



When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy.

- Matthew 2: 9-10



The Setauket Presbyterian Church
CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

December 24, 2022

7:30PM

❖ *please rise in body or in spirit; unison prayers are in bold.*

GATHERING MUSIC *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*

RINGING OF THE STEEPLE BELL

WELCOME

INTROIT

Festive Trumpet Tune

The Light Enters

Richard Wiederman, Trumpet

CALL TO WORSHIP Isaiah 9:2-7

❖ **HYMN no. 133** *O Come, All Ye Faithful* (verses 1 & 3)

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

SUNG RESPONSE

“Bereite dich, Zion mit zärtlichen Trieben”

*J.S. Bach from *The Christmas Oratorio**

Nicole Karrs, alto

*Make yourself ready, Zion, with tender desires
to see with you soon him who is most beautiful, most dear!
Your cheeks must today be far more beautifully resplendent,
hasten, to love your bridegroom with the greatest longing!*

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER FOR RECONCILIATION

Holy God,

We admit—we don't fully understand the Christmas story.

We are not familiar with angel choruses.

We have not walked many miles to be counted in a census,

and we don't always hear your voice in our dreams.

We don't fully understand this story, so we admit, sometimes we hesitate to tell it. Instead of running out into the streets to shout that there is a love bigger than we could imagine,

we whisper this good news.

Instead of throwing open the doors and inviting people in, **we simply leave them unlocked, hoping folks will figure it out.**

Instead of telling the next generation why this night matters so much,

we stay quiet, afraid of creating pressure.

Forgive us for our silence.

Forgive us for our hesitation.

Forgive us for the moments when we fail to share your good news.

Plant this story of love so deep in our bones that we cannot help but share it from generation to generation. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S GRACE

Friends, repeat after me:

No matter where we go,

No matter where we go,

No matter what we say,

No matter what we say,

No matter what we do,

No matter what we do,

We belong to God.

We belong to God.

We are held.

We are held.

We are loved.

We are loved.

We are forgiven.

We are forgiven.

Amen!

SUNG RESPONSE

“Grosser Herr und starker König”

J.S. Bach from *The Christmas Oratorio*

Liam Butchart, bass

*Great Lord, o powerful King,
dearest Savior, o how little
you care about the glories of the earth!*

*He who sustains the entire world,
who created its magnificence and beauty,
must sleep in a harsh manger.*

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

O Holy God, we need this story—this Christmas story. We need this story of ordinary people who were brave. We need this story of love that changed the world. We need this story of angel choruses that give reason to hope, and starlight that reminds us to look up. In a battered and bruised world, we gather around your Word like people gather around a fire to warm themselves. So we are here, gathered together to warm ourselves by your light, because we need this story. We need the truth that lies deep in these holy words. So today we pray: scoop out space in us to truly listen. Quiet our minds. Open our hearts. Kindle the fire. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING Luke 2:1-7

HYMN no.145 (**seated**) *What Child Is This?* (verse 1)

ANTHEM “Ach mein herzliebes Jesulein”
J.S. Bach from *The Christmas Oratorio*
SPC Choir

*Ah! Dearest Jesus, Holy Child,
Make Thee a bed, soft, undefil'd,
Within my heart, and there recline,
And keep that chamber ever Thine.*

SCRIPTURE READING Luke 2:8-14

FESTIVAL OF LIGHT

Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world; those who follow me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

The Christ candle represents Jesus, the Light of the world. The candle lighting ceremony is symbolic of the spreading of the Gospel Light from one life to another. The lighted candle is never tilted, but held upright when giving light to another. Please extinguish your candles after the last stanza of Silent Night by placing an empty communion cup over the wick and smothering the flame.

❖ HYMN no.122 *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 "Alleluia:
Christ the Savior is born; Christ the Savior is born!"**

**Silent night, holy night! Wondrous start, lend thy light;
with the angels let us sing Alleluia to our King;
Christ the Savior is born; Christ the Savior is born.**

❖ CHRISTMAS PRAYER (unison)

Living God, on this holy night we stand with shepherds,

amazed at your glory;
we sing with angels, rejoicing in your work;
we wait with Joseph, trusting in your promise;
we sit with Mary, cradling your love.
May the good news of this night inspire us
to tell the world of our great joy:
for unto us is born a Savior,
the Messiah, the Lord.
Glory and Praise to you forever! Amen.

❖ **HYMN no.134** *Joy to the World!* (verses 1 & 4)

❖ **BENEDICTION**

As you leave this place, may you go knowing that
from generation to generation,
we have been claimed and loved.

From generation to generation,
God has been by our side.

From generation to generation,
we are not alone.

The God of yesterday and the God of tomorrow
knows you by name, loves you, and calls you forth,
saying, "Go be the person you are called to be,
love wildly, do justice, and come back soon."

May it be so. Amen.

❖ **CHORAL RESPONSE** "Hallelujah Chorus" from *Messiah*
G.F. Händel

*Hallelujah: for the Lord God Omnipotent reign-eth
The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord,
And of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever.
King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.*

We invite everyone to join us in singing this jubilant song of praise!

POSTLUDE

What Child is This?

*Please extinguish your candle and put it the receptacles provided
as you leave.*

Thank you to our Worship Assistant for their service this evening.
Thanks to Christina Montalto and family for lighting our Advent
wreath!

**We would like to thank Gergana Haralampieva and Heejeon
Ahn, violins; Sohui Yun viola; Nathan Cottrell, cello; and Richard
Wiederman, trumpet for their musical services this evening.
Thank you to the SPC Choir as well.**

Cover artwork is from *A Sanctified Art*, www.sanctifiedart.org, “The Golden
Pilgrimage” by Carmelle Beaugelin.

You will always be welcome here. This is God’s house and a happy church home.

Let us be your church family, for we are all beloved children of God.

*Join us regularly for Christian worship, nurture, and the doing of God’s work in the world—
and all shall be well; all manner of thing shall be well.*

THE STAFF

Rev. Dr. Johanna McCune Wagner, Senior Pastor

Rev. Ashley McFaul-Erwin, Community Outreach Pastor

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Setauket Presbyterian Church is a member congregation the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and thereby of the Presbytery of Long Island.



*From all of us at SPC we
wish you a Merry Christmas*