



December 25, 2022 – Christmas Service, 10:00am
St. Mark's United Church of Christ

Rev. Dr. Patrick Schultz, Pastor
Organist & Accompanist: Ann Rodewald
Choir Director: Kathy Jurk

Meditative Music:

Bells:

Prelude Gathering for Worship:

Still, Still, Still

Processional Hymn: (#185)

Hark The Herald Angels Sing

Opening Prayer:

**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. (Robert Louis Stevenson)***

Prayer: *Not Only on Christmas Day* Grace Schultz

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 loving arms
Trusting in Your sovereignty.

And like the growing Christ child
In wisdom daily learning,
May I ever seek to know You
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.

— Mary Fairchild

Advent Candle lighting and reading:

Reader: As we celebrate the birth of Jesus this Christmas Day,
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: **Thanks be to God for his indescribably gift! (2 Corinthians 9:15)**

Hymn: (#210)

Love Came Down at Christmas (verse 1)

Choral Anthem:

On Christmas Day

Scripture Reading:

Luke 1:26-35 ESV

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. 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 father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God."

Hymn: (#184)

What Child Is This

Message:

'Twas a Mary Christmas

Rev. Dr. Patrick Schultz

Choral Anthem:

Sing Noel

Accompanying flute – Brenda Schultz

Prayer of Confession and Words of Assurance:

Lord, hear us this day as we open our hearts and our spirits to you. The times in which we live can feel confusing and fearful. We are in a season that should bring hope and peace, yet we crowd it with obligations and stresses. As we get overwhelmed with busyness, we shut the door to your healing love and compassion. We find ourselves on edge, fretful, wondering if we have done enough, given enough. You answer our fears with your voice: "Peace, be still". Slow us down. Help us to hear you. Encourage us to take time to listen rather than shout; to stop and rest rather than run. Forgive us when we walk in the darkness. Help us see your light.

Jesus said, "I bring you peace, not the kind of peace the world offers you. Be at peace. Know God's love is given to you." Thanks Be to God, *amen*.

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*

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.*

Announcements:

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:

The Birthday of the King

~ The offering is brought to the altar ~

Prayer of Dedication and Thanksgiving (all together)

Great God, our Redeemer, we sing your praises. Your glorious love shines in the face of Jesus, born a babe in this dark world. How precious is your gift of love! Let the light in our sanctuary and our songs of praise spill through the windows to neighbors dwelling in darkness. May our gifts and offerings reflect the light of Christ and, as beacons in the night, draw people far and near closer to you. In Jesus' name, we pray. *Amen.*

Hymn of Joy: (#205)

Away in the Manger

Benediction: (Prayer for Christmas)

L: In the midst of darkness, candles have shone.

P: Glory to God in the highest!

L: In the midst of darkness, we have seen the light of Christ.

P: Glory to God in the highest!

L: In the midst of darkness, we have been promised peace and good will.

P: Glory to God in the highest!

L: In the midst of darkness, we go forth to be the light of Christ.

P: Glory to God in the highest! Alleluia! Amen.

Sending Forth Choral Hymn:

Christmas Jubilate

Recessional: (#218)

Go, Tell It On the Mountain

Postlude:

Receive Your King



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



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

Dick and Karen Binversie for the joy of Christmas.

Alice Broehm and Judy Steinbeck in loving memory of James, Terry & Shirley.

Dave and Cindy Call for the joy of family.

Pat and Noreen Flook in memory of our parents and Noreen's brother.

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

Gerty Free in memory of Mom, Dad & Grandpa Stockmeier.

Steve and Mary Jo Gabsch in memory of Allen & Katherine Gabsch.

JoAnn Grant for the joy of my four precious great grandbabies this year.

Mark and Kathy Jurk in memory of our parents.

Marlene Kammann in memory of Melvin and sister Sue.

Kevin and Betty Kellner in memory of Mr. & Mrs. Myron Bosman.

Margene Reyer in memory of my parents and great grandnephew.

Bill and Lori Roelse for the joy of Matthew John Roelse.

Chris Schnelle & family in memory of Joel Schnelle.

Tim & Deanne Schultz for family love.

Delmar Sommer and Dawn & Loren Reinemann in memory of Janet Sommer.

Keith and Lynn Strysick in honor of our families.

