

CHRISTMAS EVE AT FIRST COMMUNITY CHURCH



## Welcome to First Community Church

We are a forward-thinking part of the global Body of Christ, historically christened “the church of the infinite quest.” We are affiliated with The United Church of Christ and The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) denominations, two of our nation’s more progressive theological traditions. We welcome people from any spiritual tradition, or from no tradition at all—anyone searching to become a more complete expression of Spirit in the world.

We are an *Open and Affirming* congregation, inclusive of persons of any nation, race, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, political or philosophical outlook, or socio-economic status. We strive to follow the way of Jesus as our guide and model toward becoming more fully human; meanwhile, we “recognize other pathways to the Divine,” and are open to truth from any source, religious, scientific, or otherwise.

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# The Festival of Lessons and Carols Christmas Eve



Friday, December 24, 2021

9 & 11 pm, North

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### PRELUDE

*Jesu bleibet meine Freude "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring", BWV 147*

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

*Pifa "Pastoral Symphony" from Messiah, HWV 56*

George Frederic Handel (1685-1759)

### INTROIT AND CANDLELIGHT PROCESSION

*Alleluia, Rejoice!*

arr. J. Edmund Hughes

O come, O come Emmanuel

Hodie Christus natus est:

And ransom captive Israel

Hodie Salvator apparuit:

That mourns in lonely exile here

Hodie in terra canunt Angeli

Until the Son of God appear.

Hodie exsultant justi,

Rejoice, rejoice!

Dicentes: Gloria in excelsis Deo, Alleluia.

Emmanuel shall come to Thee, O Israel.

Alleluia.

*Once in Royal David's City*

Henry John Gauntlett (1805-1876)

Once in royal David's city stood a lowly cattle shed,  
where a mother laid her baby in a manger for his bed:  
Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ, her little child.  
He came down to earth from heaven who is God and Lord of all,  
and his shelter was a stable, and his cradle was a stall;  
with the poor and meek and lowly, lived on earth our Savior holy.  
And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own redeeming love,  
for that child, so dear and gentle, is our Lord in heav'n above,  
and he leads his children on to the place where he is gone.

†CALL TO WORSHIP <sup>(1)</sup>

ONE: A young girl was invited—

**ALL: to carry Christ into this world.**

ONE: An ordinary carpenter was invited—

**ALL: to be a father to a child unlike any other.**

ONE: The shepherds were invited—

**ALL: outcast and isolated, included at the manger.**

ONE: The Magi were invited—

**ALL: foreigners and seekers, included at the manger.**

ONE: And if she was invited, and he was invited,  
and they were invited—

**ALL: then we can trust that we too are invited.**

ONE: This story is for us.

**ALL: This love is for us.**

ONE: Family of faith, this is our invitation. Welcome home. Amen.

†PROCESSIONAL CAROL

*O Come, All Ye Faithful*

*Adeste Fideles*

**O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,**

**O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;**

**Come and behold Him, born the King of Angels:**

**O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him,**

**O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!**

**Sing choirs of angels, sing in exultation,**

**Sing all ye citizens of heaven above.**

**Glory to God, all Glory in the highest!**

**O come let us adore Him . . .**

**Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning,**

**Jesus to Thee be all glory given.**

**Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing.**

**O come let us adore Him . . .**

## † PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION <sup>(2)</sup>

ONE: Holy God,  
We've heard this story before—  
Mary and Joseph, the angels, the shepherds.  
We want to hear this story like it's the first time.  
So move among us. Circle back. Draw close.  
Crack open our hearts and fill them with your goodness.  
Help us to hear what it is you might be saying to us  
with curiosity, joy, and hope.  
This is an invitation. Come be here with us.  
Gratefully we pray, amen.

## WELCOME

### FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

A Prince of Peace is born.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> For a child has been born for us, a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

<sup>7</sup> His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace  
for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold  
it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and  
forevermore.

### CAROL

*Sussex Carol*

Traditional English Carol  
arr. David Willcocks

On Christmas night all Christians sing  
to hear the news the angels bring,  
news of great joy, news of great mirth,  
news of our merciful King's birth.

Then why should we on earth be so sad,  
Since our Redeemer made us glad,  
When from our sin he set us free,  
All for to gain our liberty?

When sin departs before his grace,  
then life and health come in its place,  
angels and saints with joy may sing,  
all for to see the newborn King.

