



At the *, please stand, if you are able.
Large Print Hymnals, Bibles, and Hearing Assist Devices are available upon request.

Gather for Worship

PRELUDE

"O Holy Night"

A. Adams

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tamy_K2jmW0

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE BELLS

CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP

"Prepare the Way"

Choir

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQpLH9BGC8I>

RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Out of Bethlehem comes one who is to rule in Israel.

People: He shall be great to the ends of the earth.

Leader: Our spirit rejoices in God our Savior.

People: Gods mercy extends from generation to generation. Holy is God's Name!

LIGHTING THE FORTH ADVENT CANDLE

Worship Leader: Watch and wait for Christ's coming! Light candles of hope, peace, joy, and love, remembering the promises of God with prayer.

We light this candle in hope. (Light the first candle).

We light this candle for peace. (Light the second candle).

We light this candle in joy! (Light the third (pink, if used) candle).

We light this candle in love! (Light the fourth candle).

To those who live as exiles from home in a dark time, to those enslaved as exiles due to others' oppression, to those who are sin's exiles from their best God-promised selves, the Lord speaks the joy of good news.

A Reading from Isaiah

Connie and Dave

Out of love for the people of God, the Lord speaks through the prophet Isaiah, as found in the seventh chapter, verses 10-14:

The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test. Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.

Let us pray:

Connie and Dave

God of hope, Prince of peace, Jubilee Judge, and Lord of love, your goodness is beyond our wildest imaginings. You give us more than we can think to ask, coming to us with impossible possibility in the union of flesh and spirit. Teach us to love this world and all people as you love us in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

God of promise, God of hope, into our darkness come. Amen

*** ADVENT CAROL**

"Light the Advent Candle"

Light the Advent Candle four: Think of joy for ever more'
Christ Child in a stable born, gift of love that Christmas morn'
Candle, candle burning bright, shining in the cold winter night;
Candle, candle burning bright, fill our hearts with Christmas light.

OPENING PRAYER

Stir up your power, O God, and come to set us free by the righteousness of your birth in our midst, by the light of your face shining upon us, and by becoming our brother, our friend, our salvation. We pray this in the name of the Holy Trinity; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, on God, father of us all. **Amen.**

*** OPENING HYMN**

"O Come, All Ye Faithful"

Blue Hymnal #41

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AT8sr69bVKo>

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Now in humility and trust, we pray for the forgiveness of our sins:

God our Savior, we ask for your mercy. Though we have heard Mary's song, we still seek security in pride and power and possessions. Though we know your story, we resist the costs of following you. We pass by those considered lowly in this world. We turn away from hungry people who still wait to be filled. Forgive us, we pray. Hel[p us to work for the justice you intend. Make us messengers of the peace you bring. As we wait for you, turn our apathy into acts of love and service. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Emmanuel. Amen

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Friends, God is for us and not against us. For that very reason, God sent the Son into the world-not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. Believe the good news: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

*** GLORIA PATRI**

Blue Hymnal #579

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QUBxpypSblw>

*** SHARE THE PEACE OF CHRIST (From your seats, please)**

Leader: Peace be with you!

All: And also with you!

Leader: As God's forgiven people, share the peace of Christ with each other.

Hear the word of God

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

O mighty one, who scatters the proud and fills the hungry, by your Holy Spirit let your word leap in us and bring to our yearning the joy that comes with new beginnings and renewed lives.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Micah 5:2-5a

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Micah+5%3A2-5a&version=NIV>

SECOND READING

Psalm 80:1-7

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+80%3A1-7&version=NIV>

CHORAL ANTHEM

"People, Look East"

Choir

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wcqPz6rH0vI>

NEW TESTAMENT READING

Hebrews 10:5-10

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+10%3A5-10&version=NIV>

GOSPEL READING

Luke 1:39-55

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+1%3A39-55&version=NIV>

SERMON

"The Christmas Story"

Larry Sears

Sermon: **The Christmas Story**

It seems we are in a strange time in the history of God's creation. The Old Testament is full of prophecies about a coming Messiah. A man of sorrows. A suffering Messiah. Then there are prophecies about a King returning to bring judgment on the earth and righteousness to His people. We are an in-between people. The Jews are still looking for the Messiah to come, while Christians believe He came to save us, and will come again.

