



*For unto you is born this day
in the city of David a Saviour,
which is Christ the Lord.*

Luke 2:11

December 24, 2022 – Christmas Eve Service 4:00pm

St. James United Church of Christ

Rev. Dr. Patrick Schultz, Pastor

Randy Sohn, Organist

Scripture Reading: Deb La Duke

Meditative Music:

Prelude Gathering for Worship:

A Tapestry of Lullabies

Piano and Organ Duet

Opening Prayer

Precious Lord, we gather with the shepherds to listen for the angels' voices. We come with the Wise Men to offer our gifts. The King of Kings is born this night, the Messiah and Savior! He comes as a tiny, fragile baby; yet we know that he is God and God is with us. For he is born of the Virgin Mary and his name is called Emmanuel – God is with us. Amen.

♪ *O Little Town of Bethlehem* (#108)

The Reading for and Lighting of the Advent Candles:

Tammy Serketich and Jamey Binversie

Reader: As we celebrate the birth of Jesus this Christmas eve,
And rejoice in his coming to us,
We light the Christ Candle.

(Light the first, second, third, fourth and Christ candle.)

Reader: Jesus Christ is our hope.

People: **He is our peace.**

Reader: Jesus Christ is our joy.

People: **He is love ~ pure and undying love.**

Reader: Whoever believes in him will never perish
But have eternal life (John 3:16).

People: **And may this flame remind us that you are the light of the world
and if we follow you, we will never walk in darkness, but will
have the true light of life. Amen.**

Canticle of Mary—Luke 1:46-55

And Mary said,

“My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices
in God my Savior, for he has looked
on the humble estate of his servant.

For behold, from now on

all generations will call me blessed;
for he who is mighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.

And his mercy is for those who fear him from
generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;
he has brought down the mighty from their thrones
and exalted those of humble estate;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent empty away.

He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his
mercy, as he spoke to our fathers,
to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”

Scripture Reading:

Luke 2:8-18

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.

♪ *The First Noel (#118)*

♪ *O Come All Ye Faithful (#112)*

Message:*Good News of Great Joy*

The Shepherd

♪ *Away in the Manger (#109)*

Prayer of Confession and Words of Assurance:

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.

In your mercy, Lord, forgive us and heal us. We turn to you, O Christ, perfect union of Spirit and flesh; We renounce evil; We claim your love; We choose to be made whole. *(written by Nathan Nettleton)*

Institution of Holy Communion:

May the Lord be with you, not only now and in this moment, but now and always. 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 mysterious and miraculous.

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 angels 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.

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.*

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:

Coventry Carol

Piano and Organ Duet

~ 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: (Prayer for Christmas)

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.

~ attributed to Robert Louis Stevenson

♪ Sending Forth Hymn (#101)

Silent Night

Postlude:

Silent Night/O Holy Night



PLEASE KNOW OUR COMMUNION TABLE IS AN OPEN TABLE – ALL WHO WISH TO PARTAKE ARE WELCOME. WHETHER OR NOT YOU ARE A CHURCH MEMBER, OF THE UCC DENOMINATION; OR ARE JUST TRYING TO FIND YOUR WAY IN A MIXED UP, TROUBLED WORLD.

AS CHRIST IN HIS MINISTRY DID, WE WELCOME ALL PEOPLE.



*Poinsettias shared in love
with our church family this Christmas:*

Heidi & Clarence Belitz, for the joy of our families.

Shelia Hemb in memory of Lionel & Joan Hellmer.

David & Christine Gumm for the joy of our granddaughter Olivia.

*Brian, Wendy, Morgan & Amanda Henschel in memory of
Jackie Henschel and Paul Seifert*

Ron Henschel in memory of Jackie, Kevin, Harvey, Norma & Branden Henschel.

Charles & Ruth Ann Kolb for the joy of Christ's birth.

Sandy, Cindy, Sue in memory of Alvin & Loretta Kracht.

The Krause Family In memory of Dolores Krause.

Julianne Luebke & Family in memory of David Luebke.

Sarah and Richard Lutze for the joy of Christmas.

Bill & Dorothy Mueller for the joy of our children and grandchildren.

*Dorothy Mueller in memory of my siblings,
Eugene, LaVerne, Henry, Marie and Donald.*

*Dorothy Mueller in memory of my brothers-in-law Howard & Jerry and
of my sisters-in-law, Audrey, Arlene and Judy.*

*Jackie & Dave Mueller, Cody Mueller, Cheyenne & Ben Behnke in memory of
my parents Ilene & Leroy Stock.*

**continued on the back cover.....*

Tom, Nancy, Andrew and Austin in loving memory of Melvin & Violet Seifert.

Tom, Nancy, Andrew and Austin in loving memory of Addison Emilie Nye.

Tammy Serketich for the joy of Ella - Ezra and in memory of Wayne Vogel.

Carlene Sohn and family in memory of Myron Sohn.

*Carlene Sohn and family in memory of Elmyra & Carl Ohlrogge
and Elmer & Leona Sohn.*

Randy & Cindy Sohn & family in memory of Kenneth & Virginia Kuether.

Randy & Cindy Sohn & family in memory of Myron Sohn.

*Dale & Doris Sprenger for the joy of our children and their spouse, our
grandchildren and our new great-granddaughter.*

*Dale & Doris Sprenger in memory of our parents, brother: Allen,
sister-in-law: Katherine, brothers-in-law: Eddie & David, nephew: Larry.*

Allen Stolzmann Family in memory of Clarence and Verona Stolzmann.

Ellen Mae Surfus in memory of Bill Surfus - Arthur & Hertha Lorfeld.

Tom Urness in memory of Jill Urness.

*Mary Ann Vogel in memory of my Husband Wayne Vogel and
Parents Walter & Orvilla Stoeckigt.*

Tanya Wasmer & David Boman for the joy of our children & grandchildren.

Tanya, David and family in memory of Myron Sohn (Dad & Grandpa).

