

Second Sunday after Christmas

January 5, 2025

United Church of Christ - Neillsville

Pastor Julie Ruegsegger

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RINGING OF THE CARILLON

PRELUDE "How Brightly Shines the Morning Star"

Johann Pachelbel Karen Mohr

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

People of God, arise, shine, for your light has come!

We are called out of our darkness into light.

Lift up your eyes and look around.

We rejoice in the gift of light.

Come let us worship the God of light and joy and peace.

**We come to kneel at the cradle of the babe,
the light incarnate.**

OPENING PRAYER

God of promise and light, open our eyes this morning, that we may see your light in the darkness.

Open our hearts, that we may perceive your promises of justice and righteousness fulfilled in the babe of Bethlehem. May this time of worship bring us closer to you, that the good news of the birth of light and love will transform our lives. Amen.

HYMN "Arise, Your Light is Come" Ruth Duck

#164 NCH

**1 Arise, your light is come!
The Spirit's call obey;
Show forth the glory of your God
which shines on you today!**

**2 Arise, your light is come!
Fling wide the prison door;
Proclaim the captive's liberty
good tidings to the poor.**

**3 Arise, your light is come!
All you in sorrow born,
Bind up the broken-hearted ones
and comfort those who mourn.**

**4 Arise, your light is come!
The mountains burst in song!
Rise up like eagles on the wing;
God's power will make you strong.**

PASSING OF THE PEACE

One: The Peace of God be with you.

Many: And also with you.

All are invited to greet one another with words such as "*The peace of Christ be with you,*" and the response: "*And also with you*".

RESPONSE: "Glory to God"

#756 NCH (sing twice)

Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Gloria, gloria, alleluia, alleluia!

CHILDREN'S TIME

SCRIPTURE READINGS

NEW TESTAMENT Ephesians 1:3-14 (NLT)

³ All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. ⁴ Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. ⁵ God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. ⁶ So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. ⁷ He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. ⁸ He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding.

⁹ God has now revealed to us his mysterious will regarding Christ—which is to fulfill his own good plan.

¹⁰ And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth. ¹¹ Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for he chose us in advance, and he makes everything work out according to his plan.

¹² God's purpose was that we Jews who were the first to trust in Christ would bring praise and glory to God.

¹³ And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. ¹⁴ The Spirit is God's guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.

NEW TESTAMENT John 1:1-18 (NLT)

¹ In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God.

² He existed in the beginning with God. ³ God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. ⁴ The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.

⁶ God sent a man, John the Baptist, ⁷ to tell about the light so that everyone might believe because of his testimony. ⁸ John himself was not the light; he was simply a witness to tell about the light. ⁹ The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰ He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him. ¹¹ He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. ¹² But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. ¹³ They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.

¹⁴ So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unending love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.

¹⁵ John testified about him when he shouted to the crowds, "This is the one I was talking about when I said, 'Someone is coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.'"

¹⁶ From his abundance we have all received one gracious blessing after another. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses, but God's unending love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God. But the unique One, who is himself God, is near to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us.

SERMON "The Light is Here" Pastor Julie

HYMN "I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light"

#248 W&R Kathleen Thomerson

1 I want to walk as a child of the light.

I want to follow Jesus.

God set the stars to give light to the world.

The star of my life is Jesus.

Refrain:

In him there is no darkness at all.

The night and the day are both alike.

The Lamb is the light of the city of God.

Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.

2 I want to see the brightness of God.

I want to look at Jesus.

**Clear sun of righteousness, shine on my path,
and show me the way to the Father. [Refrain]**

3 I'm looking for the coming of Christ.

I want to be with Jesus.

**When we have run with patience the race,
we shall know the joy of Jesus. [Refrain]**

MORNING PRAYERS

PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

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

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation to the Table

... It is with this expectation that we come to the table to taste and see that God is here.

Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

... The angels caroled glory to you in the highest heavens and peace to all people on earth, and we join with them and with all people to praise your holy name:

RESPONSE: *"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" verse 3*

Hail the heav'n 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 them second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Breaking Bread And Pouring Wine

Sharing The Elements

All are welcome to partake in the Feast of our Lord. The table is open to all.

