

WORSHIP GUIDE for DECEMBER 24, 2021

SETTING YOUR SPACE

Merry Christmas Eve, friends! Below you'll find the order of worship for the 7 o'clock service tonight; it's our more traditional lessons and carols service. If you prefer to come at 9, we'll also be reading scripture and singing Christmas hymns, but it will be a simplified service, either outside in the courtyard, around the firepit, or in the Fireplace Room (just inside the Cows Street entrance). Everyone is welcome to either/both services, and to bring anyone with you who might be visiting. We just ask, as always, that everyone wears a mask, and please stay home if you're not feeling well.

If you are joining in at home, remember to gather a candle and something to light it with for our closing hymn, *Silent Night*, which we'll sing by candlelight. You might want to set up your Advent wreath to light those candles at the same time we light the ones in the sanctuary; we'll take the light from the Christ candle to light our own at the end of the service, remembering that each of us bears within us God's light and love, for ourselves and to share with the world. However you celebrate this evening, tomorrow, and this season, I pray you might be comforted and inspired by that promise and call.

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ORDER OF WORSHIP

Prelude - Muriel Dresser, Organist

**Prelude - Beckett Marksbury Page, Pianist; Parker Williams,
Pianist; Eliana James, Harpist**

Welcome - Rev. Erika Marksbury, Senior Pastor

Special Music: Carol of the Bells – Lara O’Brady, Mona Loner, Shelly Sanderlin, Heidi Reinker, Janet Langenwalter, Dave King, Gary Langenwalter, Jesse Cromer, Matt Reinker, Zach Reinker

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 11 – Joani Jernstedt

*A green shoot will sprout from Jesse’s stump,
from his roots a budding Branch.*

*The life-giving Spirit of God will hover over him,
the Spirit that brings wisdom and understanding,
The Spirit that gives direction and builds strength,
the Spirit that instills knowledge and Fear-of-God.
Fear-of-God will be all his joy and delight.*

*He won’t judge by appearances,
won’t decide on the basis of hearsay.*

*He’ll judge the needy by what is right,
render decisions on earth’s poor with justice.*

His words will bring everyone to awed attention.

A mere breath from his lips will topple the wicked.

*Each morning he’ll pull on sturdy work clothes and boots,
and build righteousness and faithfulness in the land.*

*The wolf will romp with the lamb, the leopard will nap with the kid.
Calf and lion will eat from the same trough,
and a little child will tend them.*

*Cow and bear will graze the same pasture,
their calves and cubs grow up together,
and the lion eat straw like the ox.*

*The nursing child will crawl over rattlesnake dens,
the toddler stick his hand down the hole of a serpent.*

Neither animal nor human will hurt or kill on my holy mountain.

*The whole earth will be brimming with knowing God-Alive,
a living knowledge of God ocean-deep, ocean-wide.*

Gathering Song: *In the Bleak Midwinter* (NC #128)

**- Jesse Cromer, Director of Music Ministries, Janet
Langenwalter, Dave King, Dave Ferry, Muriel Dresser**

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
in the bleak midwinter, long ago.

Our God transcends all heaven, earth, and its domain;
heaven and earth shall flee away when Christ comes to reign;
In the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed
the sovereign God almighty, Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels may have gathered there,
cherubim and seraphim thronged the midnight air;
But his mother only, in her maiden bliss,
worshiped the beloved with a kiss.

What can I offer, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.
If I were a wise one, I would do my part;
but what I can I offer: all my heart.

**Advent Candlelighting Liturgy - The Reinker Family
Christmas Eve: God-With-Us**

One: Advent is a time of expectation
and honesty.

**All: So even when
we are distracted and overwhelmed,
we remember the promise
of God-With-Us.**

One: And while we wait and work

for this promised coming,
All: we repent of the times
we haven't paid attention
to the hurt and the hope,
the struggle and the peace,
the sorrow and the joy,
the pain and the love, all around us.
One: We know that we each are
the bearers of your presence
to one another and to the world,
All: and the deep longing of our hearts
is communion with You
and with all that you have made.
One: We light this candle and we pray:
All: May the promise of God-with-us
be born again in us and
in our world this night.

Sung Response to Candlelighting

Shine a candle into the darkness, breathe new hope into our lives
Wind your blessed peace around us 'til the day when Christ arrives

Shine a candle into the darkness, breathe new peace into our lives
Wind your blessed joy around us 'til the day when Christ arrives

Shine a candle in the darkness, blow your blessed life into us

Shine a candle into the darkness, breathe new joy into our lives
Wind your blessed love around us 'til the day when Christ arrives

Shine a candle into the darkness, breathe new love into our lives
Wind your blessed hope around us 'til the day when Christ arrives

Shine a candle in the darkness, blow your blessed life into us

Shine a candle into the darkness, breathe Yourself into our lives
Send your blessed Child among us: 'tis the day when Christ arrives
Shine a candle in the darkness, blow your blessed life into us

Scripture: Luke 1, selected verses – FBC Children & Youth

(Kota Swaney; Sam, Katie & Molly Robinson; Kayleen & Keira McMillan & Zander Dressel; Rowan & Eowyn Clayton; Sophie & Grace Kirschnick; Oscar & Beckett Marksbury Page; Zorissa & Eliana James; Adie Spence; Edie Wilkins; Tayah & Kelton Curry; Momo Scarboro-Ford; Alisha Payne; Parker Williams; Liam & Izzy Ward; Aliyah Ferry & Jacob Harmon; Dash & Griffin Diesburg; Emma & Jack Linder; Bert & Frances Huff; Diego, Johnathan, Annabelle & Selina Pacheco; Violet & Eli Zimmerman)

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a young woman named Mary; she was engaged to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. Upon arriving, the angel said to Mary, “Rejoice, highly favored one! God is with you! Blessed are you among women!”