All out of darkness we have light,  
which made the angels sing this night,  
"Glory to God and peace to all,  
now and forevermore. Amen."

## SECOND LESSON

Luke 1:26-35, 38

The Angel Gabriel greets the Virgin Mary.

<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." <sup>29</sup> But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup> The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. <sup>32</sup> 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. <sup>33</sup> He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." <sup>34</sup> Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" <sup>35</sup> The angel said to 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 holy; he will be called Son of God.

## CAROL

*All Praise to Thee*

Elaine Hagenberg

All praise to Thee, eternal God,  
Who, clothed in garb of flesh and blood,  
Does take a manger for Thy throne,  
While worlds on worlds are Thine alone. Alleluia.

Thou comest in the darksome night  
To make us children of the light,  
To make us in the realms divine,  
Like Thine own angels, round Thee shine. Alleluia.

A little Child, Thou art our Guest  
That weary ones may rest,  
Forlorn and lowly is Thy birth  
That we may rise, to heav'n from earth. Alleluia.

## THIRD LESSON

Luke 2:1-7

The Gospel writer tells of the birth of Jesus.

<sup>1</sup> In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup> This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup> All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup> 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

*Angels from the Realms of Glory*

arr. Dan Forrest

Angels from the realms of glory  
Wing your flight o'er all the earth.  
Ye who sang creation's story now proclaim Messiah's birth.  
Come and worship, come and worship,  
Worship Christ the newborn King!

Shepherds in the field abiding,  
Watching o'er your flocks by night,  
God with us is now residing, Yonder shines the infant light.  
Come and worship, come and worship,  
Worship Christ the newborn King!

Sages, leave your contemplation,  
Brighter visions beam afar.  
Seek the great Desire of Nations, Ye have seen His natal star.  
Come and worship, come and worship,  
Worship Christ the newborn King!

All creation join in praising  
God, the Father, Spirit, Son.  
Evermore your voices raising To th'eternal Three in One!  
Come and worship, come and worship,  
Worship Christ the newborn King!

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

**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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass 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.**

## FOURTH LESSON

Luke 2:8-14

The Angels announce the birth to the shepherds.

<sup>8</sup> In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup> 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: <sup>11</sup> to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup> This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom God favors!"

†CAROL

*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

*Mendelssohn*

**Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the new born King:  
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"  
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies;  
With angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"  
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"**

**Hail the heaven born Prince of peace!  
Hail the Sun of righteousness!  
Light and life to all He brings, risen with healing in His wings,  
Mild He lays His glory by, born that we no more may die,  
Born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.  
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"**

OFFERTORY

Invitation to Giving

CAROL

*O Little Town of Bethlehem*

arr. Dan Forrest

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie.  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;  
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.  
For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above,  
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.  
O morning stars together, proclaim the holy birth,  
and praises sing to God the King, and peace to all on earth.  
O Holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray!  
Cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell!  
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord, Emmanuel.

Receiving the People's Gifts

*(All gifts placed in the offering plate will be divided between Refugee Task Force and Friends of the Homeless.)*

FIFTH LESSON

Luke 2:15-20

The shepherds go to the manger.

<sup>15</sup> 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." <sup>16</sup> So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup> When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; <sup>18</sup> and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them.

<sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.

<sup>20</sup> The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

†CAROL

*The First Nowell*

Traditional English Carol

arr. David Willcocks

**The first Noel the angel did say  
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;  
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep,  
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.  
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, 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.  
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.**

SERMON

STARWISE

CAROL

*Night of Silence*

Dan Kantor/arr. John Ferguson

Cold are the people, winter of life,  
we tremble in shadows this cold endless night,  
Frozen in the snow lie roses sleeping,  
flowers that will echo the sunrise,  
Fire of hope is our only warmth,  
weary, its flame will be dying soon.

Voice in the distance, call in the night,  
on the wind you enfold us, you speak to the light,  
Gentle on the ear you whisper softly,  
rumors of a dawn so embracing,  
Breathless love awaits darkened souls,  
soon will we know of the morning.

SIXTH LESSON

John 1:1-5

The Gospel of John tells the great mystery of the first incarnation.

