



CHRIST  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH  
MILFORD

December 12, 2021  
3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent

## REFLECTION

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### Celebrating Our Messiah Jesus: The Bright Morning Star

Blessed be our Lord Jesus Christ  
who came among us as a man,  
A Light from heaven itself:  
The promised Star, rising out of Jacob,  
To give us hope in the encircling darkness.

The Holy and Awesome One,  
The everlasting Ancient of Days,  
The Unfathomable One who cannot be seen  
In the splendid, unapproachable light he dwells in,  
In the thick darkness that surrounds him,  
Has been revealed to us—in a baby.

Sing his praise, the long-awaited Messiah,  
For he shows the Infinite God to be tenderness and love.  
Adore him, in joy, the Morning Star of the world!  
For the night of our lostness will soon be over.

.....

### THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Advent + Christmas + Epiphany + Lent + Easter + Pentecost

#### Gathering Hymn

Angels from the Realms of Glory

— God + calls + cleanses + speaks + strengthens + sends —

#### Call to Worship

Isaiah 40:3-5:

A voice cries:

**“In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.**

Every valley shall be lifted up,

**and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.** And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, **and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”**

1. An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
 2. Shep - herds in the fields a - bid - ing, watch - ing o'er your flocks by night,  
 3. Sa - ges, leave your con - tem - pla - tions, bright - er vi - sions beam a - far;  
 4. Saints be - fore the al - tar bend - ing, watch - ing long in hope and fear,  
 5. All cre - a - tion, join in prais - ing God the Fa - ther, Spir - it, Son;

ye who sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry, now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:  
 God with man is now re - sid - ing, yon - der shines the in - fant Light:  
 • seek the great De - sire of na - tions; ye have seen his na - tal star:  
 sud - den - ly the Lord, de - scend - ing, in his tem - ple shall ap - pear:  
 ev - er - more your voic - es rais - ing to th'e - ter - nal Three in One:

**REFRAIN**

Come and wor - ship, come and wor - ship, wor - ship Christ, the new - born King.

**Invocation**

**Old Testament Lesson** Numbers 24:15-19

**Praise Hymn** Brightest and Best of the Sons of the Morning

1. Bright - est and best of the sons of the morn - ing, dawn on our  
 2. Cold on his cra - dle the dew - drops are shin - ing; low lies his  
 3. Say, shall we yield him, in cost - ly de - vo - tion, o - dors of  
 4. Vain - ly we of - fer each am - ple ob - la - tion, vain - ly with  
 5. Bright - est and best of the sons of the morn - ing, dawn on our

dark - ness and lend us your aid; Star of the East, the ho - ri -  
 head with the beasts of the stall; an - gels a - dore him in slum -  
 • E - dom and of - f'rings di - vine, gems of the moun - tain and pearls  
 gifts would his fa - vor se - cure; rich - er by far is the heart's  
 dark - ness and lend us your aid; Star of the East, the ho - ri -

zon a - dorn - ing, guide where our in - fant Re - deem - er is laid.  
 ber re - clin - ing, Mak - er and Mon - arch and Lord o - ver all.  
 • of the o - cean, myrrh from the for - est or gold from the mine?  
 ad - o - ra - tion; dear - er to God are the prayers of the poor.  
 zon a - dorn - ing, guide where our in - fant Re - deem - er is laid.

Epistle Lesson

Revelation 22:12–13, 16–17, 20

## **Confession of Sin**

O exalted and mighty Father, we have not loved your glory.  
Quietly and humbly we come, remembering that you oppose the proud,  
and tear down those who exalt themselves.

We are guilty of conceit, of vanity, and of boasting,  
of putting on airs of superiority, and adopting tones of condescension.  
Our hearts have been stony, and proud.  
And we have loved neither you nor others  
with the innocence of children  
We are quick to criticize and find fault,  
but defensive and testy when criticized ourselves.  
We have been smug or stingy with our possessions,  
or protective of our status, or too hungry for praise.

Help us, for the burden of love you ask us to carry  
is breaking our proud back, for only humility is strong enough to carry it.  
Bend us, O Lord, under your mighty hand.  
Bow our hearts, that we might know ourselves as we are,  
and not as we imagine ourselves to be.

All this we confess, in the name of our humble Savior, Even Jesus Christ. Amen.

