

Welcome to the Community Church of Richmond United Church of Christ

Our Church at Worship on Christmas Eve 2020



Welcome to our online-only celebration of the coming of the Christ child. Though this service is offered as a pre-recorded video, it's not intended to be simply a show that you watch; it is intended to guide you in worshipping God, knowing that you do so together with a community of your siblings in Christ.

No matter where you are on this Christmas Eve, you are encouraged to follow along during worship, to join in speaking aloud the parts for many voices (even if you whisper), and, of course, to sing along with the Christmas carols.

You're also encouraged to have some candles to light – perhaps you have the Advent wreath we distributed at the start of the season. Maybe you have a festive Christmas candle. Maybe you just have some old birthday candles in the drawer. Pull them out before worship starts as we prepare to welcome the Light of the World.

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP GOD

PRELUDE	“O Holy Night”	Penny Kraft And Cheryl Heber
WORDS OF WELCOME		Rev. Hope Molozaiy
CAROL	“O Come, All Ye Faithful”	led by Charles Kemp

Verse 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,
O come, let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord!**

Verse 2:

**Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest;
O come, let us adore him, O come let us adore him
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord!**

Tune: John F. Wade, 1751, Adeste Fideles; CCLI License No. 1908882

LIGHTING THE CANDLES OF CHRISTMAS

led by The Speaker Family
Jim and Kathy Speaker; Michelle, Andrew and Sadie Currier;
Sharon, Richie, Brendan, and Colin Sharpe

One: Because God so loves the world,

Many: This beautiful and broken world,

One: This divided and distanced world,

Many: This warming and burning world,

One: This lost and hurting world,

Many: God's love is made flesh.

One: For such a time as this,

Many: A child is born unto us.

One: For such a time as this,

Many: The light of Christ shines upon us.

One: In a stinky stable turned birthing room,

Many: New visions of family and community are born.

One: By the surprising subversion of God's in-breaking love,

Many: The burden of injustice is thrown off.

One: Through the ages'-old song of angels and shepherds,

Many: God's glory is proclaimed.

And in God's glory we meet the hope, peace, joy, and love of all the ages.

Light the 4 candles around the wreath.

One: On this holy night, the one we've been watching for is here.

Many: On this holy night, the time we've been waiting for is now.

One: Let us rejoice together!

Many: Glory to God in the highest, and peace and goodwill to all!

Light the white Christ candle at the center of your wreath, or any candle you have at home. Keep silent for a moment in its light.

ALL: For such a time as this, the Christ child comes to us.

For such as time as this, God's love is born in us.

Joy to the world!

PRAYER (we all pray together):

We admit it, O God:

**That in a time such as this, it can be harder than usual
to open our hearts to the wonder of your love.**

In a time such as time, it can be harder to feel the joy.

Thank you for reminding us that Christ comes for such as time as this.

**Thank you for understanding that in such a time as this, we need you all the
more. Thank you for promise of the Christ Child, and the life he lived.**

Come to us again, this night, and in every time such as this. Amen.

WE LISTEN TO THE CHRISTMAS STORY

THE PROPHET ISAIAH 9:2-7

read by Cheryl Kazimier

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.
You have magnified the nation,
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest.
Because you have broken
the yoke of their burden,
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
as you did for them before.
So all the boots of the tramping warriors
and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
His 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 onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

CAROL “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” Led by Robert Richardson and Kim May
Verse 1:

**Hark! The herald angels sing, Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinner reconciled!
Joyful, all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim, Christ is born in Bethlehem!
Hark! The herald angels sing, Glory to the newborn King!**

Verse 2:

**Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold him come, offspring of the Virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see; hail the incarnate deity,
Pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! The herald angels sing, Glory to the newborn King!**

Verse 3:

**Hail the heav'n-born prince of peace! Hail the Sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with healing in his wings,
Mild he lays his glory by, born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing, Glory to the newborn King!**

Tune: Felix Mendelssohn's Festgesang 1840; Arr. William H Cummings, 1855, CCLI License No. 1908882

MARY HAS HER BABY

The Gospel According to Luke 2:1-7

read by Dawn Conley and Mike Kennedy

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered for the tax lists. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. So everybody went to their own hometowns to be registered. And 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.

A WORD FOR ALL AGES – If God came to visit us this year, what would God look like?
How would God show up? Imagine...

CAROL

“Angels We Have Heard on High”

Led by Elise Livingston and George Zimmermann

Verse 1:

**Angels we have heard on high, Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.
Glo-----ria in excelsis Deo, Glo-----ria in excelsis Deo.**

Verse 2:

**Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be, which inspire your heav'nly song?
Glo-----ria in excelsis Deo, Glo-----ria in excelsis Deo.**

Verse 3:

**Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.
Glo-----ria in excelsis Deo, Glo-----ria in excelsis Deo.**

Tune: French Carol, 1855; CCLI License No. 1908882

ANGELS SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT JESUS

The Gospel According to Luke 2:8-18

Read by the Obara Family: Ronnie, Ina, Tiana, and Zofia

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then the angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone all around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them,

“Do not be afraid; look – 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 Christ 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 all 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 the shepherds saw this, they told the parents what the angels had 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. And the shepherds returned home, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen.

MESSAGE

In Such a Time as This: God with Us

CAROL

“It Came Upon the Midnight clear

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Verse 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 earth, good will to all, great news of joy we bring.
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.**

Verse 2:

**Still through the cloven skies they come, with peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats o’er all the wary world;
Above its sad and lowly plains they bend on hovering wing,
And ever o’er its babel sounds the blessed angels sing.**

Verse 3:

**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!**

Verse 4:

**For lo, the days are hastening on, by prophet bards foretold,
When with the ever circling years come round the age of gold;
When peace shall over all the earth it’s ancient splendors fling,
And all the world send back the song which now the angels sing.**

Tune: Richard S. Willis 1850, Edmund H Sears 1849; alt.; CCLI License No. 1908882

CHRISTMAS PRAYERS

CAROL “Joy to the World” Led by George Zimmermann and Elise Livingston
Verse 1:

**Joy to the world! The Lord is come; Let earth receive her king;
Let Every heart prepare him room,
And Heaven and nature sing, And heaven and nature sing
And Heaven and Heaven and nature sing.**

Verse 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.**

Verse 3:

**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.**

Isaac Watts 1719, Attr to George F Handel 1742 | Arr by Lowell Mason 1839; CCLI License No. 1908882

PREPARE FOR THE LIGHT The Gospel according to John, from chapter 1:1-14
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.

CAROL “Silent Night” Led by Robert Richardson and Kim May

**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, 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.**

CLOSING WORDS

One: Let the people who have walked in darkness say,

All: We have seen a great light.

One: Let those who have lived in deep darkness say,

All: We have seen a great light.

One: A child has been born for us, a son given to us, and so we say,

All: We have seen a great light!

One: For our sakes, God sent the child of Bethlehem.

For our salvation, Jesus came to live among us, and so we say,

All: We have seen a great light!

One: And the darkness did not,

All: does not,

One: will not overcome it.

All: Glory to God, whose light shines with life for all people.

POSTLUDE

“What Child is This”

Cheryl Heber and Penny Kraft

