

Christmas Eve

December 24, 2021



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Plymouth United Church of Christ Rev. David Huber, Pastor

2010 Moholt Drive, Eau Claire WI 54703 ☎ 715-835-5475 🌐 pcucc.com



PlymouthUnitedChurchOfChrist

The Family of God Gathers

Prelude “Infant Holy, Infant Lowly”

arr. Lori Line

Greetings and Opening Words

Carol Verse 1

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

**O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!**

Advent Candle Lighting †

Sam Zehms, Linda Oliver

L: Because injustice and despair threaten to overwhelm us, we pray by lighting this candle of hope.

P: **Because so many swords have not yet been beaten into ploughshares, we pray by lighting this candle of peace.**

L: Because grief and loss weigh so heavily, we pray by lighting this candle of joy.

P: **Because hatred is still so strong, and because people all over the world are suffering, we pray by lighting this candle of love.**

L: Love-shine, your moment has come. In the dark of the womb you waited. Bathed in the balm of the star, you rest. Into a world sorely in need of your light, you are born. God has come to us as a child, to dwell with us, and to walk with us.

P: **When you knock on our door looking for room, may we welcome you. Like the herald of your birth, call us to share your good news first with those who are poor, excluded, and afraid. May the light from these candles burn away everything that is preventing the God of hope and peace and joy and love from being born among us.**

All: **The light shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot put it out.**

Carol Verses 2, 6, 7

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

**O come, O Wisdom from on high, and order all things far and nigh;
To us the path of knowledge show, and help us in that way to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!**

**O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by your advent here;
Love stir within the womb of night, and death's own shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!**

**O come, Desire of Nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;
Make envy, strife, and quarrels cease; fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!**

Prayer of Confession †§

Manger-dwelling God, we hear the songs of the angels, yet we easily tune-out the cries of the needy; we feel the breath of our children on our faces, yet remain untouched by your Spirit of peace; we are surrounded by gifts as precious as those brought by the Wise Ones, yet have trouble sharing with those who are from other countries, other faiths, other neighborhoods. Forgive us, holy one. Open our hearts to make room for you, that we may live more faithfully by your way. We long for community and acceptance, speak to us your grace that we might welcome the stranger into our lives, for by welcoming them we welcome you. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon †§

L: Into the noise of life, Jesus comes, calm and bright; into the shadows, he brings light; into the brokenness of our lives, he brings peace. Already your world is a little bit calmer and brighter having offered to God the bits of chaos clouding your life. Trust the good news born this night: In Jesus' name, you are forgiven!

P: You are forgiven!

L: May the peace of Christ be with you!

P: And also with you!

Passing the Peace

Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Offering

“Make Room”

Doxology

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow
Praise God all creatures here below
Praise God above ye heavenly host
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

Prayer of Dedication †§

**May the gifts we share be genuinely from our hearts, just as yours was that day,
God of Bethlehem. May they serve those who look for welcome, those who
struggle with loss and grief, those who need to be blessed by hope. This we pray
in the name of your Child, Jesus. Amen.**

Carol Verses 1 & 3

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

**Oh, come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant!
Oh, come ye, oh, come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him Born the king of angels;
Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come, let us adore him,
Oh, 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;
Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come, let us adore him,
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!**

Service of Lessons and Carols

Lesson 1 Jeremiah 23:5–8

Deb Zehms

Solo “I Wonder as I Wander”

Sam Zehms

Lesson 2 Luke 1:5–25

Sam Zehms, John Stecher, Linda Oliver, Craig Zehms

Carol

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

**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.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing, and voices ring with peace to all on earth.**

**How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the glorious love of heaven.
No one discerns God’s coming, but in this world of sin,
Where yearning souls long to be whole, the dear Christ enters in.**

Lesson 3 Matthew 1:18–25

Sam Zehms, Lorin Divine

Carol

“It Came upon the Midnight Clear”

**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, good will to all, great news of joy we bring.”
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.**

**For lo, the days are hastening on, by prophets seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold;
When peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
and all the world send back the song which now the angels sing.**

Lesson 4 Luke 1:26–38

Sam Zehms, Deb Zehms, Craig Zehms

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!**

**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!**

Lesson 5 Luke 1:46–55

Deb Zehms

L: And then Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

P: **Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.**

L: His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

P: **He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.**

L: He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.

P: **He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”**

Carol

“Away in a Manger”

**Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**

**The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky,
and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.**

**Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay
close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,
and fit us for heaven to live with you there.**

Lesson 6 Luke 1:59–79

Linda Oliver, John Stecher, Lorin Divine

Solo “How Can I Keep from Singing”

Lorin Divine

Carol

“Joy to the World!”

**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 earth! 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.**

Lesson 8 Luke 2:8–20

Linda Oliver, Lorin Divine

Duet “Gesù Bambino”

Hannah Zehms, Sam Zehms

Lesson 9 John 1:1–14

Sam Zehms

Solo “O Holy Night”

Hannah Zehms

Christ Candle Lighting

Light from the Christ Candle will be shared with everyone in the congregation. Dip your unlit candle into the flame and then hold it vertically for the next person to light from you. Be vigilant with children and take care not to get your candle too close to those in front of you. Please be sure all candles are extinguished following the service.

Carol

“Silent Night”

**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.**

Benediction †

**All: May the song of the angels, the joy of the shepherds, and the peace of the
Christ child be with you this day and always. Amen.**

Postlude

† *Feasting on the Word* Worship Companion, Year C, Vol. 1 ©2012 Westminster John Knox Press. Used with permission.

† adapted from SaltProject, used by permission, and the Christmas Appeal Candle Light Liturgy, used by permission of Christian Aid, and David Huber

† <http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com>

§ Written/modified by Rev. David Huber

News Notes

- Sunday morning worship on December 26 will be online only on Facebook and our website.

The beautiful poinsettias adorning the sanctuary were given by:

Anori & Clyde Divine in honor of Prescott; **Dorothy Gilbertson; Larry & Barb Kleist** in memory of Mr. & Mrs. August Kleist and Mr. & Mrs. Edwin Hinz; **Louise Partlow** in memory of Christena Strandt and Leol Partlow; **Mimi Pederson** in memory of Trudy Brewer and George & Hazel Bosley; **Pete Spitt** in memory of Sharon Spitt; **George Stecher, John Stecher, and Sue Falch** in memory of Kay Stecher and in honor of Dorothy Gilbertson; **Mike & Marybeth Tschumperlin** in memory of Sally Tschumperlin, Wade & Joyce Johnson, and Gretchen Johnson; **Keith & Deb Zehms** in memory of Jeanne Zehms.