## **Individual Confession**

**Absolution**                      I John 1:5–9

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

**Thanksgiving Hymn**              While by the Sheep We Watched at Night

1. While by the sheep we watched at night, glad tid - ings brought an  
 2. There shall be born, so he did say, in Beth - le - hem a  
 3. There shall the child lie in a stall, this child who shall re -  
 4. This gift of God we'll cher - ish well, that ev - er joy our

*f* REFRAIN *p* echo  
 an - gel bright.  
 child to - day. How great our joy! Great our joy!  
 deem us all.  
 hearts shall fill.

*f* *p* echo *f*  
 Joy, joy, joy! Joy, joy, joy! Praise we the Lord in

*p* echo  
 heav'n on high! Praise we the Lord in heav'n on high!

## Gospel Lesson

Luke 1:26–38

### Peace of Christ

The peace of the Lord be with you! **And also with you!**

### Sanctus

Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord, God of Hosts!  
Heaven and earth are full of Your glory!  
Hosanna in the Highest!  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the Highest.

— God + calls + cleanses + speaks + strengthens + sends —

### Sermon Text

Jeremiah 33:14-22

This is the Word of the Lord!

**Thanks be to God!**

### Sermon

The Messiah in Jeremiah | Pastor Curran Bishop

### Response Hymn

Labor of Love

It was not a silent night  
There was blood on the ground  
You could hear a woman cry  
In the alleyway that night  
On the streets of David's town

And the stable was not clean  
And the cobblestones were cold  
And little Mary full of grace  
With the tears upon her face  
Had no mother's hand to hold

### Chorus

It was a labor of pain, it was a cold sky above  
But for the girl on the ground in the dark  
With every beat of her beautiful heart  
It was a labor of love

Noble Joseph by her side  
Callused hands and weary eyes  
There were no midwives to be found  
On the streets of David's town  
In the middle of the night

So he held her and he prayed  
Shafts of moonlight on his face  
But the baby in her womb  
He was the Maker of the moon  
He was the Author of the faith  
That could make the mountains move

## Chorus

— God + calls + cleanses + speaks + strengthens + sends —

## Bringing Our Life to God

Prayers | Collection | Profession

## Prayers of the People

### Collection

Text **MNA 1708** to **76959** and follow the prompts or visit  
[give.pcamna.org/to/1708/](http://give.pcamna.org/to/1708/)

## O Savior Rend the Heavens Wide

O Savior, rend the heavens wide;  
Come down, come down with mighty stride.  
Unbar the gates, the doors break down;  
Unbar the way to heaven's crown.

## Confession of Faith

The Nicene Creed (AD 325)

We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, begotten from the Father before all ages, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made; of the same essence as the Father. Through him all things were made. For us

and for our salvation he came down from heaven; he became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and was made man. He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried. The third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures. He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead. His kingdom will never end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life. He proceeds from the Father and the Son, and with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified. He spoke through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic\* and apostolic church. We affirm one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look forward to the resurrection of the dead, and to life in the world to come. Amen.

\*the universal Christian Church in all times and places

## **Communion in Christ Jesus**

*All Christians are invited to receive Christ's presence of bread and wine. When directed please take your bulletin, stand and form a circle around the worship space. Whether you intend to take communion or not, please join us in the circle. If you are not able to stand, please move your chair into the circle. We serve wine in the outer rings of the tray in the Lord's Supper, believing it to be the Biblical element used. We provide grape juice in the inner rings for those who, out of conscience or for health, do not drink wine.*

**Communion Hymn**            In the Bleak Midwinter (Verses 1-2)

## **Prayer for those searching**

*Oh God, I am discovering that the more I have, the more I need to have, the more I am loved, the more I need to be loved, the more I achieve, the more I need to achieve. Nothing seems to satisfy me. Could it be, as someone once said, that "Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee." Dear God, if this is true, and if as the Bible teaches there is life and life eternal in Christ alone, please guide me to Him. Open me to the reality of the One who alone can satisfy my restless heart. Give me the courage to believe that which I cannot see but can understand, feel and touch through the Word, sacraments and church family. Lord I want to believe, help my unbelief! Amen.*

— God + calls + cleanses + speaks + strengthens + sends —

**Coronation Hymn**            In the Bleak Midwinter (Verses 3-4)

1 In the bleak mid-winter, frost-y wind made moan;  
 2 Our God, heaven can-not hold him, nor earth sus-tain;  
 3 An-gels and arch-an-gels may have gath-ered there;  
 4 What can I give him, poor as I am?

earth stood hard as i-ron, wa-ter like a stone;  
 heaven and earth shall flee a-way when he comes to reign:  
 cher-u-bim and ser-a-phim thronged the air;  
 If I were a shep-herd, I would bring a lamb;

snow had fall-en, snow on snow, snow on snow,  
 in the bleak mid-winter a sta-ble place suf-ficed  
 but his moth-er on-ly, in her maid-en bliss,  
 if I were a wise man, I would do my part;

‡ in the bleak mid-winter, long a-go.  
 the Lord God in-car-nate, Je-sus Christ.  
 ‡ wor-shipped the be-lov-ed with a kiss.  
 yet what I can I give him: give my heart.

