

Order Of Service – Dec. 24, 2020

Christmas Eve

Music for Contemplation: *Silent Night* and *Tannenbaum* by Ed Gerhard, *We Three Kings* by Bill Mize and Ed Gernard, *Coventry Carol* and *What Child Is This?* by Ed Gerhard. Photos by Carole Bundy, Molly Cohen, Andey Amata, Susan Jhirad, and Steve Schmidt, and © Soul Matters.

Sound of the Bell

Opening Words: words by Fra Giovanni

Welcome

Chalice Lighting: words by Sophia Lyon Fahs

Covenant

Love is the heart of this church.

We commit to:

Being a diverse, welcoming community of mutual care and respect;

Supporting each other's spiritual journey and search for truth and meaning;

Promoting justice and serving the wider community.

We hold ourselves to this promise with compassion and understanding.

Hymn: *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*, words by Edmund Hamilton Sears, music by Richard Storrs Willis (*Singing the Living Tradition* #244); voice and ukulele: Joi Wolf; keyboard: Brian Wolf.

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, to all good will, from heaven the news we bring.”

The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.

Still through 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.

But with the woes of war and strife the world has suffered long;
beneath the angel strain have rolled two thousand years of wrong;
and we who fight the wars hear not the love song which they bring.
O hush the noise of battle strife, and hear the angels sing.

For, lo! the days are hastening on by prophet bards foretold,
when with the ever circling years comes round the age of gold:
when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
and the whole world give back the song which now the angels sing.

Candles of Joy, Sorrow and Milestones

Meditation

Music and Readings: The Nativity Story

- ❖ **1st Reading:** Mary and Joseph (Luke 2:1, 4-7)
- ❖ **Hymn:** *The First Nowell* composed by William Sandy; traditional English carol. (*Singing the Living Tradition #237*) vocalists Nancy Kurtz & Molly Ruggles, organist Russell Tripp, .

The first Nowell 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.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, born is the king of Israel.

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.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, born is the king of Israel.

- ❖ **2nd Reading:** Shepherds in the Fields (Luke 2:8-14)

- ❖ **Hymn:** *Angels We Have Heard on High*, traditional French Carol, words by Earl Marlatt (*Singing the Living Tradition* #231) pianist and multi-track vocals: Molly Ruggles.

Angels we have heard on high sweetly singing o'er the plains
and the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why these songs of happy cheer?
What great brightness did you see? What glad tidings did you hear?
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

- ❖ **3rd Reading:** The Child in the Manger (Luke 2:15-20)
- ❖ **Hymn:** *O Little Town of Bethlehem*, words by Phillips Brooks; composed by Lewis Redner (*Singing the Living Tradition* #246) vocalist Shaina Sawyer, pianist Molly Ruggles.

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see the lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee 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.
Let praises ring: from God they bring good will to all on earth.

- ❖ **4th Reading:** Three Kings (Matthew 2:1-3, 7-12)
- ❖ **Hymn:** *Once in Royal David's City* words by Carl Seaburg, music by Henry John Gauntlet (*Singing the Living Tradition* #228) vocalists: Nancy Kurtz, Carole Bundy, Brendan O'Brine, Brendan Shea, organist Russell Tripp

Once in royal David's city stood a lowly cattle shed,
where a mother laid her baby in a manger for his bed;
so may we when life turns hard find in love our stay and guard.

Shepherds came to see this wonder, and to kneel in holy awe
at that lowly stable manger where the infant lay on straw;
so may we this happy morn honor every child that's born.

From afar three magi journeyed to that stable rude and bare,
to pay homage to the infant, offering gifts both rich and rare;
so may we our gifts bestow, whether we be high or low.

In that happy Christmas spirit, hear the angels from on high
sing their ancient salutations: joy's a gift you cannot buy.
So may we, with heart that sings, share the truth this season brings.

Homily: *Charles Dickens, Unitarian*

Special Offering to benefit **La Colaborativa** - <https://www.la-colaborativa.org/>
Carol of the Bells, composed by Mykola Leontovich, performed by guitarist Ed Gerhard

A Christmas Prayer

Hymn: *Joy To the World!*, words by Isaac Watts, music attr. to George Frederick Handel, arr. by Lowell Mason (*Singing the Living Tradition* #245), vocalists: UUCM choir.

Joy to the world! The Word is come: let earth with praises ring.
Let every heart prepare a room, and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! Now gladness reigns: let hearts their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground.
Let righteousness its glories show as far as love is found,
as far as love is found, as far, as far, as love is found.

Closing Words: *The Work of Christmas* by Howard Thurman

Postlude: *Oh Come all Ye Faithful*, performed by guitarist Ed Gerhard,
composer and lyricist John Francis Wade, photography by Carole Bundy