

The Federated Church

United Church of Christ + Unitarian Universalist Association



**AND THE
SOUL FELT
ITS WORTH**

Christmas

Merry Christmas!

Welcome to Worship at Federated Church

“Every Year”

by Rev. Sarah Speed

My heart and I have an agreement.
Every year we show up here—
here in the sanctuary,
here with the candles and tall ceilings,
here with the creaky church pews
and the songs of silent nights.

My heart and I have an agreement.
Every year we show up here—
At the end of the year,
After another 12 months of humanity, of me
Trying to keep it all together,
Trying to keep my head above water,
Trying to keep up the appearances.

Every year we show up here.
We drop it all. We leave it at the door.
We come into this space, and I could swear it feels different.
Maybe it's God. Maybe it's hope. Maybe it's love.
But whatever it is, I need it every year, so we show up here.
Tell us again the story of tonight.

My heart needs it.

Dear Christmas worshippers,
Welcome on this holiest of nights. Whatever it is that has drawn you here, welcome. Wherever this last year has taken you; whatever hopes, fears, loves, and longings you carry here tonight, we're glad you're here. May Emmanuel—the “God-who-is-with-us”—meet you here in this place and amidst it all as you enter once again into this sacred story. For God's life-altering promises are for you and for our world. May your soul feel its worth; may our weary world rejoice!

Wishing you a blessed Christmas,
Pastor Eric

Order of Worship | December 24, 2023

All music can be found at the back of the bulletin.

Throughout the service, please join in reading those parts printed in bold.

Prelude

“O Holy Night”

Fe Gould, soloist

Welcome & Presentation of Light

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. 4)

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 & 4 (p. 5)

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. 6)

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. 7)

Fourth Lesson *Shepherds & Magi Journey to the Manger*
Scripture [Luke 2:15-20; Matthew 2:1-2, 7-12](#)
Poem “Covenant”
Carol Response #7 “The First Noel” vss. 3 & 4 (p. 7)

Meditation “Weary World Rejoice! God is Born Amidst the Rubble”

Sung Response “Weary World Rejoice” vv. 1 & 4 (p. 3)

Responding to God’s Invitation: Prayer Stations (see insert for instructions)

Sharing the Light of Christ

Scripture [John 1:1-5, 9-14](#)
Poem “Luminous Night”
Carol Response #4 “Silent Night”

Please hold lit candles upright at all times
Tip the unlit candle and light it from your neighbor’s lit candle.
See lyrics on the next page

Benediction

Postlude

Thank you for joining us for worship. Merry Christmas!

“Weary World Rejoice”

Anna Strickland

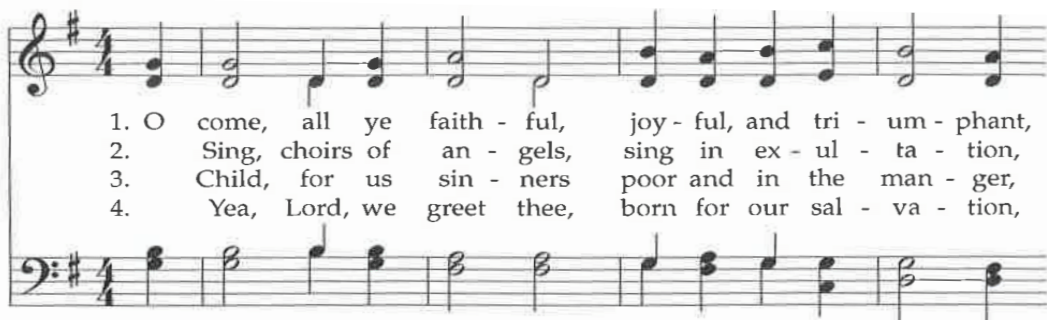
Wear - ry world, God's own vine still
 Wear - ry world, wait - ing still
 Tears our on - ly bread and wine
 Hold - ing our breath un - til
 Cry - ing out to be re-stored
 Christ re - turns in truth and grace
 Des - perate for a break from war
 Will we re - cog - nize his face?
 Wear - ry world re - joice
 Come and raise your voice

Silent Night

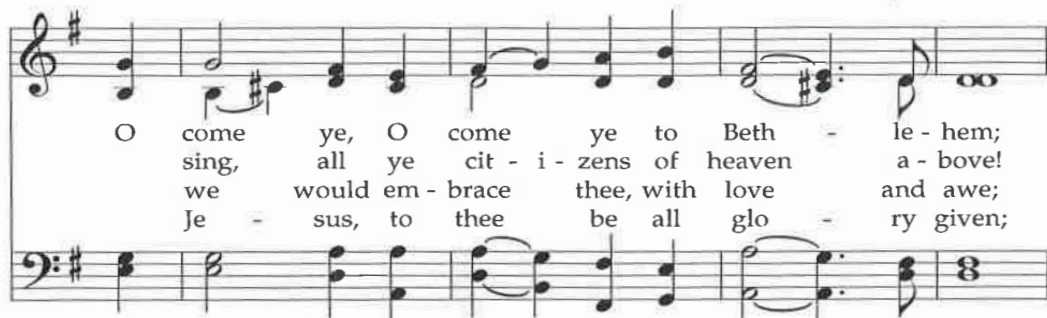
***Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright
 'Round yon virgin mother and child,
 Holy infant so tender and mild
 Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace
 Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight
 Glories stream from heaven afar,
 Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia
 Christ, 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***

