

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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THE CHURCH WITH A HEART, IN THE HEART OF CHERAW.

A SERVICE OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

DECEMBER 24, 2022

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT COMMUNION SERVICE

LITURGICAL COLOR: WHITE

Christmas Meditations W. James Glass, Organ

Two Settings of <i>Vom Himmel hoch</i> , P52 & 478	Johann Pachelbel	1653-1706
<i>In dulci jubilo</i> , BWV 751	Johann Sebastian Bach	1685-1750
<i>Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen</i> , Op 122	Johannes Brahms	1833-1897
Two Folk Songs For Christmas <i>Den die Hirten lobten sehre Zu Bethlehem geboren</i>	Helmut Walcha	1907-1991
Noel Vosgien	Jean Bouvard	1905-1996
Gesu Bambino	Pietro A. Yon	1886-1943
Carillon de Westminster	Louis Vierne	1870-1937

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT COMMUNION SERVICE

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

WELCOME¹

Greetings! Whether you are a regular attender, this is your first time or your first time back in a while, you are welcome here! For the truth this night is that God has invited us all to new birth and that makes us all the people on a life path who yearn for the messages of God, bringing more hope, more peace, more joy and more love to our lives. Let this be a moment of knowing these can be yours for you are loved by God!

CALL TO WORSHIP²

L: Rejoice, for God is with us — Emmanuel.

C: In the darkness of our world shines God's holy light.

L: Now there is reason to hope, to love, to laugh, to live.

C: God is truly with us. We are not alone.

ALL: Thanks be to God! Amen.

OPENING PRAYER³

Gracious God, with joy and thanksgiving we gather as your people. We have come to hear again the timeless story of Christ's birth. In the excitement of this night, quiet our hearts that we may know the peace and fullness of this holy time. Shine, O Light, in the darkness of our world. Sing, O angels, in the

stillness of our hearts, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those God favors." This we pray in the name of the Child of Bethlehem. **Amen.**

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE⁴

Reader One: This night, this night is a night to remember. A night when home broke in on us. A night when we were not forgotten or alone or abandoned. This night. This night is the night when here and there became one, when past and future combined in a breathless present. This is a night when we are home, in ourselves, in this family, in the God who loved us enough to walk beside us.

Reader Two: We gather in the night to proclaim the light. We shrug off despair and embrace hope. We set aside conflict and choose peace. We push away despair by claiming joy. We overcome hate by rising into love. Because this night we know, even in the shadows of our doubts, we know that we are loved. That's what it means to be home.

Reader One: We light these candles, hoping to become the light, hoping to radiate light by how we live. We light these candles to create a space called home in this place, in our place, in inner places. We light these candles to declare that unto us a Savior is born, who is Christ the Lord. Welcomed home by angels singing and shepherds kneeling. Welcomed home by those like us who have worshiped for thousands of years. Welcomed home again tonight, right here, right now, in us.

Reader Two: It's time to be home.

Light the Christ Candle and all candles of the wreath.

ALL SING: We honor Messiah with the Christ-Candle's flame; Our Christmas Eve candles glad tidings proclaim. O come, all ye faithful, rejoice on this night as God comes among us, the Christian's true Light. (sung to the tune of Away in a Manger)

***HYMN NO. 234**

"O Come All Ye Faithful"

ADESTE FIDELES

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND LORD'S PRAYER⁵

Pastor: God of our Salvation, we come to you on this wondrous night to gather in praise, to lift up your name with friend, family, and stranger. In the beginning, your creative work began with a word, and tonight, your creation continues with the Word made flesh. On this holiest of nights, we join the everlasting chorus saying:

Congregation: Glory to God on highest! Great is your name in all the earth!

Pastor: Like Mary, we ponder these things in our hearts, and wonder how you could love us so much as to actually become one of us, one with us. We remember these stories this evening that remind us of your steadfast love, that affirms you have never, and will never, give up on your children.

Congregation: Thank you for your steadfast presence in our lives!

