



Rockville United Church
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)/United Church of Christ
A Service of Lessons & Carols
1st Sunday after Christmas ~ Hybrid Worship
December 29, 2024 ~ 10:45 a.m.

PRELUDE

CELEBRATING OUR LIFE TOGETHER

GATHERING MUSIC

From Heaven Above

(verses 1 & 4)

From heaven above to earth I come to bring good news to everyone!

Glad tidings of great joy I bring to all the world, and gladly sing:

“Glory to God in highest heaven, who unto us the Christ is given.”

With angels sing the Savior’s birth, a glad new year to all the earth.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Come, holy people, redeemed of God, to follow the way prepared for you.

We come with joy to see what God is making known to us.

Once again the earth is surprised as the glory of God transforms the commonplace.

Again we gather to proclaim our faith in the living God.

Experience anew the wonder of God’s ways. Kneel in awe before life that is fresh and new. Sing glory to God in the highest and peace to all on earth.

We glorify and praise God for all that we have seen and heard!

*CAROL

O Come All Ye Faithful

Chalice Hymnal, No. 148

(verses 1 & 2)

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!

Refrain:

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,

sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!

Glory to God, all glory in the highest; [Refrain]

*** PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION**

Lord, open unto me.

Open unto me—light for my darkness.

Open unto me—courage for my fear.

Open unto me—hope for my despair.

Open unto me—peace for my turmoil.

Open unto me—joy for my sorrow.

Open unto me—strength for my weakness.

Open unto me—wisdom for my confusion.

Open unto me—forgiveness for my sins.

Open unto me—love for my hates.

Open unto me—thy Self for my self.

Lord, Lord, open unto me. Amen.

Howard Thurman, Meditations from the Heart

SUNG RESPONSE

Gloria, Gloria

Chalice Hymnal, No. 34

LESSON I ~ Isaiah 9:2, 6-7 Foretelling the Birth of a Child

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined. For a child has been born for us, an heir given to us; upon whose shoulders authority will rest. This One shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Protector, Champion of Peace. This authority will be great and there shall be endless peace for the throne and realm of David. It will be established and upheld with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Most High God will do this.

***CAROL**

Down to Earth

Chalice Hymnal, No. 168

(verses 1 & 2)

Down to earth, as a dove, came to all, holy love:
Jesus Christ from above, bringing great salvation, meant for every nation.

Refrain:

*Let us sing, sing, sing, dance and spring, spring, spring,
Christ is here, Ever near! Gloria in excelsis.*

This is love come to light, now is fear put to flight.
God defeats evil's blight; giving for our sorrows, hope of new tomorrows.

LESSON II ~ Isaiah 11:1–3a; 4a; 6–9 The Vision of a Peaceful World

Then a shoot will sprout from the stump of Jesse; from Jesse's roots, a branch will blossom: The Spirit of the Most High God will rest on you—a spirit of wisdom and understanding, a spirit of counsel and strength, a spirit of knowledge and reverence for God. You will delight in obeying the Holy One and you won't judge by appearances, or make decisions by hearsay. You will treat poor people with fairness and will uphold the rights of the land's downtrodden. Then the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the young goat; the calf and the lion cub will graze together, and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear; their young will lie down together. The lion will eat hay like the ox. The baby will play next to the den of the cobra, and the toddler will dance over the viper's nest. There will be no harm, no destruction anywhere in my holy mountain; for as water fills the sea, so the land will be filled with knowledge of the Most High God.

* CAROL

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming
(verses 1 & 2)

Chalice Hymnal, No. 160

Lo, how a rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung,
of Jesse's lineage coming by faithful prophets sung;
it came, a flow'ret bright, amid the cold of winter
when half spent was the night.

Isaiah 'twas foretold it, the rose I have in mind;
with Mary we behold it, the virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright she bore to us a Savior
when half spent was the night.

LESSON III Psalm 148 A Song of Praise (read responsively)

Nan Merrill

Praise the Blessed One! Give praise from the heavens, and from all ends of the earth!

Give praise all you angels, angels of earth and of heaven!

Give praise sun and moon, give praise, all you shining stars!

Give praise, all universes, the whole cosmos of Creation!

Praise the Blessed One! For through Love all was created,

And firmly fixed for ever and ever; yes, the pattern of creation was established.

Give praise to the Beloved, all the earth, all that swim in the deep,
and all the winged ones in the air!

