



Welcome!

First Congregational Church
of Webster Groves
United Church of Christ

Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.

December 24, 2020
Christmas Eve



*We respond to God's call by welcoming everyone
regardless of ability, age, ethnicity, race, gender identity,
sexual orientation or socio-economic background.*

*To proclaim in word and deed the love of Christ, we affirm that
all may share in the full life, ministry, fellowship, responsibilities
and blessing of our congregation.*

*No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome here.*

ORDER OF WORSHIP

A CHRISTMAS BLESSING

Blue Christmas
Martin Mills, soloist

Billy Hayes and J. W. Johnson

PRELUDE

TOLLING THE BELL AND LIGHTING THE ALTAR CANDLES

CALL TO WORSHIP (Responsive—Leader; **People**)

Elyse von Weise

This is the night we have waited for.

It is the most beautiful night of the year.

It is the night of shepherds and stable and of humble people everywhere!

It is the night of our dear Savior's birth!

CAROL

O Come, All Ye Faithful
Leon Burke III, soloist

Traditional

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... Christ the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels: sing in exultation!
O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above,
"Glory to God, all glory in the highest!"
O come, let us adore him... Christ the Lord!

AT THE ADVENT WREATH

The Christ Candle

Aiden and Ryan White-Lenard

Because God so loves the world,

This beautiful and broken world,

This divided and distanced and world,

This warming and burning world,

This lost and hurting world,

God's love is made flesh.

For such a time as this,

A child is born unto us.

For such a time as this,

The light of Christ shines upon us.

In a stinky stable turned birthing room,

New visions of family and community are born.

By the surprising subversion of God's in-breaking love,

The burden of injustice is thrown off.

Through the ages-old song of angels and shepherds,

God's glory is proclaimed.

On this holy night, the one we've been watching for is here.

On this holy night, the time we've been waiting for is now.

Let us rejoice together!

Glory to God in the highest, and peace and goodwill to all!

The Christ candle is lighted.

**ALL: FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS,
THE CHRIST CHILD COMES TO US.
FOR SUCH AS TIME AS THIS, GOD'S LOVE IS BORN IN US.
JOY TO THE WORLD!**

INTERLUDE

O Holy Night

Adolphe Adam

Jonathan Brader, vocal and guitar

A CHRISTMAS TABLEAU

THE ANNUNCIATION

Scripture

Luke 1:26-31

Kelsey Tolson

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And the angel came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹ But she was much perplexed by these words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus."

Christmas Carol

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Charles Wesley

Leon Burke III, vocal and piano

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

THE BIRTH

Scripture

Luke 2:1-7

Gwen Denoon

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

Christmas Carol

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Phillips Brooks

Kari Alca, soloist

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.

THE SHEPHERDS

Scripture

Luke 2:8-14

Beatrice Byrne

⁸ In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

¹⁰ 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: ¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom God favors!”

Christmas Carol

The First Nowell

Traditional

David Taylor, soloist

The first Nowell the angels 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.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell! Born is the king of Israel!

AT THE MANGER

Scripture

Luke 2:15-20

Nina Thompson

¹⁵ When the angels had left the shepherds and gone into heaven, they 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.” ¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Christmas Carol

What Child Is This

Wm. C. Dix

Leon Burke III, soloist

What child is this who, laid to rest on Mary’s lap, is sleeping,
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the king whom shepherds guard and angels sing.
Haste, haste to bring him laud, the Babe, the son of Mary!

THE MAGI

Scripture

Matthew 2:1-2, 7-11

Francis Byrne

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the East came to Jerusalem, ² asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.”

³ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴ and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.

⁵ They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

⁶ ‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.’ ”

⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸ Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” ⁹ When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹ On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Christmas Carol

We Three Kings of Orient Are

John Henry Hopkins, Jr.

(Paul Cereghino, Phil Shoulberg, Mark Cereghino)

We three kings of Orient are bearing gifts, we traverse afar
Field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star!

Frankincense to offer have I.
Incense holds a Deity nigh:
Prayer and praising, all men raising,
Worship him God on high!

Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume
Breathes a life of gathering gloom:
Suffering, sighing, bleeding, dying,
Sealed in a stone, cold tomb.

Born a king on Bethlehem’s plain,
Gold I bring to crown him again.
King forever, ceasing never,
Over us all to reign.

O star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect Light!

PRESENTATION OF GIFTS FOR THE MANGER

Ryan and Aiden White-Lenard

The Magi brought gifts to the Christ Child to honor him. We invite you present your own gifts at our virtual manger by giving to those who have little. Please either send a check to First Congregational Church, 10 W. Lockwood Ave., Webster Groves, MO 63119, with the word "Manger" in the memo line; or go to our website's Donate page, and give electronically. All Gifts for the Manger go to Gateway 180 Homeless Services.

Christmas Carol

Away in a Manger

Traditional

Kari Alca, soloist

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep in the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the poor Baby wakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

Prayer of Dedication

Good Christian friends, rejoice!

Let all the beloved of God rejoice!

All creation groaning, rejoice!

Everyone who has felt beaten down or alone, rejoice!

Heaven and earth, rejoice!

**ALL: JESUS OUR SAVIOR IS BORN TODAY! CHRIST OUR LORD
WAS BORN FOR THIS! LOVE, OUR LIGHT, SHINES BRIGHTLY
THROUGH OUR GIFTS! MAY OUR OFFERINGS, BY GOD'S
BLESSING, BECOME HOPE RENEWED AND LIFE RESTORED.
AMEN.**

PRAYER FOR CHRISTMAS

Rev. David Denoon, *Pastor*

CANDLELIGHT CAROL

Silent Night, Holy Night

Franz Gruber and Joseph Mohr

David Taylor, soloist

Wherever you are, we encourage you to light candles and put out your house lights for the singing of this carol.

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:
Glory streams from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing, "Hallelujah!"
"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

Elyse von Weise

POSTLUDE

Let Heaven and Nature Sing

Chancel Choir and Soloists

CODA TO CHRISTMAS 2020

A Wish
(Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas)

David Taylor
Ralph Blane

Cover Art: James Tissot (French, 1836-1902). The Angel and the Shepherds (L'ange et les bergers), 1886-1894. Opaque watercolor over graphite on gray wove paper - Brooklyn Museum



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