



December 24, 2021, 4:00pm

Christmas Eve

St. Mark's United Church of Christ

Rev. Dr. Patrick Schultz, Pastor Organist: Kathy Jurk

PLEASE KNOW OUR COMMUNION TABLE IS AN OPEN TABLE - THIS MEANS COMMUNION IS SERVED FOR ALL WHO WISH TO TAKE OF IT, WHETHER OR NOT YOU ARE A CHURCH MEMBER, OF THE UCC DENOMINATION; OR ARE TRYING TO FIND YOUR WAY IN A MIXED UP, TROUBLED WORLD.

AS CHRIST IN HIS MINISTRY DID, WE WELCOME ALL PEOPLE

Meditative Music

Bells Ring

Prelude Gathering for Worship

Quiet Songs of the Holy Night

Call to Worship: (responsively)

The Prophet Isaiah said: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—On them light has shined.

People: O Come, O Come Emmanuel!

Malachi said John the Baptist's birth: Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. John prepared the way before Jesus Christ, baptizing him in the Jordan.

People: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Zachariah proclaimed: By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness. To guide our feet into the way of peace.

People: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

God is with us. God is coming into our lives in a new way. The birth of the Christ-child is the renewal of hope and reminder that Christ will come again. Keep watch for the light; it is drawing near.

ALL: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Opening Prayer

Lord, remind us that, like Mary and like the shepherds, each of us is a bearer of your Good News. We are called to proclaim hope, peace, joy, and love in your name. Open our hearts and our spirits today to receive with great joy the love that you have for us. For we ask this in Jesus' Name. Amen.

O Come All Ye Faithful

Brianne Vandoske

Reading and lighting of the Advent Candles: Alexa Dexter, Annabelle Uttech

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

[Light the purple and pink candles]

Jesus Christ is the true reason for hope, peace, joy, and love in this season and evermore.

As we light the Christ candle, celebrating the end of Advent and the arrival of Christ and Christmas, let us remember how our savior came once as a lowly baby, that the world through him might be saved, and how he will return one day in glory.

[Light the center white candle]

The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God ~ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Prayer:

Not Only on Christmas Day

Alexa, Annabelle, Brianne

Lord, this is my prayer
Not only on Christmas Day,
But until I see you face to face
May I live my life this way:

Just like the baby Jesus
I ever hope to be,
Resting in Your arms
Trusting in Your sovereignty.

And like the growing Christ child
In wisdom daily learning,
May I ever seek to know
With my mind and spirit yearning.

Like the Son so faithful
Let me follow in your light,
Meek and bold, humble and strong
Not afraid to face the night.

Nor cowardly to suffer
And stand for truth alone,
Knowing that Your kingdom
Awaits my going home.

Not afraid to sacrifice
Though great may be the cost,
Mindful how You rescued me
From broken-hearted loss.

Like my risen Savior
The babe, the child, the Son,
May my life forever speak
Of who you are and all you've done.

So while this world rejoices
and celebrates your birth,
I treasure you, the greatest gift
Unequaled in your worth.

I long to hear the same words
That welcomed home your Son,
Come, good and faithful servant
Your Master says, "Well done"

And may heaven welcome others
Who will join with me in praise
Because I lived for Jesus Christ
Not only Christmas Day.

Hymn of Praise:

128

It Came upon the Midnight Clear

Edmund H. Sears, 1810–1876, alt.

Richard S. Willis, 1819–1900

1. It came up - on the mid - night clear, That
 2. Still through the clo - ven skies they come, With
 3. And ye, be - neath life's crush - ing load, Whose
 4. For, lo, the days are has - t'ning on, By

glo - rious song of old, From an - gels bend - ing
 peace - ful wings un - furled, And still their heav'n - ly
 forms are bend - ing low, Who toil a - long the
 proph - et bards fore - told, When with the ev - er -

near the earth To touch their harps of gold: "Peace
 mu - sic floats O'er all the wea - ry world: A -
 climb - ing way, With pain - ful steps and slow, Look
 cir - cling years Comes round the age of gold; When

on the earth, good will to all From
 bove its sad and low - ly plains They
 now, for glad and gold - en hours Come
 peace shall o - ver all the earth Its

heav'n's all gra - cious King"; The world in sol - emn
 bend on hov - 'ring wing, And ev - er o'er its
 swift - ly on the wing; O rest be - side the
 an - cient splen - dors fling, And all the world send

still - ness lay, To hear the an - gels sing.
 Ba - bel sounds The bless - ed an - gels sing.
 wea - ry road, And hear the an - gels sing!
 back the song Which now the an - gels sing. A - men.