Pastor: And yet, even on this night on which we celebrate the fulfillment of love, we recognize that there are many who are still waiting for fulfillment: the fulfillment of adequate food and shelter. The fulfillment

of peace and the end of violence. The fulfillment of reprieve from the fierce grip of grief. The fulfillment of a restoration of a broken relationship. The fulfillment of a renewing of heart, mind, or body. The fulfillment of healing from a chronic illness. The fulfillment of an end to substance abuse. Giving God,

Congregation: give us the courage to do your work in the world and to share the peace coming to us in the manger this evening.

Pastor: We pray this night especially for those who have traveled to be here. For those who have lost loved ones in the past year. For those who struggle with illnesses of body, mind or spirit. For those who fight alcoholism's or drug addiction's onslaught. For those who will be traveling in the coming days and weeks. For those who work on Christmas: especially medical workers, police, and emergency personnel and for those who cannot make it home for Christmas. Hear us we pray, O God,

Congregation: Restore us and make your face to shine that we might be saved.

Pastor: In all that we do and in all that we are, send your Spirit to send us forward with the majesty of this night and to share the grace we find with everyone we encounter. This we pray in the name of your Son, who taught us to pray saying:

All: 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 sins as we forgive those who sinned 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.

ANTHEM "Angels Are Making Their Rounds" Pepper Choplin Chancel Choir

Fear not, Zechariah, for the Lord has heard your prayer. Elizabeth will bear a son. Hail, O blessed one, you have found favor with God. O blessed one, you have found favor with God. Fear not, Joseph, go and take Mary to be your wife, for she carries a holy Child.

OFFERTORY "Dance, Bring a Torch, Jennette, Isabella" Christopher Uehlein

***OFFERING RESPONSE NO. 219 verse 3** *What Child Is This?*

So, bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh. Come, peasant, king to own Him. The King of kings' salvation brings; Let loving hearts enthrone Him. This, this is Christ, the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing: Haste, haste to bring Him laud, the Babe, the Son of Mary!

SOLO "*The First Noel Canon*" Keyshawn Melton PACHELBEL/GLASS

SCRIPTURE READING Luke 2:13-20

HOMILY Angels Among Us: No Fear

***HYMN NO. 245** "*The First Noel*" THE FIRST NOEL

SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION⁶

INVITATION

Christ our Lord invites to his table all who love him, who earnestly repent of their sins and seek to live in peace with one another. Drawn from many places, we have come to open our hearts to God, to hear God's Word, and to respond in love. Let us prepare our hearts and minds for Holy Communion by confessing our sins before God and one another.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Merciful God, we confess that often we find darkness more comfortable than light. We confess that we find your good news frightening and unsettling, especially when we consider its demands as well as its promises. We confess that Christmas has become more to us than the birthday of Jesus, partly because we do not want a Christ-Child in our lives or in our world. Forgive us, bend us, remake us. Be born again into our world; be born again into our hearts and lives. AMEN.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

P: God hears our prayers and responds to us with forgiving love. In the name of Christ Jesus, you are forgiven.

C: In the name of Christ Jesus, we all are forgiven.

All: Thanks be to God. AMEN

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING⁷

P: The Lord be with you

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them up to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. You created light out of darkness and brought forth life on the earth. You formed us in your own image and breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast. You delivered us from captivity to sin, made covenant with us to be our sovereign God, and spoke to us through your prophets. In the fullness of time, you gave your only Son Christ Jesus to be our Savior, and at his birth the angels sang glory to you in the highest and peace to your people on earth. And so, with all your people we praise your holy name and join their unending hymn:

All Sing: Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice; give ye heed to what we say: Jesus Christ was born today. Ox and ass before him bow, and he is in the manger now. Christ is born today! Christ is born today! (UMH 224, verse 1 "*Good Christian Friends, Rejoice*")

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus the Christ, who is to be a light to the nations. As Mary and Joseph went from Galilee to Bethlehem and there found no room, so Jesus went from Galilee to Jerusalem and was despised and rejected. Your Word became flesh, born of woman, on that night long ago. As in the poverty of a stable Jesus was born, so by the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your Church, delivered us from sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

Then on the night Jesus gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Take, eat; this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Christ Jesus we offer ourselves, in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

All Sing: O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord. (UMH 234, Last Phrase Only "*O Come, All Ye Faithful*")

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ that we may be for the world the body of Christ redeemed by his blood. By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Through your Son Jesus the Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours Almighty Father, now and forever.

