Welcome + Announcements

Prelude  “Ave Maria”  Biebl, arr. Ketel
Cello: Emily Michael and Patrick DaSantos

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”

Lighting the Candle of Love  Julie Robertson

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

Joy To the World
    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

A Spiritual Christmas

French Carol, arr. Rieger
    Susa

Canadian Tune, arr. Rutter
    arr. Rutter

Traditional Spirituals, arr. Fettke
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”

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 “O Jesulein Suss” (“O little One Sweet”) Vocalist: Glenda Chen

Scheidt, 1650; J.S. Bach

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”

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.
Copyright and licensing notifications

Used with permission for reprinting and streaming/podcasting under ONE LICENSE #A-738843,
CCLI Reprinting License #11204669  CCLI Streaming License #20261332, and CCS License #14247. All rights reserved.

“Call to Worship,” Written By Ruth C. Duck, Bread For The Journey
Benediction: Written by Ruth C. Duck, Touch of Holiness

CUCC STAFF
   Pastor: Lacey Brown  lacey.cucc@gmail.com
   Youth & Adult Education Ministry: Śānti Matthews  education.cucc@gmail.com
   Communications Manager: Jeff Cole  office.cucc@gmail.com
   Children’s Ministry: Anne Bailey Zschau  children.cucc@gmail.com
   Choir Director: Anne Moorman-Smith  sing.cucc@gmail.com
   Organist: Doug Barrick  music.cucc@gmail.com

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
   a just world for all
Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn

Isa. 12:6; 26:9; 35:6; Matt. 11:5

Marty Haugen, 1983; rev. 1993

Liturgical composer Marty Haugen wrote both words and music for this Advent hymn with the twofold aim of providing an easy congregational chorale and utilizing the images of the Isaiah passages.

Copyright © 1982 by G.L.A. Publications, Inc.
Come as a baby weak and poor, to bring all hearts to
Music to heal the broken soul and hymns of loving
One without voice breaks forth in song, a lame one leaps in
Love be our song and love our prayer, and love, our endless

gather, to open wide the heavenly door, and
kindness, the thunder of the anthems roll to
wonder, the weak are raised above the strong, and
story, may God fill every day we share, and

lives now inside us for ever.
shatter all hate and injustice.
weap-ons are bro-ken a-sunder.
bring us at last into glory.
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.

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
But his mother only, in her maiden bliss,

3 Angels and archangels may have gathered there;
Cherubim and seraphim thronged the midnight air;
But his mother only, in her maiden bliss,
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.

4 What can I offer, poor as I am?
If I were a wise one, I would do my part: but
In the bleak midwinter, long ago.
Sovereign God almighty, Jesus Christ.
What can I offer: all my heart.

Christina Rossetti has portrayed the Christmas story, not in warm Bethlehem, but in the winter of her native England. Rossetti was an accomplished writer of poetry and prose, noted for her deep spirituality.
NCH 125 “Angels We Have Heard on High”

1 Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
2 Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
3 Come to Bethlehem and see Christ whose birth the angels sing;
4 See the babe in manager laid whom the choirs of angels praise;

And the mountains in reply, echo back their joyous strains.
Say what may the tidings be, which inspire your heavenly song.
Come adore on bended knee, God, our world now entering.
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid, while our hearts in love we raise.

Refrain

Gloria in excelsis Deo,