



# Almost There

A Christmas Eve Service of Worship  
Mountain Shadows Presbyterian Church  
December 24, 2018 5:00 p.m.

*All are warmly welcome at this service of worship.*

*Please silence your mobile phone before the service begins.*

*Please note your presence by signing the worship attendance pad in your row.*

*An asterisk\* in this bulletin signifies that worshipers may rise in body or spirit.*

*Hymns not printed in this bulletin are located in the purple hymnal, Glory to God.*

*During the closing hymn, worshipers will successively light candles down each row.*

*Light your candle by tipping its wick toward the flame of a burning candle.*

*Always hold a burning candle upright.*

*After the service, extinguish your candle and deposit it in the appropriate receptacle.*

*Please join us for festive refreshments under the church ramada.*

*Merry Christmas! Christ our Savior is born.*

**Musical Meditation**

Carolyn Ancell  
Harp

**Threefold Chime**

**Opening Prayer and Pastoral Words of Welcome**

Rev. Rachel Srubas

**Prelude**

*All is Calm*  
Carolyn Ancell

by Ann Crosby Gaudet

**Call to Worship and Candle Lighting (responsive) Worship Co-Leader: Ken McAllister**

The people who had been living in darkness have seen a great light.

**The light of life has shined on those who dwelt in the shadowy darkness of death.**

*Please pause in silence while the first candle is lit.*

God, will make it happen.

**There will be a new time, a fresh start.**

*Please pause in silence while the second candle is lit.*

Hope of all hopes, dream of our dreams,

a child is born, Spirit-breathed; a son is given to us: a living gift.

**And even now, with tiny features and dewy hair, He is great.**

**The power of leadership and the weight of authority will rest on His shoulders.**

*Please pause in silence while the third candle is lit.*

His name? His name we will know in many ways:

**He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,**

**Beloved Life-Giver, Bringer of Wholeness, Prince of Peace.**

*Please pause in silence while the fourth candle is lit.*

His leadership will bring sustainable peace for all time.

He will ensure justice without fail and absolute equity always.

**The passion of Eternal God will carry this to completion.**

*Please pause while the Christ candle is lit.*

**\*Hymn #133 O Come, All Ye Faithful, verses 1-3**

**Prayer (Unison)**

**Holy God, all-glorious giver of grace,**

**you are light, shining in darkness;**

**you are life, the life of all people.**

**Help us hear anew**

**your promises of hope and salvation and love**

**as we sing our familiar carols.**

**Forgive us for forgetting the wonder and power of this night,**

**for focusing on ourselves and what we need to do**

**instead of on the miracle of Jesus' birth. Fill us with the light and life of Christ,**

**through whom all things were made,**

**so that we may be Jesus' faithful disciples,**

**bearing witness to your grace and truth**

**through him, your Word made flesh. Amen.**

## The Announcement of Good News (responsive)

God's love knows no bounds.

Love comes down at Christmas—a love so deep that nothing will ever be the same again.  
This love is for us all—to touch us, to forgive us, to make us whole. Alleluia! Amen.

### \*Sung Response

Tune 136, Go Tell It

*Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;*

*Go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!*

While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,  
behold, throughout the heavens there shone a holy light.

*Refrain*

The shepherds feared and trembled when lo! above the earth  
rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth.

*Refrain*

Down in a lowly manger, the humble Christ was born,  
and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn.

*Refrain*

### \*The Passing of Christ's Peace (responsive)

This night no one is a stranger.

We are joined together as one family through the miracle of one child's birth.

We share our joy at being present when God is made present to us in Jesus.

May the peace of Christ be with you!

**And also with you.**

Let us turn and share the peace of Christ with one another.

### The Story of Jesus' Birth: a telling of Luke 2:1-20

#### \*Hymn #147

*The First Nowell*

### Pastoral Reflection: The Story of a Song

#### Choral Anthem

*Almost There*

The Mountain Shadows Choir, Charmaine Piane Dame, Director

Songwriters: Michael W. Smith / Amy Grant / Wes King

Almost There lyrics © The Loving Company

The lyrics appear on the next page of this worship bulletin.

Mary, full of innocence  
Carrying the Holy prince  
You're almost there, you're almost there  
Mother of the Living Word  
Trusting in the voice you heard  
You're almost there, you're almost there  
You're almost where the angels see  
Redemption's plan unfolding  
All hope is in the Son you'll bear  
You're almost there  
A lonely road, a willing heart  
Pray for strength to do your part  
You're almost there, you're almost there  
Trust the Father to provide  
Bread of heaven prophesied  
You're almost there, you're almost there

You're almost where the waiting ends  
Delivering the life within  
The answered prayer, Emmanuel  
You're almost there  
You're almost where the journey ends  
Where death will die and life begins  
The answered prayer, Emmanuel  
You're almost, almost there  
You're almost where the waiting ends  
Delivering the life within  
The answered prayer, Emmanuel  
You're almost there  
You're almost where the journey ends  
Where death will die and life begins  
The answered prayer, Emmanuel  
You're almost there

### Invitation to the Offering

Offertory

*Lovely is the Dark Blue Sky*  
Carolyn Ancell

trad. Danish  
arr. Sunita Staneslow

Pastoral Prayer

\*Closing Hymn

Silent Night

Tune: 122, Stille Nacht

*Keep burning candles upright at all times. To light a candle, tip the unlit wick toward flame.*

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,  
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.

Silent night, holy night,  
wondrous star, lend thy light;  
with the angels let us sing,  
Alleluia to our King;  
Christ the Savior is born,  
Christ the Savior is born!

\*Benediction

\*Postlude

*Ding, Dong Merrily on High*  
Carolyn Ancell

trad. French, arr. Joanna Mell