

The Federated Church

United Church of Christ † Unitarian Universalist Association



**THE WEARY
WORLD
REJOICES!**

Christmas 2020

CHRISTMAS EVE

December 24, 2020 | 7:00pm

Merry Christmas!

Welcome to Worship at Federated Church

*An Open & Affirming Congregation of
the United Church of Christ & Unitarian Universalist Association*

***Whoever you are, wherever you are on the journey of life and faith,
we're delighted you're joining us!***

Dear Christmas Eve worshippers,

“Blue Collar” shepherds; weary but wonder-filled travelers; a poor, unwed, and exhausted but faithful pregnant girl; farm animals—these were among the first to experience the marvel and mystery of God born among us. It’s a reminder that God desires to be at home among ordinary people, and often calls the most unlikely of people together. May the strangeness and challenges of this year awaken our hearts to hear the very good news of this story in new ways. With gratitude for the story of the first Christmas, we extend to you this Christmas Eve a welcome as wide as the outstretched arms of God.

If you are looking for a church home, we hope you will return again and again to experience more of life together here. Federated Church is a holy place to be inspired in worship, belong in community, and be transformed in our living; we would love to share the journey of life and faith with you!

Tonight, may this virtual sanctuary be a place of Holy Wonder and Hope at God’s life-altering promise for you. Wherever you are on the journey of life and faith, may you experience the profound love of God made known in Emmanuel.

Wishing you a blessed Christmas,
Rev. Eric J. Ogi, Pastor, Federated Church

Prelude

Welcome

Call to Worship & Presentation of Light

Beloved, on this holy night we gather to remember and proclaim
How God did not wait until the world was ready, till nations were at peace;
**God came when the Heavens were unsteady,
And prisoners cried out for release.**

God did not wait for the perfect time.

God came when the need was deep and great.

God dined with sinners in all their grime, and turned water into wine.

God did not wait until hearts were pure.

In joy, God came to a tarnished world of sin and doubt.

To a world of anguished shame,

God came with love to share our grief and to touch our pain.

God came and God's light would not go out.

the Christ candle is lit. silence is kept.

In the mystery of the Word made Flesh

The Maker of the Stars was born.

So, let us light candles to shine in every darkness:

Wherever despair keeps watch, we will light candles of Hope.

Wherever fear crowds in, we will light candles of Peace.

Wherever grief overwhelms, we will light candles of Joy.

To inspire all our living, we will light candles of Love.

Sung Response "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" (*Refrain*)

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel

Gathering Carol #3 "O Come, All Ye Faithful" vss. 1, 2 & 4 (p. 7)

Christmas Prayer & The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art 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.

First Lesson *The Witness of the Prophets*
Scripture Isaiah 9:2, 6-7; Micah 5:2-5a
Poem “Dominus Vobiscum”
Carol Response #2 “O Little Town of Bethlehem” vss. 1 & 2 (p.8)

Second Lesson *The Birth of Jesus*
Scripture Luke 2:1-7
Poem “A Song for the Poor at Christmas”
Carol Response #12 “Away in a Manger” vss. 1 & 2 (p.9)

Third Lesson *An Angel Astounds the Shepherds with Good News*
Scripture Luke 2:8-14
Poem “Prepare Our Hearts”
Carol Response #7 “The First Noel” vss. 1 & 2 (p.10)

Fourth Lesson *The Shepherds Journey to the Manger*
Scripture Luke 2:15-20
Poem “Covenant”
Special Music “O Holy Night”

Meditation “A Light in the Shadows of Death”

Musical Meditation

Sharing Our Christmas Eve Offerings

*tonight’s offering will go to the Pastor’s Emergency Fund,
which supports DeKalb County community members in need*

Prayer of Dedication

**God of Light and Life, we bring our gifts to your humble manger.
Bless these expressions of our gratitude for your incarnate love,
and use them to bring healing and hope to your people. Amen.**

Sharing the Light of Christ

Scripture John 1:1-5, 9-14
Poem “Luminous Night”
Carol Response #4 “Silent Night”
see lyrics on next page

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, shepherds quake at the sight
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia
Christ, the Savior is born! Christ, the Savior is born*

*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*

Benediction

Postlude

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WORSHIP NOTES

The Call to Worship is adapted from the poem, "First Coming," by Madeleine L'Engle and "I Will Light Candles this Christmas," a poem by Howard Thurman. All other poems used in worship come from *Upon a Luminous Night* by Christine Rodgers, except for the excerpt from "Prepare Our Hearts," which is written by Muriel Tarr Kurtz. All are used with permission.

