to find his lost sheep.

M is for Manger. A manger is usually used to hold food for animals, but this time it held the baby because he had no crib.

Song: Away in the Manger

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little lord Jesus lays down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay
Close by me forever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,
And fit us for heaven to live with you there.

Moment for Music

N is for Noel. Noel is another word for Christmas. It means new birth, and that's what happened in our story. That's what happens every year at Christmas time. That's what happens every time we decide to follow Jesus – he is born anew in us.

O is for Offering. The WISE ONES gave gifts to the baby, and we can offer our gifts every day. We give our time, our talents, and our treasure to God, and pray that as a Church, we are good stewards of all that is entrusted to us. So we share our gifts now.

***Offertory** “In the Bleak Midwinter”

(vs 4) 55

What shall I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.
If I were a wise man, I would do my part,
Yet what can I give him--- give my heart. Amen.

P is for Peace. Now we light the Advent candle of peace. Jesus is the Prince of Peace, and is the source of the kind of peace that surpasses all understanding.

Q is for Quiet. We begin a time of prayer in quiet, allowing God to speak to us, and joyful when the quiet is broken by small voices.

R is for Revealed. Revealed means “showing us something that was once hidden.” God revealed to us what love looks like by giving us Jesus. Jesus is love, and reveals to us the way to love one another.

S is for Star. One special star guided WISE ONES to come to see the baby. They were mysterious, and they lived far away, but they brought gifts to Jesus because they knew that he would grow up to be a King.

Scripture: Matthew 2:9-11

T is for Travel. As Joseph and Mary travelled far, we too have journeyed through the season of advent to come to the manger tonight, and to gaze in wonder at the baby Jesus.

U is for Unity. At Christmas we pray for Peace on Earth for all.

V is for Vulnerable. Vulnerable means, “able to be hurt.” Every baby is very vulnerable, and so are we when we love one another. God became vulnerable when Jesus was born, and we are called to be vulnerable when we love our brothers and sisters.

W is for Wonder. Like the WISE ONES, we stand in awe and wonder of the newborn King.

X is for Christ. X is the Greek letter Chi, the first letter in the word “Christ.” The X is one of the most ancient symbols of Christianity. People have been using the letter X to stand for Christ for centuries. When we light the Christ candle, we are symbolizing the coming of light into the world. Jesus is born.

Y is for You. You ANGELS. You WISE ONES. You SHEPHERDS. You sons and daughters. You mothers and fathers. You friends and strangers. You are all here to worship and celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Z is for Zeal. Let your zeal for Christ burn brightly. As these lights are passed out, know that the light of God burns much, much brighter. Though these lights will die out, the light of God is steadfast, and endures forever.

(Please light your luminaries)

Song: Silent Night

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 Hallelujah.
Christ the saviour is born, Christ the saviour 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.

The benediction will be your greetings to one another.

The Christ Candle is lit tonight by Robert and Barbara Bishop. They wish to thank the congregation of Port Williams United Baptist Church for their loving care these past months. Be assured of their love and prayers always.