

Mt. Zion United Church of Christ

Christmas Eve

7:00 PM

WELCOME MT. ZION BRASS

CALL TO WORSHIP¹

One: On this holiest of nights,

Many: we come, joining the shepherds who are stunned by wonder.

One: On this most silent night,

Many: we come, our hopes and dreams joining those of Mary and Joseph.

One: On this night of carols and candlelight,

Many: we come, our glad songs joining with the choirs of angels over us.

One: On this evening creation stood still and held its breath, for God was doing the most unbelievable thing.

Many: On this evening God embraced humanity from the inside, as one of us, from birth to death.

One: Glory to God in the highest!

Many: Let us sing praises to our God!

OPENING HYMN NO. 112 (red hymnal, see p. 4)

O Come All Ye Faithful

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE²

HYMN NO. 108 (red hymnal, see p. 5)

O Little Town of Bethlehem

TIME OF CONFESSION

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

L: O God, you search us out and know us, and all that we are is open to you. We confess that we have sinned.

P: In your mercy, Lord, forgive us and heal us.

L: When we make no room for Christ, and fail to welcome him into our lives,

P: In your mercy, Lord, forgive us and heal us.

L: When we follow shooting stars and squander our gifts in Herod's court,

P: In your mercy, Lord, forgive us and heal us.

L: When we seek to cut down those who might rise above us,

P: In your mercy, Lord, forgive us and heal us.

L: When we sanitize your birth place and erase from memory the poor and displaced,

P: In your mercy, Lord, forgive us and heal us.

L: When we sing sweet sentiments over Christ's birth, and fail to rejoice over his everyday presence,

P: In your mercy, Lord, forgive us and heal us.

L: We turn to you, O Christ, perfect union of Spirit and flesh;

P: We renounce evil; We claim your love; We choose to be made whole.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

ACT OF PRAISE NO. 118 (red hymnal, vs. 1-2, see p. 6)

The First Nowell

ALL SING: The first Nowell the angels did say was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay, in fields as they lay keeping their sheep, on a cold winter's night that was so deep. Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, born is the King of Israel.

They looked up and saw a star shining in the East beyond them far, and to the earth it gave great light, and so it continued both day and night. Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, born is the King of Israel.

THE HODGEPODGE NATIVITY

SCRIPTURE (read by Sam Neff)

Luke 2: 1-20

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

WORSHIP CHOIR ANTHEM

Sing Gloria

by Wagner

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION³

L: The poet Ann Weems says, "if there is no cross in the manger, there is no Christmas... This table is open to everyone who hopes to know Christ better.

L: May the God of silent nights be with you!

P: May the God of herald angels be with you!

L: Open your hearts to the One born in the little town of Bethlehem.

P: May Emmanuel come to abide in our hearts.

L: Join all believers in singing of our joy this night.

P: May our voices blend with those of the angels and shepherds.

COMMUNION PRAYER

L: In the silence of the night, God of holiness, your Child crept in among us, so small no one would notice, so poor no one would care...On this evening when we celebrate his birth, in the days to come when we follow him to Jerusalem, we sing carols of that mystery we call faith:

ALL: Christ was born, so we might have life; Christ died, so we might have forgiveness; Christ was raised, so we might have resurrection; Christ will be born again, to gather us together with him.

REMEMBERING THE STORY

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION & THE LORD'S PRAYER

ALL: 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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

BREAKING OF THE BREAD & POURING OF THE JUICE

SHARING OF THE ELEMENTS

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

ALL: Loving God, we thank you for the gift of this time at the table with you. As we go into the world, help us to be the gift another needs, sharing your blessings of love and grace, running to tell the Story we heard from the shepherds. Help us to be the comfort which can swaddle others, sharing Jesus' compassion with the poor and needy, welcoming the holiness offered by the most vulnerable we meet. Help us to enkindle the lives around us, sharing your peace with all the broken, learning your language of hope. Amen.

CANDLELIGHTING SERVICE

CAROL (see p. 7)

Silent Night, Holy Night

CHRISTMAS BLESSING

POSTLUDE

Joy to the World

by Handel

Thank you to Lee Brown for donating the Christmas tree in the sanctuary! Thank you to all of those who volunteered to make this service possible! Special thanks to Sam Neff for reading the Scripture, to Barbara Krier, Helen Burns, Bob Katherman, Judy Cornelius, & Janet Abel for taking part in the candlelighting, for the families who read the Call to Worship, the families who participated in the Hodgepodge Nativity, and for all the members who submitted videos of themselves singing *Silent Night*. Thank you to all the members of our praise team for providing the music including Brenda Beyer, Paula Strayer, Andrew Texter, Barb Neff, Denny Daugherty & Mike Gibbs and to all the choir members who participated in the virtual anthem!

