

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

117 N. 2nd Street, Clarksburg, WV 26301

Phone: 304.623.3397 email: cfumc@citynet.net

Rev. Michael Q. Atkinson, Pastor

Rev. Anna Troy, Deacon Don Gardner, Director of Music

Dr. Jessica Scott, Organist

"A Holy, Healthy, and Loving Community Striving to Know Christ and to Make Christ Known"

December 24, 2024

11:00 p.m.

A CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE



WORDS OF WELCOME

Rev. Michael Atkinson

PRELUDE "Meditation on a Medieval Hymn"-Tune by C. Callahan Dr. Scott

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: For you who are filled to the brim with happiness,

People: **Jesus Christ, the joy of the world, is born.**

Leader: For you who are mourning the loss of family and friends,

People: **Jesus Christ, the joy of the world, is born.**

Leader: For you who feel like you are tripping about in darkness,

People: **Jesus Christ, the joy of the world, is born.**

Leader: For you who rest in gratitude and contentment,

People: **Jesus Christ, the joy of the world, is born.**

Leader: For you who feel the ache of loneliness,

People: **Jesus Christ, the joy of the world, is born.**

Leader: For you who are surrounded by unlikely yet beautiful companionship,

People: **Jesus Christ, the joy of the world, is born.**

Leader: Come, let us worship the birth of our Savior!

People: **Come, let us worship God who came to dwell among us!**

Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, June 2024.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

The Skidmore Family

Reader: Beloved, today we welcome the Christ Child, the fulfillment of our joy, as we proclaim with the prophet Isaiah, “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” (Isaiah 9:6).

People: Christ our joy has come near. Emmanuel, God with us, has come to dwell with us as a tiny baby. “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” (Isaiah 9:7).

Reader: We light this candle as a sign of Christ coming to dwell with us, to live in the neighborhood of vulnerable humanity as a vulnerable child. May the light of Christ warm our hearts and light our way as we share the joy of God’s salvation wherever we go.

Light the center candle of the Advent wreath.

LIVING CRECHE

Aniston and Dominic Hazuka

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Luke 2:1-20

Khloe Hazuka

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. All went to their own towns to be registered. 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.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 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: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the

Messiah, 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 those 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 they saw this, they made known what had been 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. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

MUSICAL OFFERING ----- "O Holy Night" / Adolphe Adam
Don Gardner, tenor; Cyndi Shaver, signer; Jessica Scott, organ

MEDITATION "Time After Time" Rev. Michael Atkinson

OFFERTORY "Sussex Carol" by Dale Wood Dr. Scott

*DOXOLOGY: UMH #242 "Love Came Down at Christmas"
Love shall be our token; Love be yours and love be mine;
Love to God and neighbor, Love for plea and gift and sign.

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

MUSIC DURING COMMUNION "Good Christian Friends, Rejoice"

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.

SHARING OF THE BREAD AND CUP

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Leader: We have waited for a long time for your hope, your joy, your love to shine in the darkness of this world, Almighty God. Even now, in our gathering here, we await you. In our hearts, we still hope that your light will blaze forth, banishing the shadows of this world and guiding all the people back to you.

People: Yet you did not come into this world in a show of power and glory.

You did not shine forth for all of creation to behold.

A tiny spark – a newborn baby, visible to parents and curious animals.

A host of angels – away from populated areas, singing to migrant workers.

A sparkling star – guiding foreigners to see what neighbors could not.

Leader: Open our hearts, merciful God, to the sparks of your presence still in this world, that we might behold your presence in the least likely of places, and among the least likely of people.

People: God with us, kindle your spark within us, that together we may shine forth your light, we might banish the shadows of this world, we might be the continuation of the Christmas miracle: Emmanuel is in this world, God is with us, now and evermore.

Adapted from Rev. Eliza Buchakjian-Tweedy, Pastor at First Church Congregational in Rochester, NH.

*HYMN ----- “Silent Night, Holy Night”

PASSING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

(V. I soloist: Haden Kersting)

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.

Silent night, holy night, wondrous star, lend thy light;
With the angels let us sing, Alleluia to our King;
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE “Organ Flourish on Joy to the World” by Michael G. Dell Dr. Scott