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**UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, CONGREGATIONAL**

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 **“Welcoming, Loving, Serving, Where God has No Limits”**

*Welcome and Merry Christmas! We are so glad that you have joined us for worship this night.*

*Please take a moment to sign the attendance pads, (located at the end of each pew) so that you*

 *know who is worshipping near you and you may greet them by name.*

**\****Those who are able please stand*

**PreLUDe** Selections from *Messiah* - G.F. Handel

 Jen Vilimonovic, violin; Cathy Fafrak, piano & Chancel Choir

 Soloists: Jennifer Cochran, Tim Cochran, Tracy Gabrielsen, Kellie Johns

Pastoral Symphony

 “And the Glory of the Lord”

 “Thus Saith the Lord”

 “But Who May Abide the Day of his Coming?”

 “There Were Shepherds Abiding in the Field”

 “And Lo! The Angel of the Lord Cam Upon Them”

 “And the Angel Said Unto Them”

 “And Suddenly There Was With the Angel”

 “Glory to God”

 “Rejoice Greatly, O Daughter of Zion”

 “He Shall Feed His Flock Like a Shepherd”

 “For Unto Us a Child Is Born”

**welcome**

**LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE** Isaiah 9: 2, 6-7 The Swantek Family

**RESPONSE “O Holy Night”**

O holy night, the stars are brightly shining, It is the night of the dear Savior’s birth.

Long lay the world in sin and error pining, Till he appeared and the soul felt its worth.

A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices, For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!

Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices! O night divine! O night when Christ was born!

O night divine! O night, O night divine!

Truly he taught us to love one another; his law is love and his gospel is peace.

Chains shall he break, for the slave is our brother, and in his name all oppression shall cease.

Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raising, let all within us praise his holy name.

Christ is the Lord! O praise his name forever! His power and glory evermore proclaim!

His power and glory evermore proclaim!

**\*call to worship**

Leader: We are walking toward joy!

**People: Drawn by the cords of love.**

der: We are moving to the sound of a hopeful chorus,

**People: Lured by a deep and holy peace-full melody.**

Leader: We are growing in the likeness of Christ**.**

**People: Supported by the nudges of the Spirit.**

Leader: We are living in awareness of a divine love that fills the universe,

**People: Pulling us to love and serve, to pray and worship.**

**\*CAROL “O Come All Ye Faithful”**

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,

O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;

Come, and behold him, born the King of angels;

***Refrain:***

**O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,**

**O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord**.

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,

Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;

Glory to God, glory in the highest;

**Refrain**

Child, for us sinners poor and in the manger,

We would embrace thee, with love and awe;

Who would not love thee, loving us so dearly?

**Refrain**

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;

Jesus, to thee be glory given;

Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing;

**Refrain**

**\*OPENING PRAYER** Rev. Meghan Malone

Leader: Blessed are you, O Christ, God’s anointed one. You were here before time began and here you are still, walking alongside all who journey.

**People:  Blessed are you, sun of righteousness. You shine with the love of God so brightly that it illuminates the whole universe.**

Leader: Blessed are you, Son of Mary; born a child, you were not afraid to share our humanity, and to live among us as the embodiment of mercy and grace.

**People:  Let Heaven and earth sing out their praises, let all God’s people rejoice**, **and all the creatures of the earth join in on the dance.**

Leader:  You are the mystery of the Word made flesh, and the incarnation of God, who came to flip all of our expectations upside down, and to show us the way to The Way.

**People:  You are the way, the truth, and the life. Praise and honor and glory to you, o light of the world.  Amen.**

**CAROL “It Came Upon A Midnight Clear”**

It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth,
To touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, goodwill to all
From heavens all gracious King!"
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come,
With peaceful wings unfurled;
And still their heavenly music floats
O'er all the weary world:
Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on hovering wing,
And ever o'er its Babel sounds
The blessed angels sing.

And you beneath life's crushing load,

whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way,

with painful steps and slow;
Look now, for glad and golden hours

Come swiftly on the wing;
Oh rest beside the weary road,

 and hear the angels sing.

For lo, the days are hastening on,

by prophet seen of old,

When with the ever-circling years

shall come the time fore-told,

When peace shall over all the earth

its ancient splendors fling,

And the whole world send back the song

which now the angels sing.

**THE ANNOUNCEMENT TO MARY** Luke 1:26-38 Cheri Ingraham

**CAROL “Who Would Think That What Was Needed”**

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**THE magnificat** Luke 1:26-38 Maggie Bixler

**SOLO** “Breath of Heaven” - Amy Grant & Chris Eaton Carleigh Johns, soloist

**CHRISTMAS MESSAGE** ”Finding Our Way Through Laundry, Taxes and Death” The Rev. Luke Lindon

**CAROL “O Little Town of Bethlehem”**

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;

yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary; and gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth!
and praises sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth.

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!

**THE BIRTH OF JESUS** Luke 2:1-7 Deb Waldron

**ANTHEM** “Away in a Manger” - arr. John Rutter Chancel Choir

**THE ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE SHEPHERDS** Luke 2:8-14 Pam Branscome

**CAROL “Angels We Have Heard On High”**

Angels we have heard on high sweetly singing o'er the plains,

And the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.

**Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!**

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?

What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heavenly song?

**Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!**

Come to Bethlehem and see Christ whose birth the angels sing;

Come, adore on bended knee, Christ the Lord, the newborn King*.*

**Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!**

 **SHEPHERDS VISIT THE MANGER**  Luke 2:15-20 Brad Rice

 **SOLO** “What Child Is This?” Katherine Johns, soloist

 **CHRISTMAS PRAYER**

 **PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR**

**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 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. AMEN**.

 **OFFERTORY**

**Offertory Invitation**

*There is an offering plate if you feel led to deposit your envelope or an offering there.*

*You can also give through our Realm app or get the link to give by texting UCCMEDINA to 73256.*

 *Thank you for your prayerful consideration!*

**\*Doxology for Christmas** *(Christina G. Rossetti, 1872 & Gustav Holst, 1906)*

 **What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;**

 **If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part; yet what I can I give him: give my heart.**

 **Prayer of Dedication**

**Love that never ceases, take our offerings and turn them into new beginnings. Bless them, and bless us, so that we may become the beloved community that you came here to tell us about, on Earth as it is in heaven. May all that we are becoming, bring more of your peace, your hope, your joy, and your love to our world. Amen.**

 **LESSONS OF LIGHT**  The Rev. Harry Buch

John 1:1-10

John 1:14-16

John 8:12

**PASSING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST** *(Only unlit candles should be tipped)*

**CAROL “Silent 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.

***(Congregation may extinguish candles)***

 **BENEDICTION**

 **\*CAROL “Joy to the World”**

Joy to the world! the Lord is come: let earth receive her King;
let every heart prepare him room,

and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing,

and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the world! the Savior reigns; let us our songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains

repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,

repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness,

and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love,

 and wonders, wonders of his love.

 **\*POSTLUDE**  “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” Organ & Instrumentalists

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Claire & Philip Nicholson Our 53rd Wedding Anniversary (12/21/22)

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