O Come, All Ye Faithful

1. O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful, and tri - um - phant,
2. Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,
3. Child, for us sin - ners poor and in the man - ger,
4. Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born for our sal - va - tion,

O come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem;
sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heaven a - bove!
we would em - brace thee, with love and awe;
Je - sus, to thee be all glo - ry given;

come and be - hold him, born the King of an - gels;
Glo - ry to God, all glo - ry in the high - est;
who would not love thee, lov - ing us so dear - ly?
Word of the Fa - ther, now in flesh ap - pear - ing;

Refrain
O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him,

O come, let us a - dore him, Christ, the Lord!

O Little Town of Bethlehem

1. O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!
2. For Christ is born of Ma - ry, and gath - ered all a - bove
3. How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is given!
4. O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;

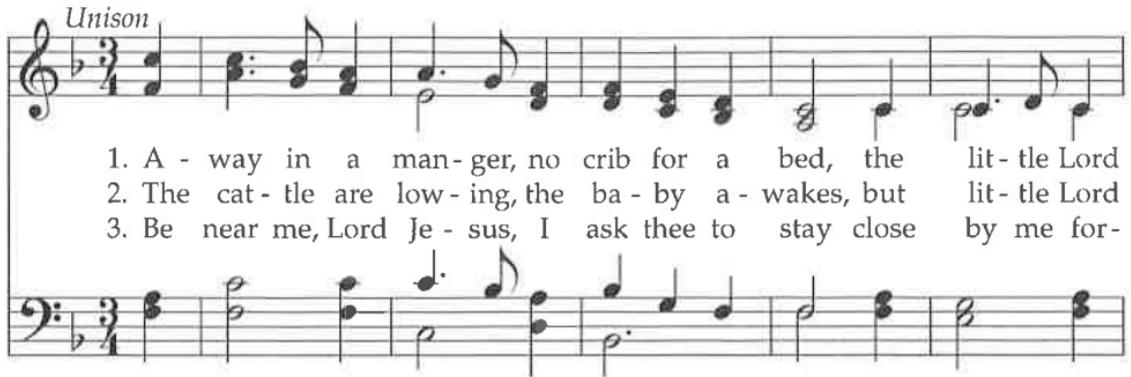
A - bove thy deep and dream - less sleep the si - lent stars go by.
while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - dering love.
So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the joys of high - est heaven,
cast out our sin, and en - ter in; be born in us to - day.

Yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing Light;
O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth.
No ear may hear Christ com - ing, but in this world of sin,
We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;

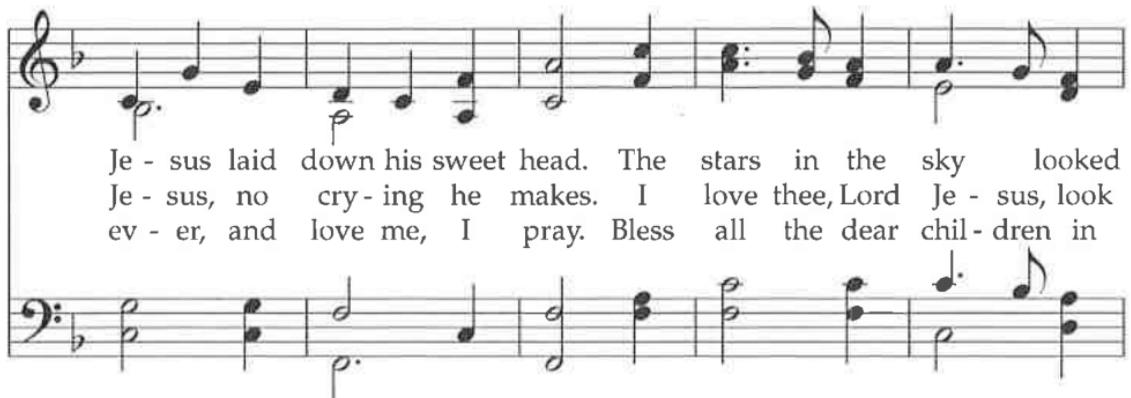
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.
Your voic - es raise to God in praise; and peace to all on earth.
where meek souls will re - ceive him still, the dear Christ en - ters in.
O come to us, a - bide with us, our God, Em - man - u - el.

