

FOUNDED 1716
North Haven
Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
Christmas Eve



North Haven, Connecticut
An Open & Affirming Congregation

**NORTH HAVEN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

Thursday, December 24, 2021

Christmas Eve

PRELUDE: *Suite of Christmas Carols*

Carl Bloom

***OPENING HYMN:** "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

P132

1 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!	2 God from true God, and Light from Light eternal, born of a virgin, to earth he comes! Only-begotten Son of God the Father: [Refrain] 3 Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation, sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above! Glory to God, all glory in the highest: [Refrain] 4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning; Jesus, to thee be all glory giv'n! Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing: [Refrain]
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***THE CALL TO WORSHIP:**

Leader: Holy people, beloved of God, come. Come to follow the way prepared for you.

PEOPLE: Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth.

Leader: Once again the earth is surprised at a manger, as the glory of God transforms the commonplace..

PEOPLE: Let us go to Bethlehem and see what God has made known to us.

Leader: Experience the wonder of God's ways. Kneel in awe before life newly born.

ALL: Let us bring glory and praise to God for all that we have seen and heard!**

PRAYER OF INVOCATION:~*unison*

Gracious God, we pray this evening for all who have come with us to Bethlehem. We pray for all who are poor and cold and hungry like the shepherds, that they may hear good news. We pray for all who are wandering and searching like the magi, that they may find the place to leave their gifts and their burdens. We pray for all who are busy, hurried and preoccupied like the innkeeper, that they may know the peace that comes from genuine acts of hospitality. We pray for all like Herod who have power, that they may use it with good will. We pray for ourselves -- we who need comfort, peace and joy, even in this starlit season, and all the days of our lives. ^{###} Amen.

A WORD OF WELCOME

THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

Karlee Etter and Jeff Hutchins

A GIFT OF MUSIC: *O Holy Night*

Music by Adolphe-Charles Adam

Text by Placide Cappeau; translation by John S. Dwight

Arranged by Sally DeFord

O holy night, the stars are brightly shining,
It is the night of the dear Saviour'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;

Chorus

Fall on your knees, Oh hear the angel voices!
O night divine! O night when Christ was born.
O night, divine, O night, O night divine.

Led by the light of Faith serenely beaming;
With glowing hearts by his cradle we stand:
So, led by light of a star sweetly gleaming,
Here come the wise men from Orient land,
The King of Kings lay thus in lowly manger,
In all our trials born to be our friend;

Chorus

He knows our need, To our weakness no stranger!
Behold your King! Before Him lowly bend!
Behold your King! your King! before him bend!

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 raise we;
Let all within us praise his Holy name!

Chorus

Fall on your knees, Oh hear the angel voices!
O night divine! O night when Christ was born.
O night, divine, O night, O night divine.

THE PASTORAL PRAYER AND OUR LORD'S PRAYER (*trespasses*)

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass 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.

OUR CHRISTMAS OFFERING

*Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow
Praise God all creatures here below
Praise God above ye heavenly hosts
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Tune: Old Hundredth

*Prayer of Dedication

THE CHRISTMAS STORY - LESSONS AND CAROLS

A GIFT OF MUSIC: *Once in Royal David's City*

Verse 1 solo by Gabriella DeLuca

Congregation and Choir join on verse 2 and 4

V62

Gabriella Solo:

1 Once in royal David's city
stood a lowly cattle-shed,
where a mother laid her baby
in a manger for his bed.
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.

Congregation and Choir join:

2 He came down to earth from heaven,
who, with God is over all,
and his shelter was a stable,
and his cradle was a stall.
There among the poor and lowly
lived on earth our Saviour holy.

4 And our eyes at last shall see him,
through his own redeeming love;
for that child who seemed so helpless
is our Lord in heaven above;
and he leads his children on
to the place where he is gone.

THE ANNUNCIATION TO MARY: Luke 1:26-38

p. 1201

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

HERE ENDS THE READING. THANKS BE TO GOD.

Hymn: "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear" (vs. 1,2)

P 129

1 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, good will to men,
from heaven's all-gracious King."
The world in solemn stillness lay,
to hear the angels sing.

2 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.

THE PROCLAMATION TO JOSEPH: Matthew 1:18-25

p. 1147

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. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. 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. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

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

HERE ENDS THE READING. THANKS BE TO GOD.

1 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.

2 For Christ is born of Mary,
 and, gathered all above
 while mortals sleep, the angels keep
 their watch of wond'ring love.
 O morning stars, together
 proclaim the holy birth,
 and praises sing to God the King
 and peace to all the earth.

