

THE CHRISTMAS TREE

There was a community of trees in the Pennsylvania German settlements as early as 1747. Even after the 1840s, Christmas trees were thought of as pagan symbols.

Comparatively, the Christmas tree was adopted late in America, as were many other Christmas customs. Christmas was sacred to New England [Puritans](#). William Bradford, the second governor of the pilgrims, wrote that he did his best to stamp out "pagan mockery" of the observance, he even penalized anyone who did it frivolously (Ibid.).

In 1659, the General Court of Massachusetts issued a law, making observing Christmas a penalty offense. People were fined for hanging Christmas decorations.

Oliver Cromwell preached against "the [heathen](#) traditions" of Christmas carols, decorated trees, and any expression of joy that desecrated "that sacred event." However, in the 19th century, German and Irish immigrants undermined the Puritan legacy (Ibid).

From: Christianity.com

Christmas Benediction

May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the determination of the Magi, and the peace of the Christ child. Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit bless you now and forever. Amen

Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year to all.

Pr. Bob and Barb

**December 31, 9:00 Morning worship:
What's New?**

Pilot Knob Lutheran Church

Where Truth is Discovered!

“God’s Promise”



Preaching God's Inerrant Word Since: 1875

Welcome to Our Service

Rev. Robert Snitzer

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Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

December 24, 2023 9:00 AM

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Pilot Knob's Purpose Statement

Worship God and proclaim His Word so people will experience salvation through Jesus, mature in the faith and equip all to serve in the church and world.

Pianist Sheryl Albertson

Welcome/Announcements

Lighting the Christ Candle

P: For to us a child is born, to us a son is given,

C: And the government will be on his shoulders.

P: And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.

C: Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.

P: With righteousness he will judge the needy; with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.

C: And he will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips, he will slay the wicked.

*Opening Hymn One Small Child #280

Opening Prayer

Old Testament Lesson 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16 Pew Bible 301

Hymn Hark! The Herald Angels Sing #277

Gospel Lesson Luke 1:26-38 Pew Bible 1026

Hymn Silent Night #253

Sermon God's Promise

Hymn Angels We Have Heard on High #278

Christmas Creed Overhead

Offering

Offertory

Distribution of Light

*Pastor will light a candle from the Christ candle and the ushers will light theirs from the pastor's candle. Worshippers are cautioned **not to tip a burning candle** lest hot wax spill.*

Hymn O Holy Night #285

Christmas Prayer (Unison)

Loving Father, help us remember the birth of Jesus that we may share in the song of the angles, the gladness of the shepherds and the worship of the wise men. Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every greeting. Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clean hearts. May the Christmas morning make us happy to be the children of God and the Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiven and forgiving, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Christmas Benediction

Extinguish Candles

Closing Hymn Joy to the World #270

What Is the Origin of Christmas Trees in America?

Christmas trees were an odd commodity for most Americans in the 19th century. In the 1830s, German settlers in Pennsylvania had the first record of displaying one, though trees had been a tradition in many German homes before then.

German Christmas Trees

In Germany, devout Christians decorated trees in their homes during the 16th century, which is credited with starting the Christmas tree tradition we know today. When wood became hard to find, some people built Christmas pyramids of wood and decorated them with evergreens and candles.

Many people believe Martin Luther was the first to add candles to the tree. As he was walking home one winter night to write a sermon, he was awed by the twinkling stars in the evergreens. A tree was erected in the main room and wired with lighted candles so he could recreate the scene for his family (Ibid.).
