

Lighting the Advent Wreath: Christ Candle

Carol, Rachel and Henry Ropella

Reader One: Throughout these past weeks, we have watched and waited in expectant hope. We have waited with generations past and those to come. We have watched for the new world promised to the ancient prophets—a world characterized by peace, joy, and love.

Reader Two: We have waited and watched for the birth of Jesus, for the coming of Christmas, for the entry into our messy human world of Emmanuel: God With Us.

Reader One: We wait and watch from within the muddle of our world, seeking to make room for God among us. Room for grace and joy and peace and love to pierce our present moment. We watch for the glimpses of God’s presence, for moments of compassion and transformation. Let us light these candles as we rejoice in the light that shines within and across the darkness. And let us declare, once again—

All: Joy to the world, Emmanuel has come! Hallelujah. Amen.

Musical Nativity

“Do You Hear What I Hear?”

Julee Reckin-Thierer, Sifia Jevne, Richie Price, April Price

“Away in A Manger”

Annie Rubenzer, Eve Rubenzer, Mae Simpson, Agnes Welsch, Tom Schmelzle, Jon Blomquist, Dawn Ascher

THE BIRTH OF JESUS IN READINGS AND SONGS

First Lesson	Isaiah 9:2, 6-7	Andrew Mercil
Carol	“O Little Town of Bethlehem”	#2 on songsheet
Second Lesson	Luke 2:1, 3-7	Connie Flug
Carol	“What Child is This?”	Richie Price, April Price
Third Lesson	Luke 2:8-14	Andrew Mercil
Carol	“It Came Upon A Midnight Clear”	#3 on songsheet
Fourth Lesson	Luke 2:15-16	Connie Flug
Carol	“Angels We Have Heard on High”	#4 on songsheet
Fifth Lesson	Luke 2:17-20	Andrew Mercil
Carol	“Hark the Herald Angels Sing”	#5 on songsheet

A TIME TO RESPOND IN FAITHFULNESS

Offering

A portion of tonight’s offering will be given to the UCC Christmas Fund, which supports medical, crisis and pension needs of clergy and lay church employees who have retired.

Offertory

“Coventry Carol”

Meg Burkett/Evelyn Rohrbach

(arr. Mark Hayes)

Offertory Prayer *(in unison)*

Emmanuel is born among us. Our hearts are full; our joy is boundless. God With Us, receive these gifts of love for the well-being of your people. Amen.

SERVICE OF LIGHTS

Anthem "O, Holy Night" Isaiah May and Evelyn Rohrbach

Contemporary Readings Rev. Kathleen Remund

"First Coming" by Madeline L'Engle

"I Will Light Candles this Christmas" by Howard Thurman

***Candle Lighting** "Peace, Peace" (Powell, arr. Rouse) Senior Choir
The choir will sing "Peace, Peace" as an introduction to "Silent Night." As they do so, the ushers will come to the start of each row to light our candles. We will pass the light, candle by candle, down the row and when directed, we will join the choir singing "Silent Night." Candles will remain lit through the singing of "Silent Night" and the Benediction.

***Carol** "Silent Night" #6 on song page

***Benediction**

Leader: On this holy night, receive the mystery of the Word made Flesh—do not try to resist it or argue against it or define it. On this holy night, rejoice in the madness that the Maker of the stars has come among us. May our hearts be open like a cradle so that Christ can be born in each soul tonight—and from there, flood every heart with light. And may Emmanuel—God with us and for us—be once again incarnate in this world.

All: Amen.

***Extinguishing Candles**

As you depart, please leave your candles in one of the buckets set out by the entrances to the sanctuary.

***Closing Carol** "Joy to the World" #7 on song page

Postlude "Joy to the World" Evelyn "Rohrbach"
(D. Hustad)

The staff wishes all of you a joyous
and hope-filled Christmas!

Staff

Kathleen Remund, Ordained Minister

Karen Miller, Director of Faith Formation

Organist, Evelyn Rohrbach

Mary Burkett, Music and Choral Director, Worship Coordinator

Dave Ottman, Livestreaming Coordinator

Cathie Weissman, Bell Choir Director

Mary Burkett, Interim Office Manager

Gail Skamfer, Custodian

Thanks to all who purchased poinsettias. Please take them home with you after the service.

You are welcome to stay for our Christmas Eve concert, which will begin at 7pm and last for 30-40 minutes. It will also be broadcast outside.

Credits

The Call to Worship and Opening Prayer were adapted from “In the Fullness of Time,” by Ian Fraser, originally published in the book *Hay and Stardust*, by Ruth Burgess, Wild Goose Publications, 2005.

The Lighting of the Advent Wreath: Christ Candle was adapted from “Advent Candle-Lighting Liturgy 2022” by Derek Weber, posted on the *Discipleship Ministries* website, www.umcdiscipleship.org.

The Prayer of Dedication was adapted from one posted on *Discipleship Ministries*, <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org>.

The Benediction was adapted from “First Coming” by Madeline L’Engle and a benediction written by Nancy C. Townley and posted on *Ministry Matters*, <https://www.ministrymatters.com>.

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