

**Welcome to the Community Church of Richmond
United Church of Christ
Our Church at Worship on the First Sunday of Christmas
December 27, 2020 10:00 A.M.**

Our Mission: To be an inviting, caring faith community connecting with Christ.

Tune into Facebook at 10:00 on Sunday to share this time of worship. If you can't join promptly at 10:00, the video will be available later as well.

You can access that video even if you don't have a Facebook account – just type in <https://www.facebook.com/CommunityChurchOfRichmond/>

Thanks to the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ for the video elements of today's worship.

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP GOD

GATHERING SONG

"Good Christian Friends, Rejoice"

#129

Verse 1:

Good Christian friends rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
now give heed to what we say: Jesus Christ is born today;
Ox and ass before him bow, asleep within the manger now.
Christ is born today, Christ is born today!

Verse 2:

Good Christian friends rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
Now you know of endless bliss: Jesus Christ was born for this!
God has opened heaven's door, and you are blessed forevermore.
Christ was born for this, Christ was born for this!

Verse 3:

Good Christian friends rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
Now you need not fear the grave: Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all to gain the everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save, Christ was born to save!

Transl John Mason Neale 1855 alt. |Tune: IN DULCI JUBILO , 14th c. German melody

WORDS OF WELCOME

Rev. Hope Molozaiy

OPENING PRAYER

Leader: Thank you, God, that in a little town of Bethlehem,
away in a manger, a child is born.
Thank you for the child in a manger
being born while the herald angels sing:
'alleluia' to the newborn king.

**People: Hear us, as we gather 'round this story
and see him lying in a bed of straw,
where all your faithful come
to Royal David's city,
where under a starry sky
we give thanks for this first noel.**

Leader: Thank you for the story,
first told to humble shepherds
as they watched their flock,
of the virgin Mary and her baby boy,
and tells us love came down at Christmas.

**People: Let us celebrate
the message of the angels
from the realms of glory
that in the still of the night
they chant the news:
Christ the redeemer is here.
May we share the chant with them
and tell everyone this good news. Amen.**

SCRIPTURE READING Psalm 148

Praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord from the heavens;
praise him in the heights!
Praise him, all his angels;
praise him, all his host!
Praise him, sun and moon;
praise him, all you shining stars!
Praise him, you highest heavens,
and you waters above the heavens!
Let them praise the name of the Lord,
for he commanded and they were created.
He established them forever and ever;
he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.
Praise the Lord from the earth,
you sea monsters and all deeps,
fire and hail, snow and frost,
stormy wind fulfilling his command!
Mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars!
Wild animals and all cattle,
creeping things and flying birds!
Kings of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the earth!

Young men and women alike,
old and young together!
Let them praise the name of the Lord,
for his name alone is exalted;
his glory is above earth and heaven.
He has raised up a horn for his people,
praise for all his faithful,
for the people of Israel who are close to him.
Praise the Lord!

SONG

“Where Will You Be?”

written and sung by UCC pastor Rev. Chuck Ericson

SCRIPTURE READING

The Gospel according to Luke 2:22-40

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

“Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
according to your word;
for my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel.”

And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

READING

“It was to Older People that Jesus Came”

from The Iona Community, read by Pastor Hope

HYMN "What Child is This" #148

Verse 1:

What Child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this, the angels sing, is Christ, God's holy offering;
Haste, haste your praise to bring the babe, the child of Mary!

Verse 2:

Why lies the Child in manger bare where ox and ass are feeding?
Give heed, draw near; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;
Hail, hail the word made flesh, the babe, the child of Mary!

Verse 3:

Bring gifts of incense, gold, and myrrh; come, join in jubilation;
The Holy Child, though meek and mild, has come with God's salvation.
Raise, raise the song on high, the mother sings her lullaby;
Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the child of Mary!

Tune Greensleeves, from English Traditional melody 16th century, William C Dix 1865 alt, CCLI License No. 1908882

READING "Christmas Bells" Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

PASTORAL PRAYER "Praying the Nativity"

The Lord's Prayer

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.