Away in a Manger

Unison



1. A - way in a man-ger, no crib for a bed, the lit - tle Lord
2. The cat - tle are low - ing, the ba - by a - wakes, but lit - tle Lord
3. Be near me, Lord Je - sus, I ask thee to stay close by me for -



Je - sus laid down his sweet head. The stars in the sky looked
Je - sus, no cry - ing he makes. I love thee, Lord Je - sus, look
ev - er, and love me, I pray. Bless all the dear chil - dren in



down where he lay, the lit - tle Lord Je - sus, a - sleep on the hay.
down from the sky, and stay by my cra - dle till morn - ing is nigh.
thy ten - der care, and fit us for heav - en to live with thee there.

WORDS: Anonymous (19th century)
MUSIC: Attr. James R. Murray, 1887; harm. LBW, 1978

AWAY IN A MANGER
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The First Noel

1. The first No - el, the an - gel did say, was to
 2. They look - ed up and saw a star shin - ing
 3. And by the light of that same star three
 4. This star drew nigh to the north - west, o'er
 5. Then en - tered in those wise men three, full

1. cer - tain poor shep - herds in fields as they lay; in fields where
 2. in the east, be - yond them far, and to the
 3. wise men came from coun - try far; to seek for a
 4. Beth - le - hem it took its rest, and there it
 5. rev - erent - ly up - on their knee, and of - fered

1. they lay keep - ing their sheep, on a cold win - ter's
 2. earth it gave great light, and so it con -
 3. king was their in - tent, and to fol - low the
 4. did both stop and stay, right ov - er the
 5. there, in his pres - ence, their gold and

1. night that was so deep.
 2. tin - ued both day and night.
 3. star wher - ev - er it went. No - el, No - el, No -
 4. place where Je - sus lay.
 5. myrrh and frank - in - cense.

Refrain

el, No - el, born is the King of Is - ra - el.

YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!

Federated Church is an Open & Affirming Community. In a time of deep division and vitriolic rhetoric around issues of race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality, and where the dignity of people living with disabilities or mental health issues are often ignored, demonized, or turned into a joke, we promise to:

Welcome all people of every age, gender, race, national origin, faith expression, marital status & family structure, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, physical ability, mental or emotional condition, economic and social status, and educational background to share in the life, leadership, ministry, fellowship, worship, sacraments, responsibilities, blessings, and joys of our church family.

The Rainbow Flag: We proudly display a rainbow flag at the front of our sanctuary as a visual declaration of God's extravagant and inclusive love, as well as of our own "promise of welcome" to all people. Our prayer is that all can be their truest selves here. This flag serves as a particular signal that our church is a safe and affirming space for LGBTQ persons to be, to belong, to lead, to question, and to grow in faith.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Miss a Sunday? Want to listen again? Pastor Eric's sermons are posted each week at our website: www.fedsycamore.org/sermons, along with a link to the full worship service.

Looking for a church home? Join us every Sunday at 10am [on our Facebook Page](#) for our worship livestream at 10am! Feel free to contact Pastor Eric to learn more or get connected (reveric@fedsycamore.org)

Holiday Office Hours Please note, the church office will be closed December 25th, 31st, and January 1st

“Welcoming Any, Loving All”

**The Federated Church is
An Open and Affirming (ONA) congregation**



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