



December 26, 2021

St. John's United Church of Christ

As believers in Jesus Christ, we strive with unconditional love and selflessness – using our God given gifts – to provide a nurturing shelter for those seeking a Christian home. We offer opportunities for spiritual growth through worship, education, fellowship, prayer and Christian action throughout our community and the world.

**Called by God
Sharing with the World**

December 26, 2021

First Sunday after Christmas

Meditation

Life will always provide matters for concern. Each day, however, brings with it reasons for joy. John McQuiston

Chimes

Prelude

Sing we now of Christmas
Gale Sterner, percussion

Welcome and Announcements

✝ Opening Hymn

O Little Town of Bethlehem

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 wondering love.
O morning stars together,
Proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the King,
And peace to men on earth!
3. How silently, how silently,
The wondrous Gift is giv'n;
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His Heav'n.

No ear may hear His coming,
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him still,
The dear Christ enters in.

4. 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!

Lifting up our Joys

Passing of the Peace

✝ Call to Worship (Congregation reads bold print)

Come let us welcome the Christmas child into our hearts

In this time of darkness, help us find the light.

Christ is the light of our world

Let us come as a congregation to call on that Light.

Bestow your grace upon us, Lord that we may be your light for others.

Let us all be a light in the darkness for others. Amen.

✝ Opening Prayer

✝ Prayer of Confession (*unison*)

Dear God, we often find ourselves surrounded by news of the darkness in the world. We give into the despair that darkness brings. We forget to seek the light of your Son. We lose our energy and focus on the good to be done. We become passive and pull into ourselves. Help us to be your lights in the world. Help us to draw energy and joy from doing the work you would have us do.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

Silent pause for reflection

Amen.

✝ Assurance of Forgiveness *(read responsively)*

You are not far from the kingdom of God, for in Christ we are given grace and forgiveness. Praise be to God! **Amen!**

Bible Readings

Matthew 25: 31-40

Alison Holler

John 1: 1-12

Kay Jones

Message

Children's Message and Blessing

Kay Jones

Meditation

The Darkness and Light of Being

Alison Holler and Kay Jones

Hymn of Response

O Holy Night

Verse 1

O Holy night! The stars are brightly shining
It is the night of our dear Savior's birth
Long lay the world in sin and error pining
'Til He appears 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, O Holy night, O night divine!

Verse 2

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
He knows our need, to our weakness is no stranger
Behold your King; before Him lowly bend
Behold your King; before Him lowly bend

Verse 3

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
Christ is the Lord; O praise His name forever!
His power and glory evermore proclaim
His power and glory evermore proclaim

✠The Apostle's Creed (unison)

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen. *(from the UCC Book of Worship)*

Giving our Gifts to God

✠Doxology

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

Prayers of the People

The Lord's Prayer (*unison*)

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.

Amen

✠ Closing Hymn *The First Noel*

1. The first Noel the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

Refrain:

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,
born is the King of Israel.

2. 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)

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,
born is the King of Israel.

3. And by the light of that same star
three Wise Men came from country far;
to seek for a king was their intent,
and to follow the star wherever it went.

(Refrain)

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,
born is the King of Israel.

4. This star drew nigh to the northwest,
o'er Bethlehem it took its rest;

and there it did both stop and stay,
right over the place where Jesus lay.

(Refrain)

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,
born is the King of Israel.

5. Then entered in those Wise Men three,
full reverently upon the knee,
and offered there, in his presence,
gold and myrrh and frankincense.

(Refrain)

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,
born is the King of Israel

✠ Sending Forth and Final Blessing

✠ Chimes/Meditation

Postlude *He is born - French Carol*



*The Altar Flowers are given to the Glory of God,
in memory of Mr. & Mrs. Leroy Miller,
Presented by Bill & Elaine Miller*

