

**Christmas Eve**  
**December 24, 2022 – 7:30 pm**  
United Church of Christ, Neillsville  
Pastor Gary Wilner

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**PRELUDE**

*“Choral Prelude on ‘In dulci jubilo’* J.S. Bach  
Karen Mohr

**GATHERING MUSIC**

Choir  
*“The Gift of Love”* Maxine Woodbridge Posegate

**WELCOME**

**OPENING PRAYER** (*All in bold*)

Pastor: Today we gather to anticipate and celebrate. It’s a two thousand year old story, but it is made new each year at this time. The hope, of course, is that the newness remains:

**ALL: Let a new way of seeing, doing, and being fill our hearts and cause us to put aside all the things that keep us apart and afraid; let us embrace God’s way. Amen**

**SCRIPTURE** Isaiah 40:1-5

Ray Weyer

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.  
<sup>2</sup>Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. <sup>3</sup>A voice of one calling: "In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. <sup>4</sup>Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. <sup>5</sup>And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all people will see it together. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

**PRAYER** **Let US Pray**

Pastor: Like the ancient audience in Isaiah, we hunger for hope.  
Will you come?  
Will you forgive and forget what we have done?  
Will you create reconciliation? A highway for the lost traveler to find home?

**All: O come, O come, Emmanuel**

Like those who stepped away from your prophets, we hunger for peace.

Will you come, God? Will you push us to listen more and war less?

Will you offer wholeness? A way back to relationship through your comfort?

**All: O come, Desire of Nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind**

Like those who thought they knew better but knew little at all, we hunger for joy.

Will you come, God? Will you show us that we look to shallow pools to satisfy our thirst?

Will you offer blessedness? New eyes to see all that is given in grace?

**All: O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by your advent here**

And like those who have lost meaning, we hunger for love.

Will you come, God? Will you cause our hearts to burn with passion and purpose?

Will you offer love? A powerful invitation to create new possibilities?

**All: O come, O Wisdom from on high, and order all things far and nigh**

O come, Emmanuel, come.

Bring reconciliation, wholeness, blessedness, and love.

**All: O come, Emmanuel, come. Amen.**

**HYMN**      *"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, goodwill to men  
From heaven's all-gracious King  
The world in solemn stillness lay  
To hear the angels sing**

**THE STORY IN WORD AND SONG**    **Luke 2: 1-20)**  
Susie Karl

"And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into their own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

And, lo, the angel of God came upon them, and the glory of God shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

**SPECIAL MUSIC**                      Choir  
*"Still the Holiest Night"*

Arr. by Philip Kern

**THE STORY CONT. & LIGHTING OF CHRIST CANDLE**  
Ray Weyer

*(Pastor lights the Christ Candle while this is being read)*

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the

city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, 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, and on earth peace, good will toward all.

**HYMN**      *"Angels We Have Heard On High"*

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

**Chorus –  
Gloria In Excelsis Deo  
Gloria In Excelsis Deo**

**2 Shepherds why this jubilee?  
Why your joyous strains prolong?  
Say what may the tidings be  
Which inspire your heavenly song?  
[Chorus]**

**3 Come to Bethlehem and see  
Him Whose birth the angels sing;  
Come, adore on bended knee  
Christ the Lord, the newborn King  
(Chorus)**

Susie Karl

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which God hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them."

**HYMN** "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 angelic hosts proclaim:  
"Christ is born in Bethlehem"  
Hark! the herald angels sing:  
"Glory to the newborn King!"

**MESSAGE**

Pastor Gary

**THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION**

*The United Church of Christ practices open communion. **Everyone** who confesses Jesus Christ as Savior is encouraged to participate.*

**THE INVITATION**

**PRAYER**

**THE STORY OF THE LAST SUPPER**

**EATING OF THE BREAD AND DRINKING OF THE CUP**

**PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

**THE CELEBRATING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST**

**HYMN** "Silent Night, Holy Night" #95 NCH

*(All 3 verses, repeat until all candles are lit)*

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  
Child of God, love's pure light,  
Radiant beams from your holy face  
Bring the dawn of redeeming grace;

Jesus Christ at your birth  
Jesus Christ at your birth.

**THE BENEDICTION** (Unison)

We rejoice in God's steadfast presence in our lives, and in God's unique presence in the life of Jesus of Nazareth— born of Mary, growing through childhood into an adult ministry, in all his life manifesting the peace, love, and justice of God;  
his voice undimmed by the centuries,  
his call and his promise as clear to us as it was to his disciples so long ago.

Come to us, Lord Jesus,  
Be born in us this night, in our hearts, our minds, our lives.  
May the light of your life be kindled in us,  
And lead us to the shining truth,  
of God with us, God for us, God in us. Amen.

**POSTLUDE** "Joy to the World"  
(All Sing)

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 Joy to the world! the Saviour 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.

3 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.

## *Poinsettia dedications*

### **White**

Susie Karl – in honor of all members of the Circle of Friends, past and present. Thank you for your legacy of service to our church.

Kathy & Howie Mathis – in honor of our beautiful family past and present

Nancy & Kirk Rodman - in honor of the Luedtke and Rodman family members

Craig & Stephanie Heck, Tracy & Kay Heck -  
– in honor of Max, Brynn, Calvin and Sophie Heck

Kevin & Jenny Erickson – in honor of our Godchildren- Matt, Alyssa, Allissa, Caden, Aubrey, Morgan & Isabel

### **Red**

Debbie & Joe Holman - in loving memory of family & friends.

Carole Romens – in honor of all my family  
Carole Romens -in honor of Marge Goetsch for hosting our Bible Study

Karlene Wallace – in memory of Tom Wallace

Rosie & Jim Repinski – in memory of our dads and moms and our great father, Lord.

Dave Beck – in memory of Shirley Beck  
Dave Beck – in memory of Phyllis Embke

Gary & Dorry Wilner –  
in memory of Clarence & Barbara Wilner  
Gary & Dorry Wilner –  
in memory of Harry & Dorothy Bujak

Craig & Stephanie Heck Family, Tracy & Kay Heck, Max & Brynn Heck – in memory of the parents of Max and Brynn Heck

Tim & Cheryl Steinbach & family –  
In honor of Wally & Pat Garbisch

Kevin & Jenny Erickson – in memory of our friend Ryan Murphy



**We thank all who decorated our sanctuary for the Advent and Christmas season. We thank those who donated Poinsettias – you may take your flower home after the 7:30 pm service. We thank all who participated in our Christmas Eve Worship services! Thank you.**