At this time of year, we tend to focus on the birth of Jesus Christ. An event that happened so long ago that no one knows what Jesus looked like, or what it was like to sit under His teaching. In March or April, we look at His sacrifice that brings us to a saving grace.

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans^[a] of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."

Have you ever wondered, "Why Bethlehem?"

Let's look at the Christmas story. Not "A Christmas Story". We aren't talking BB guns and presents here.

The story is a simple one. Over 3,000 years ago a man, his wife and 2 sons left Bethlehem (the name suggests "house of food"). They left because of a famine in the land. Elimelech, Naomi, and their 2 sons, Mahlon, and Kilion went to Moab.

Jewish tradition states that the husband Elimelech was likened to a tycoon who lived in a certain providence. The people of that providence looked up to the magnate and they would say, "Should years of drought come, he could supply the entire province with food for 10 years." However, when a year of drought came, Elimelech ran away taking his family.

While in Moab, the husband passed away. (That was considered punishment for running away.) The two sons married Moabite women - Orpah and Ruth, descendants of Lot. Ten years later the sons passed away. Naomi, Orpah and Ruth were left destitute. Naomi decided to return to her family in Bethlehem and headed back that way. She encouraged her daughters-in-law to return to their families and their gods. Orpah accepted the release and went home, never to be heard of again. Ruth on the other hand, refused to leave her mother-in-law. She not only stayed with her, but she accepted the God of the Jews. In this simple act of love and compassion she accompanied Naomi to Bethlehem.

What Ruth did was sacrificial. She knew that Naomi did not have the protection of a husband to provide her security, but Ruth was willing to accept that kind of life to help her mother-in-law. In the Book of Ruth, we find that this simple act of love by a gentile, changes the course of history. Ruth becomes the wife of Boaz, a relative of Naomi. (The Book of Ruth gives a great view of the traditions in Israel.) Now it gets interesting because Ruth, a gentile, is the mother of Obed. She is the grandmother of Jesse, and the great grandmother of King David.

How is this part of the Christmas story?

In the scriptures the story of Ruth begins the Christmas story. It is in Bethlehem that king David is born, and the prophet Nathan gave him a promise from the Lord:

"The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you: ¹² When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with floggings inflicted by human hands. ¹⁵ But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. ¹⁶ Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me^[a]; your throne will be established forever." (2 Samuel 7)

Look at the prophecy in today's Old Testament reading.

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans^[a] of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times." This promise was over 650 years before Jesus would be born to Mary and Joseph. And - God had laid the groundwork for this prophecy over 1,000 years before Jesus' birth when He sent Naomi and Ruth back to Bethlehem.

As we celebrate the birthday of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, I wanted to show you that Jesus coming as the suffering servant was not a change of plans or a second thought of God's. In Revelation we find that the Lamb of God was slain from the foundations of the world. God knew before humankind was created that we would need someone to show us how to return to Him.

Ruth accepted the life that Naomi was living, a destitute life, a life with little or no hope. Because of Ruth's sacrifice, Naomi was blessed, and eventually held a grandson in her arms. Jesus accepted becoming human. He stepped down from His throne in the heavenly realm to become as one of us.. Because of His sacrifice we are forgiven and blessed. As the candles signify, in Christ we have peace, hope, joy and love. Amen

* **HYMN** "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming" **Blue Hymnal #48**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BEQuSsZzCqY>

Respond in Love and Service

* **AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

Leader: Let us declare our faith in God.

All: We believe that the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who out of nothing created heaven and earth and everything in them, who still upholds and rules them by his eternal counsel and providence, is our God and Father because of Christ his Son. We trust him so much that we do not doubt he will provide whatever we need for body and soul, and he will turn to our good whatever adversity he sends us in this sad world. He is able to do this because he is almighty God; he desires to do this because he is a faithful Father. Nothing will separate us from his love. Amen

PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

At this time of year, the abundance of some and the needs of so many stand in marked contrast. As we bring our tithes and offerings, may Christ's heart rejoice and the needs of others be tended.

