

EXPERIENCING THE LIGHT OF GOD



2021 CHRISTMAS EVE

THE UNITED CHURCH OF THE SAN JUANS

UCSJRIDGWAY.ORG

Welcome

Throughout the season of Advent we have been waiting. Awaiting patiently for the hope, peace, love and joy of God. Tonight our waiting is blessed with a gift from God. Tonight we experience the Light of God in the eternal Gift of Salvation.

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PRELUDE *O Little Town of Bethlehem* (Lewis Redner and Phillips Brooks)

BOB LARSON, ACCORDION;
PAM LARSON, FLUTE

O Holy Night (Adolphe Adam and Placide Cappeau)

UCSJ ENSEMBLE

SCRIPTURE'S PROPHETIC PROMISE

*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.* MICAH 5:2

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

VERSE 3

**O Come, thou Wisdom from on high,
And order all things, far and nigh;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And cause us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!**

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

Kristoffersen Family: 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. His authority shall grow continually and there shall be endless peace. ISAIAH 9:6

Kristoffersen Family: With the Advent candles of Hope, Peace, Love, and Joy, on this Christmas Eve, we light the Candle of Light, the Christ Candle, for the coming of the promised Messiah, Emmanuel, which means *God with us!*

PASTOR'S GREETING

REV. CHARLES PACKARD

CHRISTMAS EVE CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: We journey toward the Light,
People: Watching every step of the way.

Pastor: For a new star in the sky,
People: For guidance in our daily lives.

Pastor: Following the Light,
People: Sensing we are not alone.

Pastor: Angels are all around us,
People: The prayers of saints surround us.

Pastor: We journey toward the Light,
People: Hoping we shall find a baby in a manger.

Pastor: A simple sign that God loves us still.
All: And reason enough to sing God's praise.

PROCLAMATION HYMN*

O Come, All Ye Faithful

**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;**

Refrain
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;
O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest;**

Refrain
**Yea, Lord, we greet Thee,
born this happy morning;
Jesus, to Thee be all glory given;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing.**

Refrain

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION*

**Tonight, as the Scriptures are read, proclaimed, and sung, come to us,
Lord Jesus. Be born in us this night, in our hearts, our minds, our lives.
May the light of your life be kindled in us, And through the power of
the Holy Spirit, lead us in our journey to reflect the shining truth,
of God with us, God for us, and God in us. Amen.**

* *Those who desire, may stand*

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Luke 2:1-7

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

HYMN OF ANTICIPATION

O Little Town of Bethlehem

**O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dream-less 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.**

**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.**

SHEPHERDS HEAR THE GOOD NEWS

Luke 2:8-10

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 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: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

HYMN OF REFLECTION

The First Nowell

**The first Nowell the angel did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay a-keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.**

Refrain:

***Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
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**

Refrain

THE SIGN OF SALVATION

Luke 2:12

This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.”

HYMN OF REFLECTION

Away in a Manger

**Away in a manger, no crib for his 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 on the hay.**

**Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
And fit us for heaven to live with thee there.**

THE DIVINE PROCLAMATION

Luke 2:13-14

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,
“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

*PROCLAMATION HYMN

Angels We Have Heard on High

**Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria in Excelsis Deo; Gloria in Excelsis Deo.**

**Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heavenly song?
Gloria in Excelsis Deo; Gloria in Excelsis Deo.**

**Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria in Excelsis Deo; Gloria in Excelsis Deo.**

*PRAYER OF PRAISE

**Gloria!
Gloria in Excelsis Deo!
We rejoice in God's steadfast presence in our lives,
and in God's unique presence
in the life of Jesus of Nazareth — born of Mary,
growing through childhood into an adult ministry,
in all his life manifesting the peace, love, and justice of God;
his voice undimmed by the centuries,
his call and his promise as clear to us
as it was to his disciples so long ago.
In his precious name we pray. Amen.**

GOSPEL

Luke 2:15-20

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." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

RESPONSE TO THE GOSPEL

What Child Is This

**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?**

Refrain:

***This, this is Christ the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,
the Babe, the Son of Mary!***

CHRISTMAS EVE MESSAGE

Experiencing the Light

REV. CHARLES PACKARD

HYMN OF PROCLAMATION

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

Refrain

***Go, tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and everywhere;
Go tell it on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born.***

**While shepherds kept their watching, o'er silent flocks by night.
Behold through-out the heavens, there shone a holy light. *Refrain***

**Down in a lowly manger, the humble Christ was born,
And God sent us Salvation that blessed Christmas morn. *Refrain***

RESPONDING TO GOD'S BLESSINGS WITH OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

*Thank you for your generosity in supporting our ministries.
Gifts may be placed in the basket located at the entrance of the sanctuary.*

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

What Child Is This

**So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh;
Come, one and all, to own Him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.**

Refrain:

***This, this is Christ the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,
the Babe, the Son of Mary!***

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING, DEDICATION 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 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, forever. Amen.**

LIGHTING OF PEACE CANDLES

When passing the flame, please hold the lit candle upright and allow the person seated next to you to dip an unlit candle into the flame. When extinguishing your flame, please blow gently and keep the candle upright for a few seconds. Upon leaving the church there will be baskets to return the candles.

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD IN SCRIPTURE AND SONG

The Gospel of John and Silent Night

IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD, AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD, AND THE WORD WAS GOD.
IN HIM WAS LIFE, AND THE LIFE WAS THE LIGHT OF ALL PEOPLE. THE LIGHT SHINES IN THE DARKNESS,
AND THE DARKNESS DID NOT OVERCOME IT.

**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.**

THERE WAS A MAN SENT FROM GOD, WHOSE NAME WAS JOHN. HE HIMSELF WAS NOT THE LIGHT,
BUT HE CAME TO TESTIFY TO THE LIGHT. THE TRUE LIGHT, WHICH ENLIGHTENS EVERYONE,
WAS COMING INTO THE WORLD.

**Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing: "Alleluia;
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born."**

THE LIGHT WAS IN THE WORLD, AND THE WORLD CAME INTO BEING THROUGH HIM;
YET THE WORLD DID NOT KNOW HIM. BUT TO ALL WHO RECEIVED HIM, WHO BELIEVED IN HIS NAME,
HE GAVE POWER TO BECOME CHILDREN OF GOD.

**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.**

AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH AND LIVED AMONG US,
AND WE HAVE SEEN HIS GLORY, THE GLORY AS OF A FATHER'S ONLY SON,
FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH. FROM HIS FULLNESS WE HAVE ALL RECEIVED, GRACE UPON GRACE.

**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.**

PASTORAL CHARGE AND CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

PASTOR: Tonight, depart in peace, and in your journey take with you the Good News that God has come in the world to journey with us.

ALL: We rejoice, and sing praises to God with us, Emmanuel.

PASTOR: May we depart and in our journey reflect as shining examples of the Word that became flesh.

**ALL: We will welcome the challenge of discipleship.
We will offer ourselves as God's ministers.
We will go forth in hope, peace, joy, and love.
We go forth singing Joy to the World!**

HYMN OF JOY*

Joy to the World

**Joy to the world! the Lord is come:
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and heaven and nature sing.**

**Joy to the world! the Savior reigns:
Let us our songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**

**He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders of His love.**

CHRISTMAS BLESSING

REV. PACKARD

POSTLUDE *Go, Tell It On the Mountain* (Trad. Spiritual; Arr. Mark Hayes)

DALE LAIDLAW
AND KATY KRISTOFFERSEN, PIANO

*Thank you for worshipping with us.
Please join us Sundays at 10am.*

**WE ARE AFFILIATED WITH:
THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA),
THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AMERICA
THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**