HYMN "The First Noel" RED hymnal #100

Verse 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.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, Born is the King of Israel.

Verse 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.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, Born is the King of Israel.

Traditional English Melody, CCLI License No. 1908882

OFFERING Invitation to Give – We are so thankful for the continued financial support that we have continued to receive during this time! Though we rarely see each other in person these days, our church is still: providing worship; providing Sunday school for our church kids; connecting members with each other; supporting neighbors in need, locally and further away. We believe those things are parts of God’s calling for us in this place and we can do them because of steady financial support. You may always send your check directly to the church at PO Box 246, Richmond IL, 60071.

Prayer of Dedication – You might pray as you write your check and address your envelope to the church... Creator, Redeemer, Holy Spirit, bless these gifts of hope compassion, faithfulness and gratitude. For all that your love has already done, thank you. For all you will yet do, through these gifts and by your Spirit, we praise you. Amen.

NEWS OF THE CHURCH

DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING

Leader: Now the days are lengthening and the solstice over,
the story is told and the baby is born.

All: May we believe even more.

Leader: Now the Good News has been told
and the promise fulfilled,
the angels have sung and the stable now quiet.

All: May we believe even more.

Leader: Now the wise ones have travelled
and the baby escapes,
the shepherds have returned
and Bethlehem is empty.

All: May we believe even more.

Leader: Now the world seems real again
and the bad news seems louder,
and conflict still happens and the poor are still poor.

All: May we believe even more.

Leader: Now Emmanuel is born and Herod is fuming,
and the holy family turns
and become migrant in Egypt.

All: May we believe even more.

Leader: Now the world is still waiting for peace to arrive,
for justice to take root and for love to find room.

All: May we believe even more.

Leader: Like Anna who trusts and Simeon who believes,
may we hold to the promise,

All: and believe even more.

Amen.

ONGOING NEWS AND OPPORTUNITIES

CHRISTMAS GREETING VIDEO CHALLENGE

Send in a photo or a brief video of yourself or your family for Pastor Hope to share with the congregation. We'd love to see you with your church Advent wreath, with your Christmas tree, or however you are managing this month! A brief video to wish the congregation merry Christmas would be fine too. Email those to pastorhope@richmonducc.org TODAY!

THE CHRISTMAS FUND OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

One of our annual offerings for the wider United Church of Christ. The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the UCC for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees. Over the past nine months, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the emergency financial needs of many who serve the church have increased dramatically. In such a time as this, the need for the Christmas Fund is more urgent than ever. You may make a contribution to the Christmas Fund by marking your check or envelope accordingly. Thank you!

ZOOM BIBLE STUDY is on break until the new year.

SUNDAY SCHOOL BUT ON A SATURDAY is on break until the new year.

PRAYERS FOR DECEMBER 27, 2020

If you have prayer updates or announcements to share, please send them to BOTH Pastor Hope (pastorhope@richmonducc.org) AND our office manager, Brandi Pletcher (office@richmonducc.org). THANKS! *We will leave a person on our list for four weeks, unless asked to leave them on longer.*

JOYS: Merry Christmas time to all!

CONCERNS

Molozaiy family friend, Lee, who has lost both his daughter and wife to COVID-19 in recent weeks
Marti Swanson's friend, Sandy, and Sandy's family
Those awaiting test results
Carol Sligting's great-grandson, Aiden
Deann Workmon

Ongoing Prayers:

Sarah Richardson, Rob and Carol's daughter-in-law, pregnant with twins
School teachers, staff, and administrators; school children and their parents, including college students
Those whose household relationships are strained
Those whose employment has been lost or put in jeopardy due to the pandemic
Healthcare workers, especially Cheryl Kazimier's niece and Rob Rummel's daughter-in-law
Marti Swanson's brother, John Baldwin
Ella Watts, Melissa Jones's mother
Louise Strah's niece, Amy Lenik

Members and Friends who are Homebound or in Nursing Facilities:

Ruthann Walters (Indiana)	Sharon Mensing (Sterling)
Mercedes Ahlgrim (New Mexico)	June Whitney (at home)