Mary was deeply troubled by these words and wondered what the angel’s greeting meant: You’ll conceive and bear a son, and give him the name Jesus – ‘Deliverance.’

Within a few days Mary set out and hurried to the hill country to a town of Judah, where she entered Zechariah’s house and greeted Elizabeth. As soon as Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the child leaped in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

In a loud voice she exclaimed, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! ... The moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who believed that what our God said to her would be accomplished!” She said, “The babe in my womb skipped like a lamb for sheer joy!”

*Mary said, “My soul proclaims your greatness, O God,
Mary said, “I’m dancing the song of my God,
And my spirit rejoices in you, my Savior.*

*For you have looked with favor upon your lowly servant,
and from this day forward all generations will call me blessed.
For you, the Almighty, have done great things for me.
Your mercy reaches from age to age for those who honor you.
Your mercy flows in wave after wave
on those who are in awe before you.
You have shown strength with your arm;
you have scattered the proud in their conceit;
you have deposed the mighty from their thrones.
You have filled the hungry with good things,
while you have sent the rich away empty.
You have come to the aid of Israel your servant, mindful of your mercy –
you remembered your mercy and your promises –
to Sarah and Abraham and to their descendants forever.”*

Children’s Time: Sarah’s Two Nativities

– Sean P. Williams, Children’s & Youth Minister

Special Music: Pat a Pan – Jubilee Bells

Scripture Reading: Luke 2:1-5 – Dave Ferry

In those days, Caesar Augustus published a decree ordering a census of the whole Roman world. This first census took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All the people were instructed to go back to the towns of their birth to register. And so Joseph went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to “the city of David” – Bethlehem, in Judea, because Joseph was of the house and lineage of David; he went to register with Mary, his espoused wife, who was pregnant.

Congregational Singing: O Little Town of Bethlehem (NC #133)

*O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see you lie!
Above your deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;*

Yet in your dark streets shines forth the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in you 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, and voices ring with peace to all on earth.

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the glorious love of heaven.
No one discerns God's coming, but in this world of sin,
Where yearning souls long to be whole, 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!

Scripture Reading: Luke 2:6-7 - Janet Langenwalter

While they were there, the time came for her delivery. She gave birth to her firstborn, a son; she put him in a simple cloth wrapped like a receiving blanket, and laid him in a feeding trough for cattle, because there was no room for them at the inn.

Scripture Reading: Luke 2:8-14 - Gary Langenwalter

There were shepherds in the area living in the fields and keeping watch by turns over their flock. The angel of God appeared to them, and the glory of God shone around them; they were very much afraid.

The angel said to them, "You have nothing to fear! I come to proclaim good news to you - news of a great joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in David's city, a savior - the Messiah - has been born to you. Let this be a sign to you: you'll find an infant wrapped in a simple cloth, lying in a manger."

Suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in high heaven! And on earth, peace to those on whom God’s favor rests.”

Congregational Singing: *Angels from the Realms of Glory* (NC #126)

Angels, from the realms of glory, wing your flight o’er all the earth;
As you sang creation’s story, now proclaim Messiah’s birth:
Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, give thanks and sing.

Shepherds, in the fields abiding, watching o’er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing, yonder shines the infant light:
Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, give thanks and sing.

Sages, leave your contemplations, brighter visions beam afar;
Seek the great Desire of Nations, guided by Christ's natal star:
Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, give thanks and sing.

Saints, before the altar bending, watching long in hope and fear,
Suddenly, our prayers attending, Christ beside you shall appear.
Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, give thanks and sing.

Scripture Reading: Luke 2:15-19- Rev. Erika Marksbury

When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go straight to Bethlehem and see this event that God has made known to us.” They hurried and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger; once they saw this, they reported what they had been told concerning the child. All who heard about it were astonished at the report given by the shepherds. Mary treasured all these things and reflected on them in her heart.

Reflection: “God Is With Us”

Response Song: *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear* (NC #131)

**- Jesse Cromer, Janet Langenwalter, Dave King, Dave Ferry,
Muriel Dresser**

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 all, great news of joy we bring.”
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.

Still thru 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.

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!

Pastoral Prayer - Rev. Erika Marksbury

One: Gracious One, in your mercy...

All: Hear our prayer.

Special Music: *Gesu Bambino*

- Jesse Cromer, Marilyn Dresser, Muriel Dresser

Closing Words - Rev. Erika Marksbury

Going Forth Song: *Silent Night* (NC #134)

**- Jesse Cromer, Janet Langenwalter, Dave King, Dave Ferry,
Muriel Dresser**

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.

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.

Silent night, holy night, Child of God, love's pure light,
Radiant beams from your holy face bring the dawn of redeeming grace;
Jesus Christ at your birth, Jesus Christ at your birth.

Benediction – Rev. Erika Marksbury

One: Friends, ... may the peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also with you.

Postlude – Muriel Dresser

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To register your worship attendance:

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