¹The Call to Worship is a combination of liturgies written by Rev. Thom Shuman, Lectionary Liturgies. Posted on LiturgyLink. <http://www.liturgylink.net/>, accessed on November 19, 2020 and Rev. Bruce Prewer and found on <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2011/11/call-to-worship-for-christmas-eve.html>, accessed on November 19, 2020.

²The liturgy for the candlelighting was written by Rev. Martha Spong and posted at <https://marthaspong.com/2013/11/15/advent-wreath-liturgies-narrative-lectionary-year-4/> and accessed on November 19, 2020.³The text for the candlelighting was written by Jen Cooper.

³The invitation is based on the poem, "The Cross in the Manger" by Ann Weems, while the remainder of the liturgy is adapted from liturgy by Rev. Thom Shuman, <http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com/2016/12/liturgy-wcommunion-for-christmas-day-a.html>

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O Come, All You Faithful

Piano $\text{♩} = 80$

1. O come all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri -
 2. Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul -
 3. Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py

5
 - um - phant! O come ye O come ye to Beth - le -
 - ta - tion, sing all ye cit - i - zens of heav'n a -
 mor - ning Je - sus to thee be all glo - ry

9
 - hem! Come and be - hold Him, born the King of
 - bove: "Glo - ry to God, all glo - ry in the
 giv'n; Word of the Fa - ther, now in flesh ap -

13
 an - gels; O come let us a - dore Him, O come let us a -
 high - est;
 - pear - ing;

17
 - dore Him, O come let us a - dore Him Christ the

21
 Lord!

O Little Town

♩ = 80

Piano

1. O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem how still we see thee
 2. For Christ is born of Ma - ry and gath - ered all a -
 3. How si - lent - ly how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is
 4. O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us we

5

lie! A - bove thy deep and dream - less sleep the si - lent stars go
 - bove while mor - tals sleep the an - gels keep their watch of won - d'ring
 giv'n! So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his
 pray; Cast out our sin and en - ter in, be born in us to -

9

by; Yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing Light. The
 love. O morn - ing stars to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth, and
 heav'n. No ear may hear his com - ing, but in this world of sin, where
 - day. We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell; O

14

hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.
 prais - es sing to God the King, and peace to all on earth.
 meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.
 come to us, a - bide with us, Our Lord Em - man - u - el!

The First Noel

♩ = 80

Piano

1. The first No - well he an - gels did say was to
 2. They look - ed up and saw a star, shin - ing
 3. And by the light of that same star, three
 4. This star drew nigh to the north - west, O'er
 5. Then en - tered in those Wise Men three full
 6. Then let us all with one ac - cord sing

6

cer - tain poor shep - herds in fields as they lay, in fields as
 in the east be - yond them far, and to the
 Wise Men came from a coun - try a - far, and to seek the
 Beth - le - hem it took its rest, and there for a
 rev - erent - ly up - on their knee, and of - fered
 prais - es to our heaven - ly Lord, that hath made

11

they lay keep - ing their sheep, on a cold win - ter's night that
 earth it gave great light, and so it con - tin - ued both
 king was their in - tent, and to fol - low the star wher -
 did both stop and stay, right o - ver the place where
 there in His pres - ence, their gold, and myrrh, and
 heaven and earth of naught, and with his blood man -

16

as so deep. No - well, No - well, No - well, No -
 day and night.
 - ev - er it went.
 Je - sus lay.
 frank - in - cese.
 - kind hath bought.

21

- well, Born is the King of Is - ra - el.

Silent Night

Piano 

1. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, all is calm, all is bright
2. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, shep - herds quake, at the sight;
3. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, Son of God, love's pure light;
4. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, won - drous star, lend thy light,

5 

round yon vir - gin mo - ther and child. Ho - ly in - fant so
Glo - ries stream from hea - ven a - far, heav - enly hosts sing,
ra - diant beams from thy ho - ly face with the dawn of re -
with the an - gels let us sing, Al - le - lu - ia

8 

ten - der and mild, sleep in heav - en - ly peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
Al - le - lu - ia! Christ the Sav - ior is born, Christ the Sav - ior is born.
- dee - ming grace, Je - sus Lord at thy birth, Je - sus Lord at thy birth.
to our King; Christ the Sav - ior is born, Christ the Sav - ior is born.