



THE
United Church
OF THE **San Juans**

Comfort and Joy
Christmas Eve Worship
December 24, 2020

CAROL SING

WELCOMING CHRISTMAS

Leader: This—tonight—is the meeting place of heaven and earth. For tonight we remember the stable in which God keeps his appointment to meet his people.

People: Tonight, a child is born for us. Unto us a son has been given. We shall call him Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace.

Leader: Bethlehem was not the hub of the universe, nor was the stable a gathering place for the rich and famous.

People: It was a place of welcome to all, most of all, the meek and lowly. We all are welcome here.

Leader: This is the place where God kept and where God keeps his promise.

People: Come, let us see what the Lord has done! Glory to God in the highest! And on earth, peace and goodwill to all!

PREPARING THE WAY FOR CHRIST TO COME

As you enter the sanctuary, you are invited to lay your strip of swaddling cloth in the manger as a symbol of welcome and a sign of your intention to make a place for Christ to enter your life anew this year. Please move quickly into the sanctuary and fill the seats from the back of the sanctuary to the front so we can continue maintaining safe distance between family groups. When all are gathered, we will continue worship with the lighting of the Christ candle

ANTHEM *Coventry Carol* (Old English, Arr. Sir John Stainer)

UCSJ ENSEMBLE

Lullay, Thou little tiny Child,
By, by, lully, lullay.
Lullay, Thou little tiny Child,
By, by, lully, lullay.

O sisters too, how may we do
For to preserve this day,
This poor Youngling, for whom we sing
By, by, lully, lullay?

Herod, the king, in his raging,
Charged he hath this day,
His men of might, in his own sight,
All children young to slay.

Then woe is me, poor Child, for Thee,
And ever mourn and say,
For Thy parting nor say nor sing,
By, by, lully, lullay.

Lighting of the Christ Candle

Leader: On this holy night, we remember the gifts of God for which we have been waiting with eager anticipation: hope, peace, joy and love. Tonight, as we light this last candle, the Christ candle, we celebrate the one who came to bring God's good and perfect gifts for us.

People: Lord of brilliant light, shine in our hearts tonight. Bring us to the manger with such longing for your love that our hearts are cracked open to receive you and to share your love with others.

Leader: O Wondrous God of the stars, we come with breathless wonder to see the babe who will change our lives. We hear the names "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace," and we are in awe. You have touched the earth this night with your unconditional love. Touch us—touch our hearts and minds and souls. May we never tire of this story. May we never take it for granted. In the name of our coming Lord, Jesus, we pray.

People: Amen.

Anthem *O Holy Night* (John S. Dwight, words; Adolphe C. Adam, music)

UCSJ ENSEMBLE

O holy night, the stars are brightly shining,
It is the night of the dear Savior's birth.
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
Till he appeared and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!
Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices!
O night divine! O night when Christ was born!
O night divine! O night, O night divine!

Truly he taught us to love one another;
His law is love and his gospel is peace.
Chains shall he break, for the slave is our brother,
And in his name all oppression shall cease.
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raising,
Let all within us praise his holy name.
Christ is the Lord! O praise his name forever!
His power and glory evermore proclaim!
His power and glory evermore proclaim!

CONFESSION OF OUR SIN AND ASSURANCE OF GOD'S GRACE

Leader: O Word made flesh, you have come into our midst as light and wisdom, desiring to be known to us in our lives and to be found in the world around us. Open our eyes and our ears and our hearts to recognize you where you dwell—in our midst—challenging, heartening, lighting the way to truth, peace, justice. Let us confess our sin in your presence and in the presence of one another.

Silence for personal reflection

Leader: God of goodness and loving kindness,

People: We confess that we have sinned against you and our neighbors. We have turned away from your invitation to new life. We have turned away from those who need us. Turn us back to you. Forgive our sins—those we know and those known only to you, for the sake of the one who came to live among us, Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

Leader: Hear the good news of Christmas! God's love knows no bounds. It is so deep and so profound that God came in human flesh to let you know that you are forgiven and beloved. With all who come to the manger, rejoice in this amazing gift of grace.