All Sing: Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel shall come to you, O Israel. (UMH 211, Refrain Only "*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*")

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD AND THE BLESSING OF THE CUP

Because there is one loaf, we, who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf. The bread we break is a sharing in the body of Christ. The cup over which we give thanks is a sharing in the blood of Christ.

THE GIVING OF THE BREAD AND THE CUP

The body and blood of Christ, given for you. **AMEN.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION⁸

We are filled with hope for the angels still sing in our world. We are filled with peace for the prince of peace is here. We are filled with joy for we have heard good news. We are filled with love for we have tasted the sign of God's great love and there is a Light for us to follow. Thanks be to God. Amen.

PASSING OF THE LIGHT

***HYMN NO. 239**

"Silent Night"

STILLE NACHT

***BENEDICTION**

Pastor Debra

*POSTLUDE

“Improvisation on Antioch”

**If you are able to, please stand.*

OUR PRAYER LIST – Our President, our Congress, all Governors, Mayors, State, County, and Local employees, all health care workers, EMT’s, all who defend our nation, all who make decisions for our nation, Jim Bennett, Scott Tomberlin, Margaret Stanton, Mary Snookie Lomas, Shep Straughn, Betty Thrailkill, Tony Thrailkill, Gwen Sullivan, Bill Eutsler, Jr., Mary Burr, Dan Ellenburg (Patty Fisher’s Brother-In-Law), Jody Reid, Craig Norton, Martha Griggs, Katie Chapman, Thomas McKinnon, Joel Keefe, Betty Hurst, Emily Marsh, Zenda Rushing. **NOTE: Names are left on the prayer list for two weeks; after two weeks, they are removed unless the church office is notified.**

Greeters: Bryson Hunter and Peyton Taylor

Acolyte: Penny Quick

Nursery Workers: No Nursery

Soundsystem Operator: Scott Eddins

Head Usher: Jerry Tucker

Liturgist Christmas Day: Rhett Butler

Flowers next Sunday: OPEN

Video Technicians: Bryson Hunter and Peyton Taylor

¹ @ worshipdesignstudio.com/angels

² <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/candlelight-service-for-christmas-eve>

³ Ibid.

⁴ Readings from: <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/advent-candle-lighting-liturgy-2022>

Song Lyrics from: “A Candle is Burning” Sandra Dean (1986) CCLI #11429516 and #20825543

⁵ <https://www.liturgylink.net/2015/12/21/prayers-of-the-people-christmas-eve/>

⁶ <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/candlelight-service-for-christmas-eve>

⁷ The Great Thanksgiving for Christmas Eve, The Untied Methodist Book of Worship, United Methodist Publishing House, Nashville, 1992, pgs. 56-57

⁸ <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/candlelight-service-for-christmas-eve>

FUMC STAFF

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**Come Celebrate Jesus's Birthday
at
First United Methodist Church Cheraw**

Sunday, December 25, 2022

10:00 AM.

Church Sanctuary

**THANKS TO ALL WHO HELPED
WITH THE ANNUAL
SHEPHERD'S CHILD PARTY.**

Without all of your many donations of money and without all the people who chose a name for the party, this could never have been successful. We provided Christmas for 52 children this year on December 16. This is the most children we have ever done! To see their eyes light up with joy and their smiles light up the room, makes my Christmas so very special. I wish all of you could have been there to see the delight on their faces. Special thanks go out to Renie Seel, Zenda Rushing, Jean Assef, Susan Marsh, Jenny Keefe, and Debra Armstrong. Special thanks go out to my husband for helping me shop for toys and clothes for 29 children and then to sort them! Trina Mills