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup> in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE



†CAROL

*Silent Night*

STILLE NACHT

Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright  
round yon virgin mother and child.  
Holy infant so tender and mild.  
Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.  
Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight,  
Glories stream from heaven afar,  
Heavenly host sing alleluia;  
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!  
Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light,  
Radiant beams from Thy holy face,  
with the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

†BENEDICTION

†POSTLUDE

*Hallelujah Chorus from Messiah, HWV 56*

George Frederic Handel

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† *All rise in body or spirit*

**WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS**

**Preacher**

Dr. R. Glen Miles, *Senior Minister*

**Worship Leaders**

Rev. Mary Kate Buchanan, *Minister of Pastoral Care*

Rev. Sarah Kientz, *Minister to Youth and Camp Akita*

Rev. Jim Long, *Minister of Pastoral Care*

Tim Vansant, *Seminary Intern*

**Readers**

**First Lesson:** Jodi Patton (9 pm)

Rose Konrath (11 pm)

**Second Lesson:** Tim Vansant (9 & 11 pm)

**Third Lesson:** Jason Milligan (9 pm)

Steven Miles (11 pm)

**Fourth Lesson:** Ella Walker (9 pm)

Kara Levell and Maggie Zook (11 pm)

**Fifth Lesson:** Rev. Jim Long (9 & 11 pm)

**Sixth Lesson:** Rev. Mary Kate Buchanan (9 & 11 pm)

**Lighting the Christ Candle**

Jim and Clare Long (9 pm)

Glen and Julie Miles (11 pm)

## MINISTRY OF MUSIC

Dr. C. Andrew Blosser, *Director of Music*  
Amy Johnston Blosser, *Associate Director of Music*  
Cambridge Choir  
Chancel Choir  
Lane Champa, *Concert Master*

## THE ORCHESTRA

### **Violin I**

Lane Champa  
Zoran Stoyanovich  
David Edge  
Robert Firdman  
Joseph Lin

### **Violin II**

Olev Viro  
Laura Masonbrink  
Nora Dukart  
Jane Nolte  
Cecilia Martin

### **Viola**

Vanessa Ripley  
Fred Ripley  
Oliver Martin

### **Cello**

Wendy Morton  
Nikita Annenkov

### **Double Bass**

Jim Bates

### **Flute**

Kimberlee Goodman  
Tom Regouski

### **Oboe**

Gretchen Myers  
Robert Royce

### **Clarinet**

David Thomas  
Bob Pfeiffer

### **Bassoon**

Betsy Sturdevant  
Scott Hanratty

### **Horn**

Julia Rose  
Brian Mangrum  
Laura Pitkin

### **Trumpet**

Luke Bingham  
Matt Pileski

### **Trombone**

James Seymour  
Wayne Rickert  
Alex Brough

### **Timpani**

Clay Schneider

### **Piano**

Sally R. Beske  
Suzanne Newcomb

*The beautiful cover of the Christmas Eve worship bulletin was designed by Ned Moore, and has been used every year since he created it in 1975.*

*(Please recycle your bulletins, if not keeping them, in the bins at each exit.)*

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***To decrease the spread of COVID-19, candles will not be distributed this year.  
All persons age 2 and older are required to wear a mask.***

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<sup>(1)</sup> Adapted from A Sanctified Art | [sanctifiedart.org](http://sanctifiedart.org)

<sup>(2)</sup> Adapted from A Prayer Written by Rev. Sarah Speed | A Sanctified Art | [sanctifiedart.org](http://sanctifiedart.org)

### **Household Prayer for Christmas Eve \***

#### **Evening**

Though I walk in darkness, O Lord, I will not be afraid—for I know that the morning will come, and the great light of your glory will shine all around me; through Jesus, the light of the world. Amen.

### **Household Prayers for Christmas Day \***

#### **Morning**

Gracious and Holy God, I thank you for the darkness and the light, for sleeping and waking, for the privilege of safety and shelter, of warmth and health, and I ask your help for all who do not have these comforts. Guide me on this holy day to pray for your world with a whole heart and to see in myself, and in family, friends, neighbors, and strangers, what you see; each one a beloved child. Give me wisdom this day to rejoice in your gifts, in Jesus' name. Amen.

#### **Evening**

God of Earth and all stars, thank you for this day when you call all people to gather in your loving embrace, by many names and traditions, in lands far and near. Thank you for the rejoicing in my life, and for your promise of steadfast love when my days are hard with sorrows. Surround me now with the love that will not let me go, and give me rest, in Jesus' name. Amen.

\*Adapted from *Feasting on the Word Worship Companion*, edited by Kimberly Bracken Long. (Westminster John Knox Press, 2013)

