Welcome + Announcements

Prelude  “Ave Maria”
  Cello: Emily Michael and Patrick DaSantos

Biebl, arr. Ketel

Choral Introit

Call to Worship

One: Now is the time of watching and waiting.
Many: The time of pregnant expectation of new life.
One: Now is the season of hope unfolding.
Many: The dark winter season when hope is waiting to be born.
One: Let us come before God with receptive and willing spirits. May our souls magnify God’s name and may our spirits rejoice in God our Savior.
Many: Rejoice! Sing! Raise your voices! God comes to bring the birthday of life and hope.

Hymn     NCH 107 “Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn”

1.    Awake! Awake and greet the new morn,
      for angels herald its dawning.
      sing out your joy, for Jesus is born,
      behold! the Child of our longing.
      Come as a baby weak and poor,
      to bring all hearts together,
      to open wide the heavenly door,
      and lives now inside us forever.

2.    To us, to all in sorrow and fear,
      Emmanuel comes a-singing,
whose humble song is quiet and near,
yet fills the earth with its ringing.
Music to heal the broken soul
and hymns of loving kindness,
the thunder of the anthems roll
to shatter all hate and injustice.

3. In deepest night Christ's coming shall be,
when all the world is despairing,
as morning light so quiet and free,
so warm and gentle and caring.
One without voice breaks forth in song,
a lame one leaps in wonder,
the weak are raised above the strong,
and weapons are broken asunder.

4. Rejoice, rejoice, take heart in the night,
though cold the winter and cheerless,
the rising sun shall crown you with light,
be strong and loving and fearless;
Love be our song and love our prayer,
and love, our endless story,
may God fill every day we share,
and bring us at last into glory.

Lighting the Candle of Love

I used to think love was a feeling. That was before I knew that
love is a fire – unquenchable and bright.
That was before I knew that love is a river – forging paths where
none have gone before. That was before I knew that love is a
song – etching its melody into my memory.
I used to think that I had to find love for it to find me. But that was
before I knew that love is that
which breathes us into beginning. That was before I knew that
love had already found me, never
letting me go.
Friends, today we light the candle of love as a reminder that it is from love that we are made, it is in love that we are raised, and it is for love that we are sent. You were made from love, to be love, to give love. Draw near to God because God, who is love, has and will always draw near to you. Amen.

American Sign Language Offering – Love

Passing the Peace

The peace of Christ is with you all!
And also with you.

Sung Response

Love shines as the solitary star, faith is the inner light. You and I together mirror the Light of Lights, And illumine the pathway home (repeat)


In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.”

And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.
His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;

he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

For the word of God in scripture, for the Word of God among us, for
the Word of God within us,
Thanks be to God.

Choral Christmas Offering

Musicians:
Cello, Emily Michael and Patrick DaSantos
Drum, Monty Smith
Guitar, Mike Schafale
Trumpet, Kris Gilmore
Piano and Organ, Doug Barrick

Masters in This Hall
Alegria
Soloists: Alan Beidler, Mike Schafale
‘Twas in the Moon of Wintertime
Canadian Tune, arr. Rutter
Joy To the World
French Carol, arr. Riegger
Susa

Joy to the world! the Savior 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
Prayers of the People

You are invited to pray silently or speak out loud your prayers. End your spoken prayers with, “God in your wisdom…” The congregation will respond, “...hear our prayer.” We will close with a pastoral prayer followed by the Lord’s prayer.

Our Father/Mother, who is in heaven, Hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your 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 yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Hymn NCH 128 “In the Bleak Midwinter”

1. In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan, earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone; Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow, in the bleak midwinter, long ago.

2. Our God transcends all heaven, earth, and its domain; heaven and earth shall flee away when Christ comes to reign; In the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed the sovereign God almighty, Jesus Christ.

3. Angels and archangels may have gathered there, cherubim and seraphim thronged the midnight air; But his mother only, in her maiden bliss, worshiped the beloved with a kiss.

4. What can I offer, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb. If I were a wise one, I would do my part; but what I can I offer: all my heart.
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](http://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 “O Jesulein Suss” (“O little One Sweet”)
Scheidt, 1650; J.S. Bach **Vocalist:** Glenda Chen

*Translation from German:*

O Little one sweet, O little one mild, Thy Father’s purpose thou hast fulfilled;  
Thou cam’st from heav’n’ to mortal ken, equal to be with us poor men,  
O Little one, O little one mild.

O little one sweet, O little one mild, in thee love’s beauties are all distilled;  
Then light in us thy love’s bright flame that we might give thee back the same,  
O little one sweet, O little one mild.

O little one sweet, O little one mild, help us to do as thou hast willed;  
Lo, all we have belongs to thee! Ah, keep us in our fealty!  
O little one sweet, O little one mild.

Offering Response “Doxology” (tune and harm. from German Christmas hymn, 1539 - NCH 130)
Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God, all creatures here below,
Praise God for all that Love has done
Creator, Christ, and Spirit One.

Dedication to the Offering

O living Christ, we need your love today to shine in the dark corners of our world, where loneliness and hatred, war and suffering, greed and lust destroy. Come to us and shine our lives, that we may more perfectly love you and reflect your love on earth. Amen.

Hymn NCH 125 “Angels We Have Heard on High”

1. Angels we have heard on high,
sweetly singing o’er the plains,
and the mountains in reply,
echo back their joyous strains.

Refrain:
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. [Refrain]

3. Come to Bethlehem and see
Christ whose birth the angels sing;
Come adore on bended knee,
God, our world now entering. [Refrain]

4. See the babe in manger laid
whom the choirs of angels praise;
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid,
while our hearts in love we raise. [Refrain]
Benediction

Let us rejoice in God our savior, who has done great things for us, who fills the hungry with good things!
Let us open ourselves to the Spirit of life and new birth! Go from this place to love one another as God has loved us. Amen.

Benediction Response

Postlude “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling”

Visit www.communityucc.org to explore ways to connect with our church.
CUCC is here to support you throughout the week.
While our physical office is closed, our virtual office is open.
Please email office.cucc@gmail.com to reach our office.
Please email lacey.cucc@gmail.com for pastoral care needs.

We thank all of those who created parts of today’s liturgy.
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“Call to Worship,” Written By Ruth C. Duck, Bread For The Journey
Benediction: Written by Ruth C. Duck, Touch of Holiness

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   If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.  
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