THE BIRTH OF JESUS: Luke 2:1-7

p. 1203

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.

HERE ENDS THE READING. THANKS BE TO GOD.

Hymn: "Jesus Our Brother" v.1,2

V56

1 Jesus, our brother, strong and good,
 was humbly born in a stable rude,
 and the friendly beasts around Him stood,
 Jesus, our brother, strong and good.

2 "I," said the donkey, shaggy and brown,
 "I carried His mother uphill and down,
 I carried His mother to Bethlehem town;
 I," said the donkey, shaggy and brown.

A CHRISTMAS STORY (Part One)

A GIFT OF MUSIC: *Night of Silence*
 Chancel Choir

By Daniel Kantor
 arr. John Ferguson

This modern Christmas anthem was recorded over the last three weeks in many different times and places. It was then mixed into one large musical offering for Christmas

Cold are the people, winter of life
 We tremble in shadows this cold endless night
 Frozen in the snow lie roses sleeping
 Flowers that will echo the sunrise
 Fire of hope is our only warmth
 Weary, it's flame will be dying soon.

Spirit among us, shine like the star
 Your light that guides shepherds kings from afar
 Shimmer in the sky so empty, lonely
 Rising in the warmth of your son's love
 Star unknowing of night and day
 Spirit we wait for your loving Son.

Voice in the distance, call in the night
 On wind you enfold us You speak of the light
 Gentle on the ear you whisper softly
 Rumours of a dawn so embracing
 Breathless love awaits darkened souls
 Soon will we know of the morning.

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

Karlee Etter and Jeff Hutchins

V7

Sung Response: "Hope Is a Star" v. 4
Love is a flame that burns in our heart,
Jesus has come and will never depart.
When God is a child there's joy in our song.
The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong,
And none shall be afraid.

THE SHEPHERDS: Luke 2:8-20

p. 1203

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

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.

HERE ENDS THE READING. THANKS BE TO GOD.

Hymn: "Jesus Our Brother" v.3,4

V56

3 "I," said the cow, all white and red,
"I gave Him my manger for his bed,
I gave Him hay to pillow His head;
I," said the cow, all white and red.

4 "I," said the sheep with curly horn,
"I gave Him my wool for His blanket warm,
He wore my coat on Christmas morn;
I," said the sheep with curly horn.

A CHRISTMAS STORY (Part Two)

THE FUTURE'S HOPE: John 1:1-14

p. 1236

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being 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.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. 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.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

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.

HERE ENDS THE READING. THANKS BE TO GOD.

Hymn: "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" (vs. 1,3)

P 120

1 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 hosts proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

3 Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth. [Refrain]

Refrain:

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King"

THE LIGHT GOES OUT AMONG US

Hymn: "Silent Night, Holy Night"

P 138

1 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.

3 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.

2 Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar,
heav'nly hosts sing, Alleluia!
Christ, the Savior, is born!
Christ, the Savior, is born!

*** CLOSING HYMN:** "Joy to the World"

P 130

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
let ev'ry heart prepare him room
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

3 No more let sins and sorrows grow
nor thorns infest the ground;
he comes to make his blessings flow
far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found,
far as, far as the curse is found.

2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let men their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

4 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.

***THE BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE: Fantasy on *Il est ne*

Richard Hudson

Church Office Staff:

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The Reverend Scott G. Morrow, Senior Pastor
Karlee Etter, Ministry Coordinator for Children
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MISSION

Our church's mission is to bind ourselves with Jesus Christ in:

- Worship together;
- Nurture of Christian discipleship; and
- Compassionate service to our community and beyond.

VISION

We are a hub for the larger community as a church of action:

- Conducting regular, robust worship in a responsible and relevant way in an ever changing and challenging world;
- Welcoming all people from different and diverse backgrounds to become a community of disciples together; and
- Involved in purposeful action and activities through the structure of self-directed Mission Teams.

VALUES

We:

- Pray together, encourage each other, and trust one another;
- Take personal responsibility for fellowship and our community; and
- Celebrate with honored traditions.

*Those who are able, please stand.

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THE CHURCH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED Monday and Tuesday, December 27 and 28. If you should have an urgent pastoral need, please leave a message at the church in the "Pastoral Emergency" voice-mail box which is checked regularly each day.

In Our Prayers This Week are: Linda Shannon, Betsy Gumbart, Marcia Foulds, Martha Swarney, Marlene Bellonio, Lorraine Burdge, Herb Schneider, Shirley Ryan, and Kerry Stewart.