Scripture Readings:

Luke 2:1-18

Lori Roelse

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

*"Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"*

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them.

Hymn of the People:

138

What Child Is This, Who, Laid to Rest

William C. Dix, 1837-1898

Traditional English Melody

1. What Child is this, who, laid to rest, On Mar - y's
 2. Why lies He in such mean es - tate Where ox and
 3. So bring Him in - cense, gold and myrrh, Come peas - ant,

lap is sleep - ing? Whom an - gels greet with an - thems sweet, While
 ass are feed - ing? Good Chris - tian, fear; for sin - ners here The
 king to own Him; The King of kings sal - va - tion brings, Let

shep - herds watch are keep - ing? This, this is
 si - lent Word is plead - ing. Nails, spear, shall
 lov - ing hearts en - throne Him. Raise, raise the

Christ the King, Whom shep - herds guard and an - gels sing:
 pierce Him through, The Cross be borne, for me, for you:
 song on high, The Vir - gin sings her lull - a - by:

Haste, haste to bring Him laud, The Babe, the Son of Mar - y.
 Hail, hail, the Word made flesh, The Babe, the Son of Mar - y.
 Joy, joy, for Christ is born, The Babe, the Son of Mar - y.

Message: *There's Room at My Inn*

The Inn Keeper

Away in the Manger

Brianne Vandoske

Prayer of Confession:

O God, you search us out and know us, and all that we are is open to you. We confess that we have sinned. When we make no room for Christ, and fail to welcome him into our lives, we turn away from you Lord. When we follow shooting stars and squander our gifts in Herod's court, we sin against you, Lord. When we seek to cut down those who might rise above us, we sin against one another. When we erase from our thoughts the poor, the hungry, and the displaced, we sin against one another and you Lord.

**P: Home we shall come
To an older place than Eden
And a taller town than Rome.**

**To the end of the way of the wandering star;
To the things that cannot be and that are,
To the place where God was homeless
And all – we are at home. (GK Chesterton, *The House of Christmas*)**

Institution of Holy Communion:

May the Lord be with you, not only now and in this moment, but always and ever. As we gather together, we open our hearts and invite the Lord into our lives. We give thanks to the many, common and daily ways the Lord touches us as well as the extraordinary.

God brought light and life out of darkness; formed us in his image and breathed into us the breath of life. And even when we turned from God in sin and separation, his love remained constant and unyielding.

In time, God the Creator gave God the Redeemer to us in the form of Jesus, our savior. At his birth the angles sang glory to the father in the highest and peace to your people on earth.

With all your people on earth and the company of the angels and saints, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Mary and Joseph went from Galilee to Bethlehem and found no room in the inn, so Jesus was born in the poverty of a stable, witnessed that night by the shepherds of the hills who then went forth telling everyone they met of the newborn child.

As Word became flesh, born of a woman, on that night long ago, so Jesus gave himself up for all of us: taking bread, giving thanks, breaking it, and giving it to the disciples saying, *“Take, eat; this is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”*

When the supper was over he took the cup, again giving thanks, he gave it to his disciples saying: *“Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and all in the forgiveness of your sins. As often as you drink of this cup, remember me.”*

Pour out your Holy Spirit on these gifts of bread, juice, and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ; Bless us O Lord, that we may become the body of Christ in your name – lifting the Gospel, sharing the Good News, and building the Kingdom of God here on earth.

Let us, with the confidence of God’s children pray together:

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, the power, and the glory now and forever. Amen.

Affirming our Faith:

Apostles’ Creed

I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:

And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord: Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary: Suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead and buried: He descended into hell: The third day he rose again from the dead: He ascended into heaven, And sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty: From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead:

I believe in the Holy Spirit: The One Holy Universal Christian Church: the communion of saints: The forgiveness of sins: The resurrection of the body:

And the life everlasting. *Amen.*

Offering

Offering, tithes and gifts can be made before or after worship in the offering baskets/plates at the welcome area of the church. St. James is also set up to take on-line offerings through the website (stmstjucc.org).

