



*New Castle Presbyterian Church ~ Built 1707 ~ New Castle, Delaware*

## ***New Castle Presbyterian Church Longest Night Service***

**December 20, 2023 at 7:00pm**

### ***Our Mission***

New Castle Presbyterian Church offers a nurturing and supportive church community where all are welcomed to join in prayer and song, study and service as all are called to demonstrate understanding, compassion, and acceptance.

By God's Spoken Word and Holy Spirit, we seek to live out the Gospel of the Risen Christ, as we grow spiritually, in strength, and with inclusiveness. We worship God in simplicity and with clarity; we study God's Word to direct our lives; and we nurture the young and the searchers in our midst.

As a congregation and in cooperation with others, we engage in service and outreach with the local community and the world. We work to feed, clothe, and shelter our brothers and sisters while sharing the selfless and forgiving love of Jesus Christ.

As we have been blessed, we seek to use all that we have to bless others with this good news of grace and joy.

## GATHER IN GOD'S NAME

**Prelude**            Jesus, Jesus Rest Your Head    arr. by Michael Larkin

### **Call to Worship**

Tonight, we come looking for the Christ Child.

**We come, bringing our hurts, our worries, our fears.**

We hear God's voice through the prophet Isaiah: "Comfort, comfort, now my people.

**God comforts all who sit in darkness, mourning under sorrow's load.**

Let us lift up our heavy hearts to our Savior,

**For the Christ Child brings God's promise of peace.**

**Hymn #92**            **While We Are Waiting, Come**

### **Lighting the Advent Candles**

*We light the candles in silence.*

### **Prayer for Light**

**O merciful God, we praise you for your generous faithfulness for all creation. You are the God of hope, peace, joy, and love. On the days when we feel far from your promises, be patient with us. Gather us into your light of salvation this night; be a comforting darkness in which we can rest and lay down our burdens. Amen.**

## PROCLAIM GOD'S WORD

### **Prayer for Illumination**

God of mercy, hear our prayers in this Advent season for ourselves and for our loved ones who live with the isolation of illness, the pain of separation, and the crushing weight of grief. We ask for strength for today, peace for the past, and courage for tomorrow. Speak your truth to us this night, that we may welcome your child, Emmanuel, God-with-us, who shares in our joy and sorrow, death and new birth, despair and promise. Amen.

### **Hearing the Word**

Old Testament Lesson      Psalm 121:1-8

New Testament Lesson      John 1:1-14

### **Time of Silence**

### **Intercession for Healing & The Lighting of the Candles**

The God of strength moves within us;

**The God of courage hears our distress.**

The God of hope reveals wholeness to us;

**The God of healing touches us when we are broken.**

When the pain overwhelms us, when the burden is too heavy,

**We turn to our God, who is sustaining and redeeming.**

When there is loneliness, when there is isolation,

**We turn to our God, who is loving and present.**

For God created us, redeemed us and sustains us,

**And we are not alone. Lead us in your ways, O God, and bring us your healing touch.**

*(You are invited to light a candle for yourself or loved ones.)*

## **The Lord's Prayer**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in  
heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our  
debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into  
temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom  
and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.**

## **GO IN GOD'S NAME**

**Hymn #109            Blest Be the God of Israel**

## **Benediction**

May God keep your going out and your coming in,  
**May God go before you, to show you the way,**  
May God shine above you to lighten your world,  
**May God be your help all along your journey.**  
**Come, Lord Jesus, come. Amen.**

*You are welcome to remain in peaceful contemplation  
and invited to leave in quiet when ready.*

Worship Leadership: Rev. Miriam Foltz and Eileen Larkin