Prayer Of Thanksgiving

We have been fed, Holy One, by your presence.
We have been led, Eternal One, by your light.
May we bask in this glow
Now and forevermore. Amen.

THE OFFERING SERVICE

Invitation to Generosity

Offertory *"Zu Bethlehem Geboren"*

Doxology:

Praise God for gifts of hope and peace
Praise God for gifts of joy and love
Praise God for sending Christ to dwell
On earth for us – Emmanuel. Amen.

Prayer of Dedication

God of light and promise, we bring our gifts to further your work in a dark world. May they bring your light to those overwhelmed by darkness, pain, and loneliness. Accept these gifts of money and time, indeed, the gift of our very selves. Let them shine for all to see, and be brought into the sphere of your love and righteousness.

HYMN *"Songs of Thankfulness and Praise"*
#243 W&R (vs. 1,3) Christopher Wordsworth

1 Songs of thankfulness and praise,
Jesus, Lord, to you we raise;
once revealed, when heaven's star
brought the wise men from afar;
branch of royal David's stem
in your birth at Bethlehem,
Word before the world began,
God revealed to us in man.

3 God revealed in valiant fight,
conquering the devil's might;
sins forgiven, sickness healed,
life restored and God revealed:
once revealed in gracious will
ever bringing good from ill,
Word before the world began,
God revealed to us in man.

JOYS AND CONCERNS

"Songs of Thankfulness and Praise"

#243 W&R (vs 4)

4 Stars shall fall and heavens fade,
sun and moon shall dark be made;
Christ will then like lightning shine,
all will see the glorious sign;
all will then the trumpet hear,
all will see the Son appear,
Word before the world began,
God revealed to us in man.

BENEDICTION

Arise, and go forth to shine for all the world to see.

We go to spread the good news of light and love, righteousness and justice.

Go now and follow the star that will guide you on your journey this week, this year, and forever.

As the Magi of old, we go forth in trust and excitement, transformed in the presence of the child of light.

May the blessing of the God of light rest upon you and fill you with light.

Amen.

POSTLUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

RADIO BROADCAST

11 AM Sunday radio broadcast
on WCCN 98.5FM and 1370AM

This week's radio broadcast is sponsored
anonymously by
"a faithful listener".

WELCOME

We welcome you to our service of worship!
We are glad that you have joined us on site,
through the internet or on the radio.

We pray that you will hear God's call,
seek to follow Jesus, led by the Holy Spirit.

YouTube link for Sunday, January 5, 2025

<https://youtube.com/live/T2Z8tx5ieWU>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday, January 5th –

- **10 AM** Deacon Host – Karlene Wallace

Greeter(s) – Lydia Schumacher, Karen Northup

Usher(s) – Craig Heck, Max Heck

PowerPoint – Emile Miller

Monday, January 6th –

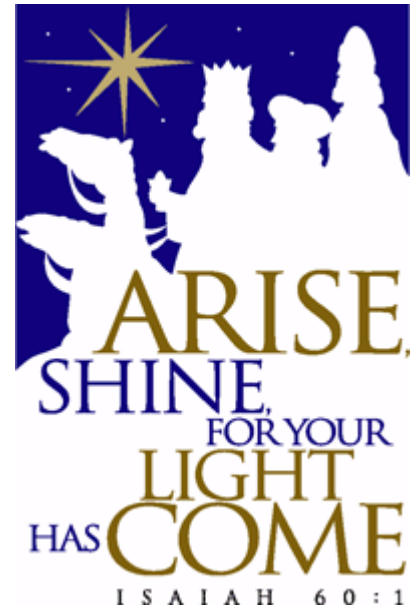
- **9 AM** Card Making

Tuesday, January 7th –

- **1 PM** Bible Study

Wednesday, January 8th -

- **1 PM** Caregivers Meeting



Coffee fellowship after worship -

Sign up on back bulletin board

Jan 5 – Weyer's / Perkl's

Jan 12 – Mathis'

Jan 19 –

Jan 26 -

We need people to sign up

