

Christmas Eve

First Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

Anoka, Minnesota

Open and Affirming

December 24, 2023

5:00pm & 10:00pm

"The Pillars of Creation," a Webb Telescope photo from NASA



**No matter who you are or
where you are in your life's journey,
you are welcome here.**



**There is no livestreaming for our Christmas Eve service this year.
We hope that you will find some use from this “digitized” bulletin that includes
links to YouTube content of selected songs.
Merry Christmas.**

Centering Music

“Little Drummer Boy”

arr. Waldrop

Zion UCC Bell Choir, Mount Clemens, Michigan

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4zbOTwRM1ZY>

Welcome

Lighting the Advent Wreath

One: For God alone, my soul waits in silence; from God comes salvation.

Many: For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from God.

Music

“Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence”

arr. Geschke

First United Methodist Church at Chicago Temple

*Let all mortal flesh keep silence, and with fear and trembling stand;
ponder nothing earthly-minded, for with blessing in his hand,
Christ our God to earth descendeth, our full homage to demand.*

*King of kings yet born of Mary, as of old on earth he stood,
Lord of lords, in human vesture, in the body and the blood,
he will give to all the faithful his own self for heavenly food.*

*Rank on rank the host of heaven spreads its vanguard on the way,
as the Light of light descendeth, from the realms of endless day,
that the powers of hell may vanish as the darkness clears away.*

*At his feet the six-winged seraph, cherubim with sleepless eye,
veil their faces to the presence, as with ceaseless voice they cry,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, Lord Most High!*

Offering Our Gifts

Offering

Text-to-Give: **844-334-1477**

Thank you for your gifts to our ministries!

If you are watching from home (live or later), please consider adding to the Offering by sending your gifts by mail, text, or online (uccanoka.org/donate).

You can support the church further through the RaiseRight program:

www.raiseright.com. Our unique church ID is gWKLGX8TRZCN.

* Prayer of Our Savior (unison)

The Prayer has many versions; pray whichever you desire (debts, sins, trespasses, etc.). We affirm that God has many names, so use one of the suggested or another of your choosing.

Our Father/Mother/Creator, 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.

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

Carol

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

The Piano Guys (Instrumental)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iO7ySn-Swwc>

A Reading from Genesis

Genesis 1:1-5

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, ² the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. ³ Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. ⁴ And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

Carol

“Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabella”

Sufjan Stevens

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-T4iOy7vIps>

A Reading from Luke

Luke 1:26-33

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Carol

“Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming”

Jacqueline Pollauf, Harp

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NB8yUdQeQRI>

A Reading from Exodus

Exodus 3:1-6

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. ³ Then Moses said, "I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up." ⁴ When the LORD saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." ⁵ Then he said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." ⁶ He said further, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

Carol

“What Child Is This?”

Josh Groban

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N1cfCEzniEg>

A Reading from Luke

Luke 1:46-55

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸ for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; ⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. ⁵⁰ His mercy is for those who fear him from

generation to generation. ⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. ⁵² He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; ⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. ⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, ⁵⁵ according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

Carol

"It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"

7th Avenue

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N1cfCEzniEg>

A Reading from Job

Job 38:4-7, 31-33

"Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. ⁵ Who determined its measurements-- surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? ⁶ On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone ⁷ when the morning stars sang together and all the heavenly beings shouted for joy?"

³¹ "Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades, or loose the cords of Orion? ³² Can you lead forth the Mazzaroth in their season, or can you guide the Bear with its children?

³³ Do you know the ordinances of the heavens? Can you establish their rule on the earth?"

Carol

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"

Nat King Cole

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EHKORmpW4Cg>

A Reading from Luke

Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴ Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵ He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Carol

"Infant Holy, Infant Lowly"

Memphis Men's Chorale; Memphis Women's Chorale

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iaaih_fklYQ

A Reading from the Psalms

Psalm 8:1-4

O LORD, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. ² Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger. ³ When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; ⁴ what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?

Carol

“In the Bleak Midwinter”

The Choir of Trinity College Cambridge (Harold Darke version)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ybgtHjuy9Hw>

A Reading from Luke

Luke 2:8-20

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see-- I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" ¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Carol

“Once in Royal David’s City”

Charlotte Jaconelli and Jonathan Antoine

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4DIFHw69h-I>

A Reading from Revelation

Revelation 21:1-6a

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be

with them; ⁴ he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away." ⁵ And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." ⁶ Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end."

Sharing the Light

Invitation

One: Even something as seemingly insignificant as a candle's flame contains all the wonders of Creation. By these flickering tongues of fire, let our hearts be warmed by the mystery of our faith: that God so loved the world that she poured herself into human flesh and lived among us as Emmanuel.

*As the ushers light the candles closest to the aisle, please pass the light to your neighbor. Please dip the **unlit** candle when passing the light. We will sing as we share the light.*

Carol

"Silent Night"

Carrie Underwood

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_vw--yxcDNM

God With Us

One: There is a time for silence, and there is a time for shouting our alleluias. A Child has been born to us!

Many: Come, Lord Jesus!

One: As you go from this place, proclaim the birth of the Child and the promise of God With Us. For a child is born to us! Jesus is born! Merry Christmas to all!

Many: Jesus is born! Merry Christmas to all!

One: Now, let us extinguish these flames and praise God! Hallelujah!

Many: Hallelujah!

Please carefully and gently extinguish your candle.

Song of Praise

"Hallelujah Chorus"

George Frideric Handel

The Cleveland Orchestra and Chorus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZX-INZQhS8Y>