

Service of Lessons, Carols and Candlelight

Christmas Eve

December 24, 2015

7:30 PM

FOR QUIET MEDITATION

*O God, come into this holy night with stars to light
our way to the cradle of peace.*

Come with angels to sing us to a deep joy.

*Come to this moment and open our hearts so we may
hear the familiar story new and fresh. Surprise us
and remind us that the child in the manger is
Emmanuel — God with us, now and always. Amen.*

GATHER AND PREPARE FOR WORSHIP

WELCOME

PRELUDE

Christmas Suite

Manz

CHIMES

INTROIT

Saint-Saëns

“Tollite Hostias” from A Christmas Oratorio

English translation: *Bring offerings, and adore the Lord in
his holy place. Rejoice, heaven, and exult, all the earth,
before the Lord, for he comes. Alleluia*

THE PEOPLE OF GOD GATHER

A HEBREW SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

One: Tonight we relight the four Advent candles to recall our journey to Christmas. We are a people of hope. Our hearts are full of anticipation for the coming of our beloved Christ Child. We light the Candle of Hope. *(candle lit)*

One: We are a people who seek peace. We know that God has told us to turn our weapons of war into instruments of care and healing. In the name of the Prince of Peace, we light the Candle of Peace. *(candle lit)*

One: Joy to the world! Our God brings us “good news.” We sing songs of praise and gladness. Let us light the Candle of Joy. *(candle lit)*

One: We are a people who seek to be brought together by the love of Christ. Acknowledging God’s gift of grace, we light the Candle of Love. *(candle lit)*

One: We also light the Christ Candle this night,. The color of the candle is white, symbolizing the light of day and the light that Christ shines into the world and through each of us. *(candle lit)*

*HYMN #148

O Come, All Ye Faithful

O come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come and behold Him, Born the King of angels!

Refrain:

*O come, let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!*

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, Born this happy morning,
Jesus, to Thee be all glory given;
Word of the Father, Now in flesh appearing!

Refrain

Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation!
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all Glory in the highest!

Refrain

***CHRISTMAS PRAYER** (*let us pray together . . .*)
Gracious God, we thank you that You came to Bethlehem – then, as now, a very troubled town – bringing light to all who came to trust you. You come to us now, into our lives and into our world, still bringing light to your people. We ask you to accept this worship as we come again to the manger. Help us to see the light that will shine for us, not just at Christmas but every day of the year. Amen.

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Luke 2:1-7

***HYMN # 150**

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 the angelic host proclaim,
“Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
Hark! The herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King!”

Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold Him come,
Offspring of the virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh the God-head see;
Hail the incarnate Deity,
Pleased in flesh with us to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.
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,
Risen 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!”

ANTHEM *I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day* J. Ford

CHILDREN’S MOMENT (*Children may come forward.*)

THE ANGELS APPEAR

Luke 2:8-14

***HYMN # 155** *Angels We Have Heard on High*

1. Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains.

Refrain Gloria in excelsis Deo;
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

2. Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heavenly song?

Refrain

3. Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.

Refrain

SHEPHERDS COME TO SEE

Luke 2:15-20

***HYMN # 153** *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*

1. 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,
From heaven's all gracious King"
The world in solemn stillness lay,
To hear the angels sing.

2. 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.

INSTRUMENTALIST *Oh Holy Night* Adolphe Adam

A READING *On the Eve of Christmas* Arabic Carol
Sabeel Liberation Theology Centre, Jerusalem

Reader 1

On the Eve of Christmas
On the Eve of Christmas
On the Eve of Christmas
On the Eve of Christmas

Reader 2

Hatred will vanish
The Earth will flourish
War will be gone
Love will be born

When we offer a glass of water to a thirsty person
It is Christmas
When we clothe a naked person with a gown of love
It is Christmas
When we wipe the tears from weeping eyes
It is Christmas
When the spirit of revenge dies in me
It is Christmas
When in my heart I no longer want to stay apart
It is Christmas
When I am buried in the being of God
It is Christmas

GOD'S PEOPLE RESPOND

OFFERING

Invitation

Offertory *Variations on "Puer Nobis"* Zabel

*CHRISTMAS DOXOLGY Tune: What Child Is This

So bring Him incense, gold and myrrh;

Come, one and all, 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.

*Prayer of Dedication (*let us pray together . . .*)

Loving God, thank you for all your gifts and for hands to serve, songs to sing, love to share and gifts to give.

We give tonight because we believe in the way of peace that Christmas proclaims. May your shalom reign here and spread through all those persons who are in need, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

THE INCARNATION

John 1:1-5, 9-14

PRAYERS OF THE CONGREGATION

The Lord's Prayer (*in unison*)

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

CHRISTMAS AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (in unison)

We believe in God, Who created the universe in darkness and continually restores all things while we sleep. Darkness is a womb in which the secret work of God is done.

We believe in Jesus the Christ, who was born in deep of night and became Light for the world. Christ sheds light on the realm of justice and peace on Earth.

We believe in the Spirit, whose energy is evident in all that lives and breathes. Through the energy of the Spirit, re-creation is possible and love's promises are fulfilled.

THE LIGHT OF THE CHRIST INTO OUR HEARTS, OUT INTO THE WORLD

All are invited to gather around the sanctuary to pass the light from person to person. Lighted candles should always be held upright; tip the unlighted candle toward the flame. Please assist all children with candles and extinguish all flames after singing Silent Night.

*HYMN # 145

Silent Night, Holy Night

1. 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.

2. 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."
3. 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.
4. 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.

***HYMN # 143**

Joy to the World!

1. 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.
2. 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.

***BENEDICTION**

***CHIMES**

POSTLUDE *On This Day Earth Shall Ring* Johnson
 *those who are able, please stand.

Welcome to Homer Congregational Church.

We are glad that you have chosen to join us for worship on this special night. We invite you to join us in the weeks to come as we continue to worship the Christ.

Sunday, December 27, 10:30 AM - An intergenerational service of music and scripture that will also include musical gifts by members.

Sunday, January 3, 10:30 AM - A time to hear the story of the Magi, sing lively Epiphany carols, share Holy Communion, and welcome the New Year together.

Thanks to all who contributed to the Advent and Christmas worship services, including members of the Choir; our music, youth and support staff: Jim Shultes, Joe Ford, Sherri Masterson, Gary Harrington, and Donna Piotti; contributors of poinsettias; children who led our Pageant; ushers, lectors, and worship assistants. Sharing your gifts which enriched the season for all! Pastor Kathleen

Poinsettias: You may pick up your poinsettia after the postlude or leave it in place for a deacon to deliver to others.