Offertory Music:

Joseph Dearest, Joseph Mine

~ The offering is brought to the altar ~

Prayer of Dedication and Thanksgiving (all together)

Lord, you have blessed our lives in so many ways. Receive our tithes, gifts and offerings. Multiply them and cause them to work in this world which you have loaned to us to make light shine in the darkness with peace and justice for all in this world. We offer these gifts in Jesus' name. *Amen.*

Benediction:

Loving God,
help us remember the birth of Jesus,
that we may share in the song of the angels,
the gladness of the shepherds,
and 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 gift
and good desires with every greeting.
Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings,
and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.

May the Christmas morning make us happy to be thy children,
and Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts,
forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake. *Amen.*

(Attributed to Robert Louis Stevenson)

His Nativity

Freely translated from JOSEPH MOHR, 1818

6. 6. 8. 8. 6. 6.

STILLE NACHT
FRANZ GRÜBER, 1818

Quietly

1. Si - lent night! ho - ly night! All is calm, all is bright;
 2. Si - lent night! ho - ly night! Dark - ness flies, all is light;
 3. Si - lent night! ho - ly night! Guid - ing Star, lend thy light!
 4. Si - lent night! ho - ly night! Won - drous Star, lend thy light!

'Round you vir - gin moth - er and Child, Ho - ly In - fant so ten - der and mild;
 Shep - herds hear the an - gels sing: Al - le - lu - ia! hail the King!
 See the east - ern wise men bring Gifts and hom - age to our King!
 With the an - gels let us sing Al - le - lu - ia to our King!

Sleep in heav - en - ly peace, Sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
 Christ the Sav - iour is born, Christ the Sav - iour is born.
 Christ the Sav - iour is born, Christ the Sav - iour is born.
 Christ the Sav - iour is born, Christ the Sav - iour is born.

GERMAN TEXT (Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1 Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht!
 Alles schläft, einsam wacht
 Nur das heilige Elternpaar,
 Das im Stalle zu Bethlehem war
 Bei dem himmlischen Kind,
 Bei dem himmlischen Kind.</p> | <p>2 Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht!
 Hirten erst kund gemacht;
 Durch der Engel Halleluja
 Tönt es laut von fern und nah:
 Christ der Retter ist da,
 Christ der Retter ist da!</p> |
| <p>3 Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht!
 Gottes Sohn, o wie lacht
 Lieb' aus deinem holdseligen Mund,
 Da uns schlägt die rettende Stund',
 Christ, in deiner Geburt,
 Christ, in deiner Geburt!</p> | |

The bright red flowers of the poinsettia were known as the 'Flores de Noche Buena', or 'Flowers of the Holy Night'. The shape of the poinsettia flower and leaves are sometimes thought as a symbol of the Star of Bethlehem which led the Wise Men to Jesus. The red colored leaves symbolize the blood of Christ, while the white leaves represent his purity.



Sharing poinsettias with our church family this Christmas are:

Dick & Karen Binversie, in memory of our departed loved ones

Alice Broehm, in loving memory of husband and son

Dave & Cindy Call, for the joy of family

Pat & Noreen Flook, in memory of our parents

Gerty Free, in memory of our son Terry and my husband Eddie

Gene & Kathy Kaestner, in memory of Walter and Laura Siegert

Marlene Kammann, in memory of Melvin

Kevin & Betty Kellner, in loving memory of Myron and Beatrice Bosman

Mike & Jan Marcheske, in memory of our parents

Margene Reyer, in memory of my parents

Mary Ellen Schnelle & Family, in loving memory of Joel Schnelle

Mary Ellen Schnelle & Family, in loving memory of Lloyd Schnelle

Chris Schnelle & Family, in loving memory of Joel Schnelle

Lee & Nancy Sixel, in loving memory of Ralph Sixel

Lee & Nancy Sixel, in loving memory of Betty Sixel

***Delmar Sommer and Dawn & Loren Reinemann,
in loving memory of Janet Sommer***

Judy Steinbeck, to celebrate the birth of Jesus