* **DOXOLOGY** **Blue Hymnal #592**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uyg6-htOtHU>

* **PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

You deliver us, O God, from exile, separation, and despair into communion with each other, with you, and with your good news. We thank you for all that draws us close together, astounding us with lives transformed by gratitude. Accept our gifts as signs of our gratitude for what you give us every day and as honor to your presence in our world; for the sake of those who stand in need and Jesus Christ, who saves us. **Amen.**

* **HYMN FOR OUR NATION** "Heal Our Land" **Red Hymnal #800**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qTm_rA54EGw

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Heavenly Father, as once again we prepare for Christmas, help us to find time in our busy lives for quiet and thought and prayer, that we may reflect upon the wonder of your love and allow the story of the Savior's birth to penetrate our hearts and minds. So may our joy be deeper, our worship more real, and our lives worthier of all that you have done for us through the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

God Who restores, You have done great things for us and we rejoice! So often You have filled us with laughter, even turning tears of sadness into shouts of joy. You send prophets, who point the way to justice and show the way to You. We thank you for sending good news to us and repairing so much that we have devastated.

In this season of light, we lift up in prayer so many who wait in darkness: people oppressed by poverty and discrimination, by political upheaval or dangerous rulers; people imprisoned wrongly and also those imprisoned justly.

Right what is wrong among us and in us and restore us to You, to others, to ourselves. Make the brokenhearted whole again; comfort those who mourn; repair our ruined cities. In all the jostling and jingling of these days, do not let us lose sight of You or those whom You especially came to serve: people who are in need of healing, people who are overlooked our underserved, the ones who are lost, and the ones we have made to feel little and least.

Light of the world, live among us always, full of grace and truth. Amen

Join me now as we together pray the prayer Jesus taught his disciples:

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 those 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 and ever. Amen.

*** CLOSING HYMN**

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"

Blue Hymnal #44

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VA0EzQQZVnk>

*** BENEDICTION**

Go in peace, trusting in the promises of God.

May the God of justice be your path, the Lord of mercy be your guide,

And the spirit of love be your light, this day and forevermore. **Amen.**

The End of Today's Worship Service – The Beginning of Service Announcements

Welcome to worship with us this morning! We're glad that you're here! If you do not have a church home, we invite you to become a part of our compassionate church family... ask Carlos, Larry or an Elder about meaningful participation and membership!

Next Sunday Dr. Carlos Baladez will lead the service.

Weekly Calendar

TBD	TBD	Food Pantry
TBD	TBD	Clothes Closet
Sunday	10:00 AM	Sunday School
Sunday	11:00 Am	Worship Service

Holy Communion is observed the First Sunday of each month.

Crestholme Presbyterian Church Officers

Session

<u>Class of 2021</u>	<u>Class of 2022</u>	<u>Class of 2023</u>
Cathie Owen	Irene Thomas	Katie Lamb
Netsy Williamson	Steve Tovar	
Clerk of the Session: Dick Crist		
Church Treasurer: Fred Archer		

Trustees

<u>Class of 2021</u>	<u>Class of 2022</u>	<u>Class of 2023</u>
Penny Christoff	Fred Archer	Tommy Rudwick

Crestholme Presbyterian Church Staff

Stated Supply Minister	Vacant
Pulpit Supply Preachers	Dr. Carlos Baladez CP, Larry Sears Elder, Fred Archer
Choir Director	Robin Bernhard
Organist	Cathie Owen
Secretary/Coordinator	Vacant

Membership in the Presbyterian Church is open to those who believe in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Every member and officer will be more than happy to visit with you about salvation by faith in Jesus and membership at Crestholme.

Telephone: 210-333-1301 FAX: 210-333-1301
Email: crestholmepc@satx.rr.com Web Site: www.crestholmepc.com
Email: foodpantry@crestholmepc.org