

December 24, 2025

7:30 PM

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE
BECOMING LIKE CHRIST – MAKING HIM KNOWN
“THE LIGHT OF CHRISTMAS!”



PREPARATION OF OUR MINDS

(Entering worship, let us prepare our hearts.)

From Creation, the Bible leads us through humanity’s progression from the light of God’s perfection to the darkness of humanity’s fall and then through generations and centuries of waiting for the dawn of the day when the Messiah would bring the light of restoration. Then that day came – but not like anyone expected. Two thousand years ago, on what we now call the first Christmas, came the incomparable, world-altering arrival of the true light of the world in Bethlehem.

CHRISTMAS PRELUDE FOR FLUTE AND PIANO

WELCOME & CALL TO WORSHIP

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING -- LOVE

Scripture – Reflection – Prayer – Lord’s Prayer

*HYMN: “O Come, All Ye Faithful”

The Christ candle is lit.

Hymnal #173

A SERVICE OF LESSONS & CAROLS

FIRST LESSON: Genesis 3:8-19

God tells sinful Adam that he has lost the life of Paradise and that his seed will bruise the serpent’s head.

REFLECTION & PRAYER

HYMN: “Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence”

Hymnal #167 (v. 1+2)

SECOND LESSON: Genesis 22:15-18

God promises to faithful Abraham that in his seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed.

REFLECTION & PRAYER

HYMN: “Lo! How A Rose E’er Blooming”

Hymnal #163

THIRD LESSON: Isaiah 9:2-7

The prophet foretells the coming of the Savior.

REFLECTION & PRAYER

*HYMN: “O Little Town of Bethlehem”

Hymnal #155 (v.1+3)

FOURTH LESSON: Isaiah 11:1-9

The peace that Christ will bring is foreshown.

REFLECTION & PRAYER

*HYMN: “It Came Upon the Midnight Clear”

Hymnal #170 (v.1+3)

FIFTH LESSON: Luke 1:26-38

The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary

REFLECTION & PRAYER

THE SHERMAN CHOIR: “Angel’s Carol” J. Rutter

SIXTH LESSON: Luke 2:1-18

St. Luke tells of the birth of Jesus, the shepherds go to the manger.

REFLECTION & PRAYER

*HYMN: “While Shepherds Watched”

Hymnal #172 (v. 1-3)

SEVENTH LESSON: Matthew 2:1-12

The wise men bring gifts.

REFLECTION & PRAYER

HYMN: “What Child is This?”

Hymnal #150 (v.1-2)

EIGHTH LESSON: John 1:1-14

We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son,

MESSAGE: “We’ll (I’ll) Leave the Light on for you.”

*HYMN: “Joy to the World”

Hymnal #146

NINTH LESSON: Matthew 28:16-20

The proclamation of Christ’s birth never ends.

REFLECTION & PRAYER

PROCLAIMING THE GLORY OF CHRIST

***CLOSING PRAYER (Unison)**

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light.

Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus’ presence, and in the last

day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord,

who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

ANTHEM: “Night of Silence”

***LIGHTING CANDLES**

[We have received the Light of Christ this night.

Let us go and spread this Light with our world!

As we process outdoors,

we bring the light of Christ into the world.

We sing Silent Night as we light our candles,

forming a circle of light and hope.]

HYMN: “Silent Night”

(Lyrics on Back Cover)



SILENT NIGHT! HOLY 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!
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.



*The Sherman Church
Lessons and Carols*

December 24, 2025

*Gathered In 1744
Continuing to invite all to know the love of Jesus*

"The impersonal hand of government can never replace the helping hand of a neighbor." - Hubert Humphrey

CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERTORY LOAVES & FISHES

Our church has supported Loaves & Fishes Hospitality House for many years. It is now located in The Sarah and Danny Straub Community Outreach Center at 25B Bridge St., New Milford. Supper is served seven days a week from 4:30 to 5:20 pm to 20-26 people. Our Christmas Eve Mission Moment collection will be Loaves & Fishes. You can find special baskets in the narthex and at the back door from Fellowship Hall. Please make checks out to The Sherman Church with Loaves & Fishes in the memo line or online at the church website under Tithes and Offerings with Loaves & Fishes in the comment line.

The story began in 1984 when a group of New Milford women came together who wanted to help get meals to their neighbors who "had too much month at the end of the money." Within a short time, with the enthusiastic response from so many sponsoring groups in New Milford, Loaves and Fishes Hospitality House was born and began serving meals daily at 4:30 out of St. John's Church kitchen. Six years and a lot of community generosity later, L&F moved to their next kitchen and dining room in the Richmond Center on Main Street which was home until 2024.

Loaves and Fishes moved last year to its long-awaited new location in The Sarah and Danny Straub Outreach Center at 25b Bridge Street. The very first meal served at the Straub Center was on Thanksgiving Day 2024, 40 years after Loaves and Fishes' first meal in 1984. Guests and volunteers alike have settled in to the new kitchen and dining room with smiles and gratitude. They serve a hot meal and bagged lunch to food-insecure neighbors 365 days a year -- every year -- thanks to a volunteer staff that comes from more than 20 different community affiliations from the greater New Milford area.

Eight members of the Sherman Church Missions Committee in teams of two prepare 20 lunches the third Monday of every month and deliver them to Loaves & Fishes. In the lunches are a sandwich, a salty snack, a sweet snack and a piece of fruit. We often include a scripture message on the bags.

The new Warming Center Program hosted by Loaves & Fishes opened for its first season in January. Thanks to a core group of dedicated volunteers, guests were able to warmly rest in the mornings from 7am, afternoons and evenings until 8pm. Working with the mayor's office to assure a place would be open with no need to open town hall rooms, Loaves & Fishes volunteers manned the Warming Center. They opened the 2025-2026 Warming Center season in late November, and it will end in late March.

A HISTORY OF "Christmas Lessons and Carols"



Although the tradition of Nine Lessons and Carols is popularly associated with King's College, Cambridge, its origins are attributed to Truro Cathedral in Cornwall. In 1880 the Right Rev. Edward White Benson, at that time Bishop of Truro, conducted the first formal service of "Nine Lessons and Carols" on Christmas Eve. Benson, concerned at the excessive consumption of alcohol in Cornish pubs during the festive season, sought a means of attracting revelers out of the pubs and into church by offering a religious celebration of Christmas. In 1883, and the Nine Lessons service began to gain in popularity across the Church of England and the wider Anglican Communion, as well as Roman Catholic churches in England and Wales.

The original liturgy has since been adapted and used by other churches all over the world, particularly in English-speaking countries. The first Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols at King's College, Cambridge, was held on Christmas Eve in 1918. During World War I the dean, Eric Milner-White, had served as army chaplain in the 7th Infantry Division and he was concerned that the distress of the "Great War" had hardened attitudes against religion. Taking advantage of the established choral tradition of the Choir of King's College, Cambridge, he introduced Benson's carol service to King's as a means of attracting people back to Christian worship.