

ST. JOHN UNITED CHURCH
A UNITED METHODIST/PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA) COMMUNITY
WILDE LAKE INTERFAITH CENTER • COLUMBIA, MARYLAND
UNITED IN LOVE – UNITED FOR SERVICE

December 29, 2024

FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS // IN-PERSON & ONLINE SERVICE

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Lay Leaders: Lisa Cooper Green, Jen McClurg, Dawn Barnes

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WE GATHER IN GOD'S NAME

PRELUDE

Patricia Hammer
Accompanist

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Lisa Cooper Green

OPENING SONG

“Angels, from the Realms of Glory”

GTG #143

Angels, from the realms of glory, wing your flight o'er all the earth;
you, who sang creation's story, now proclaim Messiah's birth:

Refrain

*Come and worship, come and worship
Worship Christ, the newborn king!*

Shepherds, in the fields abiding, watching o'er your flock by night,
God with us is now residing; yonder shines the infant light:

Refrain

Sages, leave your contemplations; brighter visions beam afar;
seek the great desire of nations; you have seen his natal star:

Refrain

All creation, join in praising God the Father, Spirit, Son,
evermore your voices raising to the eternal Three in One:

Refrain

CALL TO WORSHIP

The Lord will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son,
And shall name him Immanuel (God is with us).

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the
lion and the fatling together,

And a little child shall lead them.

A child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulder, and he is
named:

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

OPENING PRAYER

Lisa Cooper Green

**Dear God, in sending us Jesus, to be born of Mary, your Word became flesh, and we
have seen a new and radiant vision of your glory. His name is above every name, the
Prince of peace and Savior of all. In him we have been brought out of darkness into
your marvelous light. Amen.**

Isaiah 7:14

¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.

Matthew 1:18 – 25

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.’ ²² All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ ‘Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel’, which means, ‘God is with us.’

²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, ²⁵ but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

CAROL

“What Child Is This”

GTG #145

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!

Why lies he in such mean estate
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear, for sinners here
The silent word is pleading
Nails, spear shall pierce him through
The cross be borne for me, for you
Hail, hail the Word made flesh
The babe, the son of Mary!

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
Raise, raise the song on high
The virgin sings her lullaby
Joy, joy for Christ is born
The babe, the son of Mary!

SCRIPTURE SET #2

Dawn Barnes

Isaiah 11:6 – 9

⁶ The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.

⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

⁸ The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.

⁹ They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Luke 2:8 – 21

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 he favors!'

¹⁵ 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.' 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.

²¹ After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

CAROL

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"

GTG #121

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 the earth.

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.

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!

Isaiah 9:6 – 7

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

⁷His 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 onwards and for evermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

John 14:27

²⁷Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

CAROL

“Away in a Manger”

GTG #115

Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on 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 side until morning is nigh.

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.

SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS

Dawn Barnes

PASTORAL PRAYER

Dawn Barnes

THE LORD’S PRAYER

**Our God in heaven, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**

OFFERTORY SONG OF REFLECTION

“It Came Upon the Midnight Clear”

GTG #123

It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old
From angels bending near the earth, to touch their harps of gold
Peace on the earth, goodwill to all, from heaven's all-gracious King
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing

Still through the cloven skies they come with peaceful wings unfurled
And still their heavenly music floats o'er all the weary world
Above its sad and lowly plains they bend on hovering wing
And ever o'er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing

Yet with the woes of sin and strife the world has suffered long
Beneath the heavenly hymn have rolled two thousand years of wrong
And we at war on earth hear not the tidings that they bring
O, hush the noise and cease the strife to hear the angels sing!

And you, beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low
Who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow
Look now, for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing
O, rest beside the weary road and hear the angels sing

For lo, the days are hastening on, by prophets seen of old
When with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold
When peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling
And the whole world give back the song which now the angels sing

PRAYER OF GENEROSITY

God of goodness and kindness, whose mercy is from everlasting to everlasting, all that we have are gifts of your grace. Accept what we bring as offerings of praise. Let us be thankful for the hope of new life we receive in Christ Jesus. Amen.

CLOSING SONG

“Go Tell It on the Mountain”

GTG #136

(African-American spiritual; Stanzas: John W. Work III, 1940;
harm: Melva Wilson Costen, 1987)

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, throughout the heavens
there shone a holy light.

Refrain

The shepherds feared and trembled
when lo! above the earth
rang out the angel chorus
that hailed our Savior's birth.

Refrain

Down in a lowly stable
the humble Christ was born,
and God sent us salvation
that blessed Christmas morn.

Refrain

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Patricia Hammer
Accompanist