O Come, All Ye Faithful

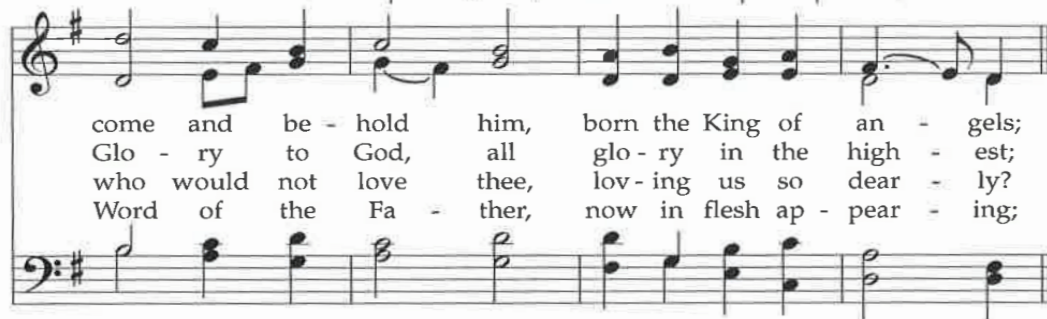
John Francis Wade



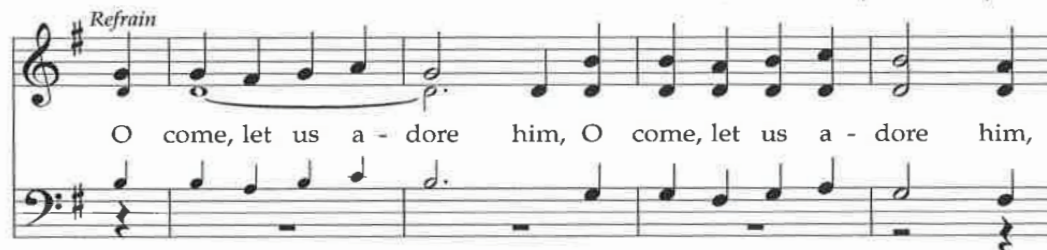
1. O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful, and tri - um - phant,
2. Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,
3. Child, for us sin - ners poor and in the man - ger,
4. Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born for our sal - va - tion,



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;



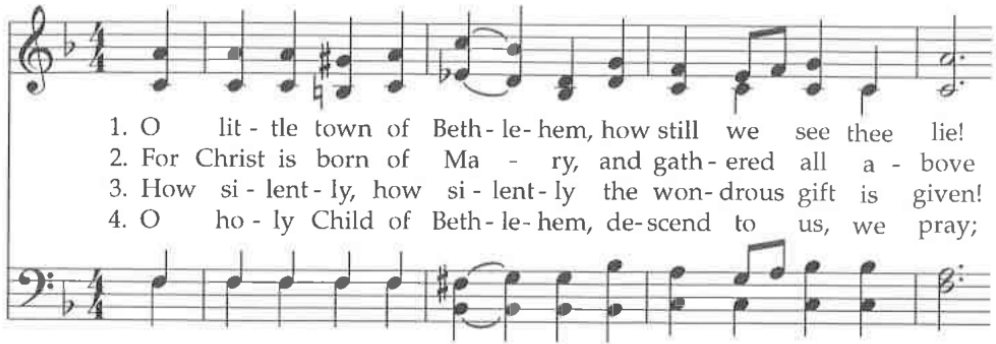
Refrain
O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him,



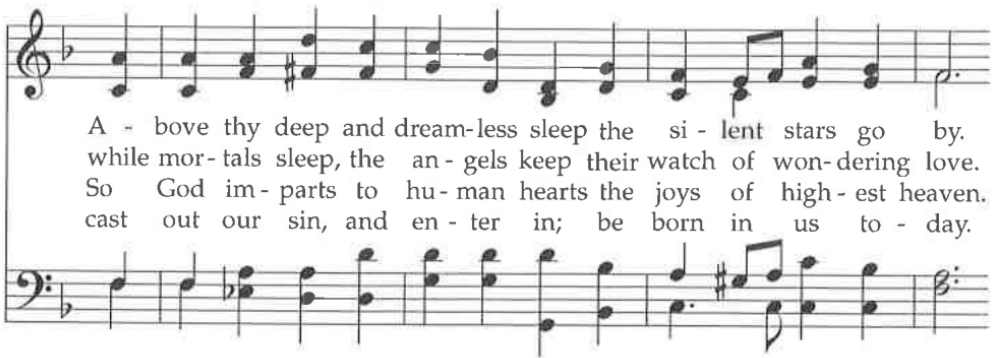
O come, let us a - dore him, Christ, the Lord!