## **Benediction**            Numbers 6:24-26

The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

## REFLECTION

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*O Morning Star, splendor of light eternal and sun of righteousness:  
Come and enlighten those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.*

### **The Bright Morning Star**

We are celebrating our Lord Jesus Christ as the bright Morning Star, as Light—the spiritual light that fallen humanity needs in order to “see” rightly and comprehend what exists: God himself, ourselves, the world around us, the past, and especially the future. The Fall in Eden led to our being cast out of the light of God’s presence. Groping around in spiritual darkness, we were—and still are—inclined to distort and misinterpret everything. God kept coming to his people, shining on them for centuries the lesser light of laws and prophets and sages, knowing full well that when time was ripe, he would send his Son to us, the Great Light who alone could bring our race out of the night shadows into the clear morning light of Truth.

Today, we contemplate that the infinite, unspeakably lofty God is not knowable—except through the man Jesus, born in Palestine two millennia ago. Consider these words from the opening of John’s gospel: *No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known.* (John 1:18 )

As modern people we tend to think of God as our Buddy-Bud, the Great Pal in the sky whose job it is to keep us happy. But God—if he is God—is incomprehensible, infinite, terrifying in his holiness, past comprehending in the nature of his Being and in the magnitude of his exaltedness above us. Yet, he comes to us as a crying baby, a frail human being, and subjects himself to the ravages of hunger, of pain, of rejection, even of death. And in that condescension a light is shined on this hidden God, this towering Majesty who has the power to destroy us. It is disclosed—made open and visible—that his heart beats for us. And in the revealing of that love, the bright future of the world is also made known: the Coming Day when everything wrong will be righted, everything grieved will be healed and made new.

You cannot know God as he truly is unless you know his Son, the God-man, Jesus, born of Mary; and without him you cannot know the good future God has planned for the world. Jesus is the Sunshine that casts a revealing light upon your Creator whom you cannot see. Come to him, now, for light; come to him day after day; come in your pain, come in your doubt, come in your loneliness, come in all the high successes of your life; come in your failures, your selfishness, in your poor judgments and confusions; come to him in the numbing sameness of your daily routines. Come to him in repentance and humility, just as you are, and you by his light will see the Face of God.

—Ron Lutjens, *St. Louis pastor/church planter*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

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**Community Group** | We'll join Christ Pres Fairfield tonight, Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>, at 4pm for their Christmas concert, *Twas the Night* (3160 Park Ave. Bridgeport, CT).

**Men's Breakfast** | Wednesdays at 7am, Pop's Restaurant (134 Old Gate Ln.). A space for community, important questions, and understanding. Feel free to invite friends and neighbors.

**Thursday Night Prayer Meeting** | 7-7:50pm. Join us for a short prayer and scripture liturgy and to pray for each other. [Zoom link](#) | Meeting ID: 899 5618 6470 | Passcode: 355978

**Sunday Worship** | We'll be meeting at the Fowler Building (parking at I Shipyard Ln.) Dec. 19<sup>th</sup> at 11am and will be back at the MAC (40 Railroad Ave. S.) for the 26<sup>th</sup> at 10:30am.

**Men's & Women's Bible Studies** | Men's meets Dec. 18<sup>th</sup>, 9-10:30am. Women's meets in January. RSVP for either study to [info@cpcmilford.org](mailto:info@cpcmilford.org).

**Men's & Women's Monthly Fellowship** | Generally 3<sup>rd</sup> Fridays, rotating months. The men will meet next in January. RSVP to [info@cpcmilford.org](mailto:info@cpcmilford.org).

## ADVENT SCHEDULE

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<i>Twas the Night</i> with CPC Fairfield	12/12, 4pm
Caroling for Chamber of Commerce	12/15 5:45pm
Bishop's Christmas Party	12/18, 5pm
Community Group Caroling	12/19, 6pm
Christmas Eve Service	12/24, 6pm
Epiphany Celebration	1/6, 6pm

### Contact us

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