

First Congregational United Church of Christ  
January 1, 2023



Painting by Frank Wesley

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Christmas

Ministers: All who are a part of this church

Preacher: William Strand

Musician: Linda Noble

Choir Director: Ann Russ

Peace Candle Lighter: Nancy Starr

Liturgist: Steve Aldrich

**Gathering Music**

**Words of Welcome**

**Prelude**

## Words to Enter Worship

**People who stayed up until midnight: On this 8<sup>th</sup> day of Christmas, our loving God gave to us: voices for singing, bells for ringing, candles for lighting, lawn ornaments for sighting.**

**People who went to bed early: In this season of Christmas, may we find joy in the Babe of Bethlehem, who came to share love, healing, and abundant life for all of God's creation.**

**People who made New Year resolutions: May we, who search to find the Christ in Christmas, and Christ in Christianity, find the incarnate being who proclaims God's kingdom.**

**People who have their Christmas decorations still up: May we receive the true gifts of Hope, Faith, and Love, and share them with our neighbors in compassionate and just ways.**

## Opening Hymn Red Hymnal #94 Hark the Herald Angels Sing

1. Hark! the herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the new born 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 new born King!"
2. Christ, by highest heaven adored;  
Christ, the everlasting Lord;  
late in time behold him come,  
offspring of a virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;  
hail th' incarnate Deity,  
pleased as man with man to dwell,  
Jesus, our Emmanuel.  
Hark! the herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the new born King!"
3. 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 us second birth.  
Hark! the herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the new born King!"

## Words of Lament

**Almighty and Merciful God, we live in a world where children are neglected, hungry, and abused. Too many children in our world, even our country, die because they don't have someone who cares about them, enough food, and protection against those who would exploit and harm them. Arise, Almighty God, to protect your children. Arise, Merciful God, and stir our hearts to do what we can and all hearts so all your children are cared for, fed, and protected. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

## Time of Silence

### Words for Blessing with the World (Psalm 148)

**One:** Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise God in the heights! Praise God all the angels; Praise God, all the host! Praise God sun and moon.

**Many:** Praise God, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens! Let them praise the name of the LORD, for God spoke and they were created. God established them forever and ever; fixing their bounds, which cannot be passed.

**All:** Praise the LORD from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps, fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling God's command!

**One:** Mountains and hills, fruit trees and cedars! Wild animals and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds! Young men and women alike, old and young together!

**Many:** Let them praise the name of the LORD, for the name alone is exalted, glory is above the earth and the heaven.

**All:** God has raised up a horn for the people, praise for the faithful, for the people of Israel who are close – Praise the LORD!

### Words of Poetry & Lighting the Candle of Peace

It is a custom in our congregation to light our Peace Candle during worship, as a witness to the Prince of Peace and our communal intention to be peace-makers as a Just Peace Church.

*Through every precinct of the wintry city  
Squadroned iron resounds upon the streets;  
Herod's police  
Make shudder the dark steps of the tenements  
At the business about to be done.  
Neither look back upon Thy starry country,  
Nor hear what rumors crowd across the dark  
Where blood runs down these holy walls,  
Nor frame a childish blessing with Thy hand  
Towards that fiery spiral of exulting souls!  
Go, Child of God, upon the singing desert,  
Where, with eyes of flame,  
The roaming lion keeps thy road from harm.*

–Thomas Merton, from *Thirty Poems* (1944)

## Passing of the Peace

Hymn Red Hymnal # 118 As with Gladness Men of Old

- 1 As with gladness men of old  
did the guiding star behold,  
as with joy they hailed its light,  
leading onward, beaming bright,  
so, most gracious Lord, may we  
evermore be led by thee.
- 2 As with joyful steps they sped,  
Savior, to thy lowly bed,  
there to bend the knee before  
thee, whom heaven and earth adore,  
so may we with willing feet  
ever seek thy mercy seat.
- 3 As they offered gifts most rare  
at thy cradle, rude and bare,  
so may we with holy joy,  
pure and free from sin's alloy,  
all our costliest treasures bring,  
Christ, to thee, our heavenly King.
- 4 Holy Jesus, every day  
keep us in the narrow way;  
and, when earthly things are past,  
bring our ransomed souls at last  
where they need no star to guide,  
where no clouds thy glory hide.
- 5

Text: 77 77 77; William C. Dix, 1837-1898, alt. Music: Conrad Kocher, 1786-1872; alt. by William H. Monk, 1823-1889. Contributors: DIX

## Scripture Readings

**Hebrew Scripture: Isaiah 63:7-9** (New Revised Standard Version)

I will recount the gracious deeds of the LORD, the praiseworthy acts of the LORD, because of all that the LORD has done for us, and the great favor to the house of Israel that he has shown them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

<sup>8</sup> For he said, "Surely they are my people, children who will not act deceitfully," and he became their savior

<sup>9</sup> in all their distress.

It was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them; in his love and pity it

was he who redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

**Epistle Scripture: Hebrew 2:10-18 (New Revised Standard Version)**

<sup>10</sup> It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. <sup>11</sup> For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, <sup>12</sup> saying, "I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters; in the midst of the congregation, I will praise you."

<sup>13</sup> And again, "I will put my trust in him."

And again, "Here am I and the children whom God has given me."

<sup>14</sup> Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, <sup>15</sup> and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. <sup>16</sup> For it is clear that he did not come to help angels but the descendants of Abraham. <sup>17</sup> Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. <sup>18</sup> Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

**Gospel Scripture: Matthew 2:13-23 (New Revised Standard Version)**

<sup>13</sup> Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." <sup>14</sup> Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt <sup>15</sup> and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

<sup>16</sup> When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the magi. <sup>17</sup> Then what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

<sup>18</sup> "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."

<sup>19</sup> When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, <sup>20</sup> "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." <sup>21</sup> Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. <sup>22</sup> But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. <sup>23</sup> There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazarene."

**Message:**

**Musical Reflections**

**Joys and Concerns, Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer: Our Father, Mother**

God, 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

## **Our Time of Giving**

### **Doxology**

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God, all creatures here below;  
Praise God for all that love has done;  
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen*

## **News of God at Work in our Congregation & Community**

### **Closing Hymn Red Hymnal #105 Go, Tell It on the Mountain**

Refrain:

Go tell it on the mountain,  
over the hills, and everywhere;  
go, tell it on the mountain  
that Jesus Christ is born.

- 1 While shepherds kept their watching  
o'er silent flocks by night,  
behold, throughout the heavens  
there shone a holy light. [Refrain]
  
- 2 The shepherds feared and trembled  
when lo, above the earth  
rang out the angel chorus  
that hailed our Savior's birth. [Refrain]
  
- 3 Down in a lowly manger  
the humble Christ was born,  
and God sent us salvation  
that blessed Christmas morn. [Refrain]

Text: 76 76 with refrain; fr. American Negro Songs and Spirituals, 1940; John W. Work, Jr., 1872-1925, alt.  
Music: Spiritual. Contributors: Traditional Spiritual, Spiritual

## **Benediction**

## **Sending Music**