

Christmas Eve Service

Revs. Cara & Steve Stultz Costello, Co-Pastors

December 24, 2015 9:00 PM

WELCOME

*It may seem naive, in a world of grief, to choose to live in joy;
It may seem foolish, in a world where solemnity is power, to sing and dance to a different tune;
It may seem cruel, in a world of suffering and injustice, to speak of light and celebration;
But you have come, Jesus, to bring joy into our grief, light into our darkness, singing into our mourning;
It is an act of healing and proclamation to believe and embrace the joy you offer.
Joy to the world! The Lord is come!*

PRELUDE: CHRIST REVEALED

Cradle Hymn

Kim Andre Arnensen

Hush! my dear, lie still and slumber, Holy angels guard thy bed! Heavenly blessings without number gently falling on thy head. See the kindly shepherds round Him, telling wonders from the sky! Where they sought Him, there they found Him, with His Virgin mother by. See the lovely babe a-dressing; lovely infant, how He smiled! When He wept, the mother's blessing. Soothed and hush'd the holy child. May'st thou live to know and fear Him, trust and love Him all thy days; then go dwell for ever near Him, see His face, and sing His praise! Amen!

Schola Cantorum; Heather Cooper, associate director

*HYMN OF INTENTION

"Joy to the World"

No. 246

*BRINGING IN THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

Acolyte

*CALL TO WORSHIP AND PRAYER OF INVOCATION

ONE: Lord God, You come to us.

MANY: You don't wait for us to become good. You don't stay away until we search for You. You take the initiative. You enter the world You made as a child, so that You could enter the world of our experience and meet us where we are, as we are.

ONE: And so, we know that as we pray, You hear and You understand, and You answer.

ALL: Come into our world again. Bring Your peace and love and trust into a world of war and hatred and suspicion. Come into this land again. Bring Your healing into a country ravaged by broken communities, broken relationships, and bodies broken by all kinds of diseases. And come into our lives, and those of our loved ones again. May we know in the depth of our souls, today and every day, that God is truly with us, no matter what life brings. We welcome You and Your healing love into our world. Come, Lord Jesus. Come!

HYMN

"Comfort, Comfort Ye My People"

1. Com-fort, com - fort, O my peo - ple, Speak of peace, now
MEN 2. Hark, the voice of one who's cry - ing in the des - ert
ALL 3. O make straight what long was crook - ed, make the rough - er

says our God; Com - fort those who sit in dark - ness,
far and near. WOMEN Bidd - ing all to full re - pen - tance
plac - es plain. Let your hearts be true and hum - ble,

Mourn - ing 'neath their sor - row's load. Speak un - to Je - ru - sa - lem
since the king - dom now is here. ALL O that war - ning cry o - bey!
as be - fits his ho - ly reign. For the glo - ry of the Lord

Of the peace that waits for them. Tell of all the
Now pre - pare for God a way. Let the val - leys
now o'er earth is shed a - broad. And all flesh shall

sins I cov - er, And that war - fare now is o - ver.
rise to meet him and the hills bow down to greet him.
see the to - ken that his word is ne - ver bro - ken.

HEBREW SCRIPTURE

Micah 5:2-5a

HYMN

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"

No. 230 vs. 1 & 4

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

No. 248 vs. 4

One: For weeks we have listened to obscure messages from ancient prophets. In their words we have caught glimpses of the light that is promised. Now, though the wreath is ablaze and all the candles of anticipation have been lit, still there is one last prophecy to hear.

Many: With eyes wide open, ears attuned and hearts unguarded, we gather around the wreath on this night, longing to receive the Word within the words.

One: A reading from the Prophet Isaiah, Chapter 9, verses 2 and 6 through 7 (pause as the passage is read)

Many: This night these words are fulfilled in our hearing and in our living. For the promise of God has come to us. Our lives are the manger in whom the Christ child is born. No longer do we seek light from another source; now the light burns in our hearts and we become love's lamp.

One: So, we light the candle at the center of our wreath and our faith. We light it in the name of the One who is the light, and, as Mary did so long ago, we name this light Jesus.

ANTHEM *Bogoroditsye Devo* Aarvo Pärt
Rejoice, O virgin Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, for thou has borne the Savior of our souls.
Schola Cantorum; Daniel Parsley, director

GOSPEL LESSON Luke 2:1-7
HYMN "Away in a Manger" No. 217

ANTHEM *Bethlehem Pastorale* Daniel Rhone
Julie Sarver, alto flute; Heather Cooper, piano

GOSPEL LESSON Luke 2:8-14
HYMN "Angels We Have Heard on High" No. 238

ANTHEM *Born Today* Cynthia Gray
Angels singing, tidings bring, Christ is born today! Earth resounding, joy abounding, Christ is born today! Come adore him, kneel before him, Christ is born today! Tell the story, sing his glory, Christ is born today. Alleluia!
Joy Unlimited Youth Choir Alumni & Schola Cantorum; Mike Wiley, conductor

GOSPEL LESSON Luke 2: 15-20
HYMN "O Come, All Ye Faithful" No. 234 vs.1,2,3, & 6

OFFERING & OFFERTORY *Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming* arr. Sarver
Harmonia Sacra Brass; Dennis Sarver, director

*DOXOLOGY No. 94 or See Below
Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise God, the source of all our gifts! Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts! Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

GOSPEL LESSON Isaiah 61: 1-4

SERMON *Birth Stories* Rev. Steve Stultz Costello

SHARING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

(Please remain seated for the singing of "Silent Night" and watch for the light of Christ. Please allow the ushers to light the candles of those on each end of the pew. Tip your unlit candle to the flame and then pass the light.)

HYMN "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, 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!**

*CONGREGATIONAL BENEDICTION

One: We praise you, Jesus,

Many: because when you chose to come to us,

One: it was not with fanfare and bright lights,

Many: it was not with loud pronouncements and noisy celebrations;

One: Nor with dramatic entrances into our world's clashes of ideologies and armies.

Many: We praise you, Jesus,

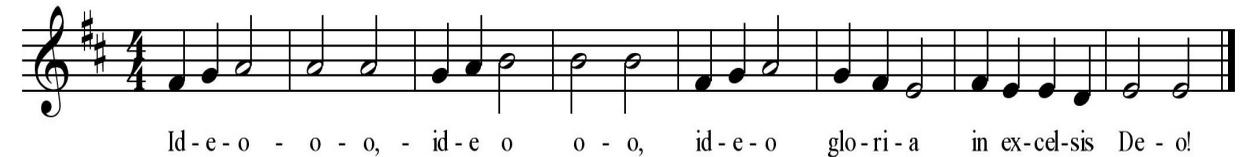
One: because when you chose to come to us,

Many: it was in the still breath-catching moment,

One: the quiet, pregnant weight,

ALL: of a silent, subversive, night.

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE



*CHRIST'S LIGHT TO THE WORLD

Acolyte

* POSTLUDE

Angels from the Realm of Glory

Edwin Johnson

**Please stand, as you are able*

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Worship Resources for Children and Families: Special bulletins, worship activities, books, finger labyrinths can be found in the Worship Baskets in the Narthex at the back of the sanctuary.

Nursery Care for Children: Children are always welcome in worship at Faith United Methodist Church. Rocking chairs are available in our narthex. Child care is also available in room 18. To find the nursery, follow the hallway at the library and turn left at the first hall to find our nursery **OR** simply find one of our ushers and greeters, who will be happy to show you our nursery.



Faith United Methodist Church

Worship Services: Sundays at 8:30AM, 9:45AM & 11:00AM

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