Give praise all mountains and hills, all trees and all minerals! Give praise all four-legged and all that creep on the ground!

Leaders of the nations and all peoples, young and old, give praise!

Unite together in all your diversity, that peace and harmony might flourish on earth!

Let all people praise the Beloved, who is exalted in heaven and on earth;
whose glory is above heaven and earth.

***For all are called to be friends, companions to the true Friend, giving their
lives joyfully as co-creators an people of peace!***

Praises be to the Blessed One,

the very Breath of our breath, the very Heart of our heart!

WORD FOR CHILDREN

The Message of the Birds

Beth Frentrup

by Kate Westerlund, illustrated by Feridun Oral

***CAROL**

Let There Be Peace on Earth

Chalice Hymnal, No. 677

Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me;
let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be.

With God our creator, children all are we.

Let us walk with each other in perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me, let this be the moment now.

With every step I take, may this be my solemn vow:

To take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally.

Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.

LESSON IV ~ Luke 2:1-7 The Angels Announce the Birth of Jesus

Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Most High God came upon them, and the glory of the Living God shone around them, and they were greatly terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. Look! For I proclaim to you good news of great joy for all the people: For there is born to you this day in the city of David, a Savior, who is the Messiah. This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby swaddled 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!”

***CAROL**

Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

Chalice Hymnal, No. 150

Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King:
peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!”

Joyful, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies;
with the angelic hosts proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”

Refrain:

Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King”

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings,
mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth. [Refrain]

LESSON V ~ Luke 2:15-20 The Shepherds Meet the Baby Jesus

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. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.

* **CAROL**

The First Noel
(verses 1 & 2)

Chalice Hymnal, No. 151

The first Noel the angel did say, was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep, on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

Refrain:

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.

They looked up and saw a star shining in the east, beyond them far,
and to the earth it gave great light, and so it continued both day and night. [Refrain]

MORNING PRAYER

PRAYERS OF THE CONGREGATION

Refrain: One: Holy One, in your mercy,

All: *Receive our prayers.*

THE PRAYER THAT JESUS TEACHES (in unison) (an interpretation from New Zealand)

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,

Source of all that is and that shall be,

Father and Mother of us all, Loving God, in whom is heaven:

The hallowing of your name echoes through the universe!

The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!

Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!

Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth.

*With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever. Amen.*

OFFERING OUR GIFTS

Offertory

*Doxology

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh, come, rich and poor, to own him,
the King of kings salvation brings, let loving hearts enthrone him.
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring him laud, the Babe, the Song of Mary.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (in unison)

Bless the gifts we give this season so that they may bring the love of the Christ troubled places in the world. Bless our lives, too, that we may become the gift that others need as we share the wonder of your love. Amen

*CAROL

Go, Tell it on The Mountain
(verses 2 & 3)

Chalice Hymnal, No. 167

Refrain

*Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;
Go, tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born.*

The shepherds feared and trembled, when lo! above the earth,
rang out the angel chorus that hailed the Savior's birth. (refrain)

Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born,
and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn. (refrain)

*BENEDICTION

Let us go in peace in the certain knowledge that God is always coming into the world
We meet God in Christ, not only in the story of a birth long ago, but every day in the unfolding story of life on Earth.
May the blessing of Christmas inspire us to live in love and peace with all creation.
Let us go into the world to share the love of Christ.

POSTLUDE

Thanks to our worship helpers today!

Liturgists: Donna Perry and John Abrahams

Digital Host: Carlotta Watkins

Greeter: Donna Lalley

Welcome Table: Beth Frentrup

Welcome to Rockville United Church!

We are glad you have joined us for worship this morning. We trust that you will find RUC to be a welcoming and engaging place to explore the life of faith within a community that honors each person's spiritual journey. We encourage you to ask questions, visit our website, and share your contact information at the welcome table near the front doors. I hope to greet you personally following worship, and invite you to contact me.

Blessings,

Rev. Jennifer Knutsen

jennifer@rockvilleunitedchurch.org

Our complimentary Wi-Fi network is **RUC Mesh**. The password is **heavenly**.



Please Scan Me To Give To RUC.

Rockville United Church



Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)/United Church of Christ

355 Linthicum Street, Rockville, Maryland 20851

301-424-6733 ~ www.RockvilleUnitedChurch.org

Office Hours: Wed, Fri—10am to 3pm or by appointment)

Ecumenical † Just Peace † Open & Affirming † More Light