O Little Town of Bethlehem

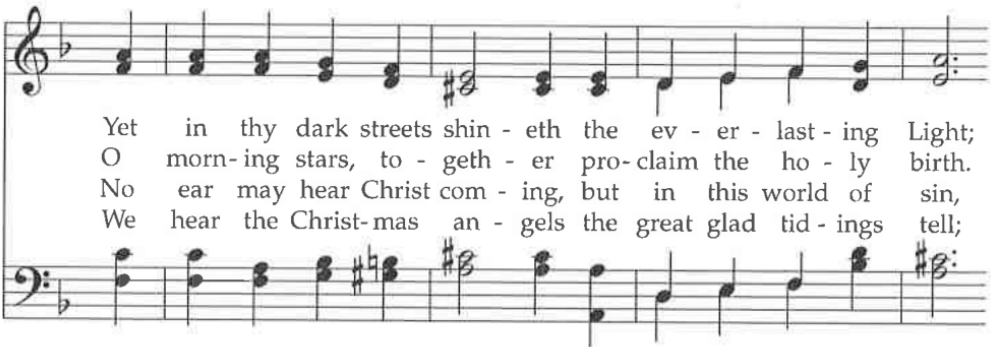
Phillips Brooks



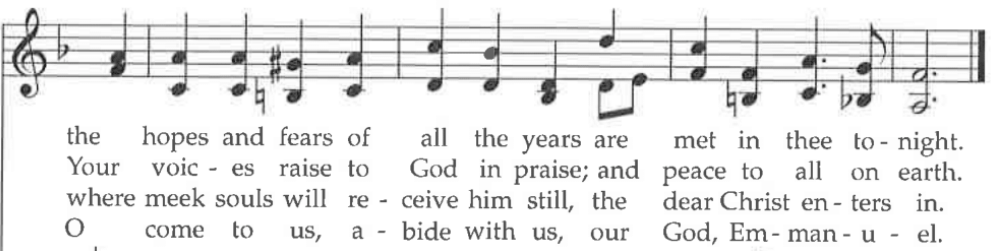
1. O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!
2. For Christ is born of Ma - ry, and gath - ered all a - bove
3. How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is given!
4. O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;



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
 11 11.11 11

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

Refrain
 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.

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

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 music and poems are used with permission. *CCLI License #3234671*

Those serving us this evening are:

Pastor: Rev. Eric J. Ogi | **Director of Music:** Gary Mattin

Liturgists: Sally Stevens and Kristin Bailey | **Ushers:** Bev & Skip Schramer

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Looking for a church home? Join us for worship every Sunday at 10am in-person or on our Facebook Page—The Federated Church of Sycamore. To learn more about Federated Church, fill out a *yellow* “Connection Card” on the table in the back of the sanctuary or contact Pastor Eric (reveric@fedsycamore.org). To receive our eNews and stay up to date on small groups, service opportunities, and other happenings contact Darlene, our Office Admin (office@fedsycamore.org).

Holiday Office Hours: Please note, the church office will be closed Monday, December 25, and Tuesday, December 26, in observance of the Christmas holiday and Monday, January 1, in observance of the New Year holiday.

December Love Offering: With contributions from United Church of Christ congregations across the country, The Christmas Fund offering provides retired pastors and church leaders in need with direct assistance to supplement pensions, help with medical insurance costs, and grants to meet emergency needs. These are especially vital for those serving small churches in rural communities. Donate in the collection plate in back, online, or by mail to church.

Pastor Eric’s Parental Leave: Pastor Eric will be taking the remaining four weeks of his parental leave this January (*Jan 1-28*) to care for baby Eliyas as Shrestha returns more fully to work. As during the first part of his leave over the summer, he will be unavailable for these four weeks.

As we bless Pastor Eric on his parental leave, we are grateful to welcome back Rev. Joe Gastiger, who will once again be leading us in worship during this time. In addition, in case of pastoral emergency, Rev. John Dorhauer, the new pastor of First Congregational UCC in DeKalb, will be on call. He can be reached at: 602-402-6171. *Please contact church Moderator, Sharon McKee, with questions.*

YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!

A warm WELCOME to those visiting or checking out Federated Church!

We're glad you're here! Are you looking for more information about who we are, what we do, or how to get involved? Would you like to meet with Pastor Eric or get connected to others? Fill out our brief online [Connection Form here](#), and we will be in touch with you soon!

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.*

“Welcoming Any, Loving All”

*The Federated Church is affiliated with two national denominations:
the United Church of Christ & the Unitarian Universalist Association*



Follow us on
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