

**First Parish Church, Congregational
United Church of Christ
Christmas Eve Celebration
Thursday, December 24, 2020
7:00 pm**

Prelude

"In Dulci Jubilo"

Bach

Call to Christmas Eve

Leader: Glory to God in the highest, and peace to all Creation! For
Jesus is born this night.

All: **And so we praise You, O God, and thank You for this,
Your greatest gift to us. Let us share in the song of
the angels and the joy of the shepherds.**

Carol

"O Come, All Ye Faithful"

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!

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!

Child, for us sinners poor and in the manger,
We would embrace thee, with love and awe;
Who would not love thee, loving us so dearly?
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,
Jesus, to thee be all glory given;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing;
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord! Amen.

Lighting of the Advent and Christ Candles

Leader: Let us share these words from the Gospel of John:

There was a man sent from God, a man whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. John himself was not the light, but came to testify to the true light which was coming into the world.

Lighting the Candle of Hope

All: We have waited for the light of Hope.

Lighting the Candle of Peace

All: We have waited for the light of Peace.

Lighting the Candle of Joy

All: We have waited for the light of Joy.

Lighting the Candle of Love

All: We have waited for the light of Love.

Lighting the Christ Candle

All: And now, the waiting is over. We light the Christ Candle, the symbol of the One who has come as the light of God's Hope, Peace, Joy and Love.

Solo

"I Wonder As I Wander"
Rebecca Shrimpton, soloist

Niles

I wonder as I wander, out under the sky, how Jesus the Savior did come for to die. For poor on'ry people like you and like I...I wonder as I wander, out under the sky.

When Mary birthed Jesus, 'twas in a cow's stall, with wise men and farmers and shepherds and all. But high from God's heaven a star's light did fall, and the promise of ages it then did recall. If Jesus had wanted for any wee thing - a star in the sky or a bird on the wing or all of God's angels in heav'n to sing, He surely could have it, 'cause He was the King.

I wonder as I wander, out under the sky, how Jesus the Savior did come for to die. For poor on'ry people like you and like I...I wonder as I wander, out under the sky.

A Christmas Eve Prayer (together)

Holy One, as we once again celebrate the birth of Jesus – once again receive Your greatest gift to us – we offer You our greatest gifts as well:

We offer You our hands to do the work Jesus came to call us to.

We offer You our feet to follow His way.

We offer You our eyes to see others and ourselves as He will, with compassion and kindness.

We offer You our mouths to speak His truths of justice and mercy.

We offer You our ears to hear Your words through Him.

We offer You our spirits to fill with His light.

And we offer You our hearts and minds to receive His presence.

We offer You all of who we are, so that Jesus may be born in us as He is born to us this night. Amen.

The Gospels

John 1:1, 14a

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and lived among us.

Carol

"Joy to the World! The Lord Is Come"

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.

Joy to the world! 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.

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.

The Gospels

Luke 1:26-33

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰

The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Music Meditation

"Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"

German Carol, arr. Harmon

Kevin Tracy and Tyler Hauer, trumpets

The Gospels

Luke 2:1-7

¹ In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration and was taken

while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ All went to their own towns to be registered.

⁴ 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. ⁵ He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child.

⁷ 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.

Carol

"What Child Is This"

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 is Christ the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring him laud,
The babe, the son of Mary.

Why lies he in such mean estate
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear: for sinners here
The silent Word is pleading.
This, this is Christ the King,

Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring him laud,
The babe, the son of Mary.

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.

The Gospels

Luke 2:8-14

⁸ In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger."

¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

Carol*"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"*

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners 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!"

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 with us men with men to dwell,
Jesus our Emmanuel.
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Hail the heaven born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Risen 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!" Amen

The Gospels

Luke 2:15-20

¹⁵ 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." ¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.

²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Duet

"O, Holy Night" (Cantique Noel)

Adam

Rebecca Shrimpton and Paul Knox, vocalists

O holy night! The stars are brightly shining, it is the night of the dear Saviour's birth; long lay the world in sin and error pining, 'till He appeared 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! Oh, hear the angel voices! O night divine! O night when Christ was born.

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 came the wise men from the Orient land. The King of Kings lay thus in lowly manger, in all our trials born to be our friend; He knows our need, our weakness is no stranger;

Behold your King! Before him lowly bend!

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, then ever, ever praise we, His power and glory ever more proclaim.

Reflection

"Gabriel's Story"

Carol

"Silent Night"

The First Parish Choir

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.

Blessing

- **It is with great joy that we welcome back the First Parish Choir in "virtual form" for this most holy evening.**
- **We offer Christmas blessings and gratitude to our guest musicians, Kevin Tracy and Tyler Hauer**
- **The nativity scene on the altar is in celebration and remembrance of the Christ Child's birth.**