Christmas Eve
2021

Community United Church of Christ
814 Dixie Trail
Raleigh, NC 27607
Prelude  Carols of Christmas  Mike Schafale, dulcimer  and CUCC Band

Welcome  Rev. Lacey Brown

Processional  “O Come, All Ye Faithful”

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem.
Come and behold him, born the King of angels;

O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation;
O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest;

Call to Worship

One:    We give thanks to you God,
for the body of a tiny baby,
life and breath in a tiny ribcage.

Many:  Immanuel, God with us,
a promise of salvation.

One:    We give thanks
for loving parents,
for the light of a star,
for the radiance of angels,
for the running feet of shepherds,
for all the joy of that first Christmas.

Many:  We thank you for tonight,
that you have given our bodies
life and breath this Christmas,
that we are here, now,
gathered with these people,
joined in one accord in prayer to you.

One:    Let the light of Jesus
shine in our hearts
as we come together for worship.  Amen.
Hope is a star that shines in the night, leading us on till the morning is bright.

Refrain: When God is a child there’s joy in our song.
The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong, and none shall be afraid.

Love is a flame that burns in our heart. Jesus has come and will never depart.

Reading  Luke 1: 26-35; 38

In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.” “How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?” The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of
God. “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her.

Musical Offering “The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came” Basque carol
Geri Bowen and Tim Jensen, vocalists

Reading Luke 2: 1; 3-7

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Introduction to Carol Robert Parrish, reader

Carol NCH 124 Away in a Manger

Reading Luke 2: 8-14

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see-- I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and 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 heaven, and on earth peace among those whom God favors!”
Reading Matthew 2: 1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.” When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: ‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.’” Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Introduction to Carol

Carol NCH 125 Angels We Have Heard on High

Reading Luke 2: 15-16

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

Introduction to Carol

Carol 219 What Child Is This (see insert)

Anthem All Is Well

Maya Cobeland, soloist

Reading Matthew 2: 1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.” When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: ‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.’” Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.
Invitation to Give

- Text the amount of your donation, with one keyword, to 919-888-4541
  General – give to CUCC’s general fund
  Pledge – give toward your pledge
  Christmas – give to the UCC’s Christmas Fund
- You can give online at our website www.communityucc.org by simply clicking on Donate.
- Or you can always mail a check to our physical address:
  814 Dixie Trail, Raleigh, NC 27607

Offertory  God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen    CUCC Band

Dedication to the Offering

God, receive these gifts – and give us open hands.
Fill our lives – and give us open hearts.
Touch us with your Word – and give us open minds.
Bless this church – and give us open doors. Amen.

Introduction to Carol  

Carol    NCH 131 It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

Reading  John 1: 1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people
did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.

Lighting the Christ Candle

We light the Christ candle as a sign of Christ’s constant presence with us, a proclamation that the Prince of Peace has come.

    Emmanuel, God-with-us, because you have come, our hope is renewed and peace reigns in our hearts. We are filled with joy as we remember you have come to save us and all people. We are drawn into your great love for us. And yet we do not forget that you have not come to make us comfortable; you have come to change us and transform us because your peaceable kingdom is not yet complete. You have come, asking us to follow you to the margins to love and serve others. We open ourselves to you, O God. May we receive the gifts you offer us and be transformed by your presence with us. Even when there is darkness around us, may we walk in the light of Christ. Amen

Carol Story    “Stille Nacht”                Anne Moorman-Smith

Candle Lighting

_The pastor will light her candle first and then distribute the light to the congregation on campus and (virtually) online. You are invited to stand and sing our closing hymn._

Carol        NCH 134 Silent Night              Guitar, Monty Smith
Benediction

Let us go from this place proclaiming that we have seen the glory of God
Believing that there is a light that shines in the darkness
Which the darkness shall not overcome

And may the love of the Creator
The joy of the Spirit
And the peace of the Christ-child
Be with you this Christmas, and evermore. Amen.

Postlude  O Little Town of Bethlehem  P. Brooks