People: Amen.

ANTHEM

Rocking Carol (Trad. Czech)

UCSJ ENSEMBLE

Baby Jesus peaceful lie, calmly lie,
We will sing a lullaby.
We will rock you, rock you, rock you,
We will rock you, rock you, rock you,
Close your eyes and sleep so still,
We will shelter you from ill.

Baby Jesus sleep in calm, perfect calm,
We will shelter you from harm.
We will rock you, rock you, rock you,
We will rock you, rock you, rock you,
Slumber now in blissful rest,
Son of God by Heaven blest.

CHRISTMAS GOSPEL

Luke 2:1-20

ANTHEM

Sing We Now of Christmas (French carol, 15th century)

UCSJ ENSEMBLE

Sing we now of Christmas, Noel, sing we here!
Hear our grateful praises to the Babe so dear.

Angels called to shepherds, "Leave your flocks at rest,
journey forth to Bethlehem, find the lambkin blest." **Refrain**

Refrain
Sing we Noel, the King is born, Noel!
Sing we now of Christmas, sing we now Noel!

In Bethlehem they found him; Joseph and Mary mild,
Seated by the manger, watching the holy child. **Refrain**

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

THE NINTH WOMAN

PASTOR PAM STOFFERAHN

ANTHEM

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming (German, 16th c.; arr. Michael Praetorius) UCSJ ENSEMBLE

Lo, how a rose e'er blooming
From tender stem hath sprung,
Of jesse's lineage coming
As men of old have sung
It came, a flow'ret bright,
Amid the cold of winter
When half spent was the light.

Isaia 'twas foretold it,
The rose I have in mind,
With Mary we behold it,
The virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright
She bore to us a Savior,
When half-spent was the night.

This flower, whose fragrance tender
With sweetness fills the air,
Dispels with glorious splendor
The darkness everywhere.
True man yet very God,
From sin and death he saves us,
And lightens every load.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Leader: . . . Lord Jesus, in your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

HOLY COMMUNION

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us,
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Instrumental Improvisation- KATY KRISTOFFERSEN

*This is the Lord's Table, and all are welcome here. Servers will bring communion to you. All service is grape juice.
Gluten-free communion is available. Just let your server know if that is your preference.*

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING AND PRAYER

Anthem *On Christmas Night All Christians Sing* (English carol; harm. Ralph Vaughan Williams) UCSJ ENSEMBLE

On Christmas night all Christians sing to hear the news the angels bring;
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 sad, since our Redeemer made us glad?
Then why should we on earth be sad, since our Redeemer made us glad,
When from our sin he set us free, all for to gain our liberty?

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

CANDLELIT SINGING OF SILENT NIGHT

As you exit the front door of the sanctuary, you will receive your candle. Please move quickly out to the sidewalks, maintaining six foot spacing between family groups. When all are gathered, we will light our candles and begin singing together.

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 hosts sing Alleluia,
Christ the Saviour is born!
Christ the Saviour is born

Silent night, holy night!
Son of God love's pure light.
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
With dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth

BLESSING

Leader: Go now in wonder. Go to bring light to those in darkness, joy to those who can find no joy, peace to those whose hearts are anxious, hope to those who fear the future, and love to everyone you meet. Go with the songs of angels in your ears and the love of God in your hearts. Go and spread the good news, Jesus Christ is born.

People: **Thanks be to God!**

WORSHIP LEADERS

PASTOR PAM STOFFERAHN

CHRIST CANDLE LIGHTERS: SHELLEY AND BOB BECKER

READER: ROBERT MCDANIEL

VOCAL ENSEMBLE: ALICE GOERTZ, SUE AND DAVE CONRAD, VINCE SNOWBARGER

MUSICIANS: KATY KRISTOFFERSEN

Wishing you a very merry Christmas!