

# FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Rev. Michael O. Atkinson, Lead Pastor

Rev. Harry Jenkins, Associate Pastor

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



December 13, 2020  
3rd Sunday of Advent  
Lessons and Carols

**WORDS OF WELCOME/ANNOUNCEMENTS** -----Rev. Michael Atkinson

**PRELUDE** ----- *"O Come, Emmanuel"* ----- *Arr. Lani Smith*

Dr. Jessica Scott, piano; Brett Miller, organ

**LIGHTING OF THE THIRD ADVENT CANDLE** -----**PEACE**

Matthew and Catherine Lilly

Voice: Today, we relight the candles of Hope and Joy as a reminder that Christ is our only hope and that joy in our hearts comes through a loving relationship with God.

*(Light the front two purple candles)*

Voice: The third candle of Advent is the Candle of Peace. It is sometimes called the Bethlehem Candle to remind us of the place in which preparations were made to receive and cradle the Christ child.

Voice: Peace is a gift that we must be prepared to receive. God gives us the gift of peace when we, like Mary, turn to God in Faith.

Voice: The prophet Isaiah calls Christ "the Prince of Peace". Through John the Baptist and all the other prophets, God asks us to prepare our hearts so that he may come in.

Voice: Our hope is in God, and in his son Jesus Christ. Our joy is experienced through God's grace and forgiveness, and true peace in our lives is found through faith. We light this candle today to remind us that God brings peace to all who trust in God.

*(Light the Candle of Peace - pink)*

## THE BIDDING PRAYER

Beloved in Christ,  
this Christmas Season it is our duty and delight  
to prepare ourselves to hear again the message of the angels,  
and to go in heart and mind to Bethlehem,  
and see this thing which is come to pass,  
and the Babe lying in a manger.

Therefore let us hear again from Holy Scripture  
the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our sin  
until the glorious redemption brought us by this holy Child;  
and let us make this house of prayer glad with our carols of praise.

But first, because this of all things would rejoice Jesus' heart,  
let us pray to him for the needs of the whole world, and all his people;  
for peace upon the earth he came to save;  
for love and unity within the one Church he did build;  
for goodwill among all peoples.

And particularly at this time let us remember  
the poor, the cold, the hungry, the oppressed;  
the sick and them that mourn; the lonely and the unloved;  
the aged and the little children;  
and all who know not the Lord Jesus, or who love him not,  
or who by sin have grieved his heart of love.

Lastly let us remember all those who rejoice with us,  
but upon another shore and in a greater light,  
that multitude which no one can number,  
whose hope was in the Word made flesh,  
and with whom, in this Lord Jesus, we for evermore are one.

These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the throne of heaven,  
in the words that Christ himself has taught us.

## 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.**

**FIRST LESSON: Genesis 3: 8-15, 17–19 ----- Adam and Eve rebel against God**

Liturgist: Judy Burns

The man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and they hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" He said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate."

Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate." The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel."

And to the man he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it', cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

**The Carol ----- "*Jesus Christ, the Apple Tree*"**

arr. by Christopher Jones

Dr. Christopher Jones and Dr. Jessica Scott, mandolins

**SECOND LESSON: Genesis 22: 15–18 ----- God promises to Abraham that by his descendants all the nations of the earth shall obtain blessing**

Liturgist: Don Gardner

The angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, and said, "By myself I have sworn, says the LORD: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice."

**The Carol ----- "*How Brightly Shines the Morning Star*"**

arr. By Paul Manz

Robert Skidmore, violin; Dr. Jessica Scott, organ

**THIRD LESSON: Isaiah 9:2, 6–7 ----- The prophet announces the birth of a king to a people in darkness**

Liturgist: Audra Skidmore

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. 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.

**The Carol** ----- "*O Come to Us, Emmanuel*"

by Lloyd Larson

Jim Winters and Don Gardner, singers

*O come to us, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here, until the song of God appear.  
O come, thou Rod of Jesse, free thine own from Satan's tyranny;  
From depths of hell thy people save and give them vict'ry o'er the grave.*

*O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here;  
And drive away the shades of night, and pierce the clouds, bring us Your light!  
O come, we pray, Messiah come, and open wide our heav'nly home;  
Make safe the path and guide our way. O come, Emmanuel, we pray.*

*O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;  
Bid envy, strife and quarrels cease; fill all the world with heaven's peace.  
O come to us, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel.*

**THE FOURTH LESSON: Isaiah 11:1-4a, 6-9** ----- **God's kingdom of Peace and Justice  
comes to all creation**

Liturgist: Brett Miller

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. With righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;

The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

**The Carol** ----- "*O Day of Peace that Dimly Shines*"

Brett Miller, song leader

*O day of peace that dimly shines through all our hopes and prayers and dreams,  
Guide us to justice, truth, and love, delivered from our selfish schemes.  
May swords of hate fall from our hands, our hearts from envy find release,  
Till by God's grace our warring world shall see Christ's promised reign of peace.  
Then shall the wolf dwell with the lamb, nor shall the fierce devour the small;  
As beasts and cattle calmly graze, a little child shall lead them all.  
Then enemies shall learn to love, all creatures find their true accord;  
The hope of peace shall be fulfilled, for all the earth shall know the Lord.*

## THE FIFTH LESSON: Luke 1:26-35, 38 - - - The Angel of God appears to the Virgin Mary

Liturgist: Dr. Jessica Scott

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

The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 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. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the LORD; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

### The Carol ----- "*Carol of the Bells*"

arr. By Douglas Mears  
First Church Handbells

## THE SIXTH LESSON: Luke 2:1 - 7 ----- Saint Luke tells of the birth of Jesus

Liturgist: Rev. Harry Jenkins

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. 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.

### The Carol ----- "*O Little Town of Bethlehem*"

Lorie Wyatt, soloist; Don Gardner, guitar

*O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee 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.  
No ear may hear his coming, but in the world of sin,  
Where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.*



**THE SEVENTH LESSON: Luke 2: 8-16 -----The Angels appeared to the shepherd**

Liturgist: Katie Shaver

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.

**The 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 th'angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"  
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, ris'n with healing in his wings.  
Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,  
Born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.  
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"*

**THE EIGHTH LESSON: Mathew 2: 1 -12 ----- The wise men follow a star**

Liturgist: Lorie Wyant

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: `And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

**The Carol -----"I Wonder as I Wander"**

arr. by Christopher Jones  
Dr. Christopher Jones, mandolin

**THE NINTH LESSON: John 1: 1-14**----- John unfolds the Mystery of the Incarnation

Liturgist: Rev. Michael Atkinson

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.

**BENEDICTION** ----- Rev. Atkinson

**POSTLUDE** ----- "*O Come, All Ye Faithful*"

arr. by Joel Raney

Dr. Jessica Scott, piano; Brett Miller, organ



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Our prayers and sympathy to the family and friends of  
**Bruce Wells (April 30, 1955 – December 5, 2020)**



## CHRISTMAS MEMORIAL POINSETTIAS

Our church this year again will be using poinsettias to adorn the altar for the Christmas Sunday, December 20th, and Christmas Eve services.

A significant difference this year is that you will NOT need to provide/deliver your flower.

Poinsettias have been ordered from Donna's Florist. The cost is \$15.00 per plant.

Simply call the church office (304-623-3397) any Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. and let us know the memorial information.

**Please call by noon, Thursday, December 17th,  
with your name and the name of the one/s being memorialized.**

(You will be called by Don Gardner or one of our office volunteers to discuss if and when you would like to pick-up your flower.)