

Trinity United Church of Christ
An Open and Affirming Congregation

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December 17, 2023

10:45 AM

Angels Among Us¹
Do Not Be Afraid: More Joy
Praise Band Sunday

If you are a guest, thank you for worshiping with us today. We invite you and all present to sign the pew pads located at the end of each pew. We also invite you to sign your name in our guest book located in the back entrance of the sanctuary or at the bottom of the stairs that lead to the sanctuary. Please note, all doors to the building will be open until 11:00 AM. After that time, please use the handicap door in the narthex.

*We welcome infants and children and all their giggles & voices in our worship! For your comfort, we also have a children's corner in the back narthex where your child can relax and play, and you can still participate in the worship experience. Nursery care (infant through 2nd grade) is also provided, should you desire it. ***Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.***

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

"O Come, O Come Emmanuel"

John Mason Neale, Paul Baloche,
Rita Baloche, Thomas Helmore
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**O come, O come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lonely exile here Until the Son of God appear.**

Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel, shall come to thee, O Israel.

**O come, O Son of God most high; Deliver us from sinfulness and pride
Restore in us a child-like heart To consecrate and set us apart.**

**O come, O Savior of this world, the long-awaited promise You foretold,
and right the wrongs that humans have done; We pray Your glorious Kingdom come.**

Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel, shall come to thee, O Israel.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

Advent Candlelighting Family: Angie & Jim Cooper, Cayden & Jacob Leissler

ALL SING: Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE OF JOY: We light the third Advent candle, the candle of joy, and ask that God would alight within us the flame of joy this day, granting us an openness to hearing the message of the angels, and courage to be messengers in the world, creating more joy in the midst of fear. And with the angel messengers above us, among us, and within us, we say:

ALL: Do not be afraid. Do not be afraid. Do not be afraid. Do not be afraid.

***OPENING HYMN**

"The First Noel"

UM #245 vs. 1,2,4

David Crowder | Jack Parker | Jeremy Bush | Mark Waldrop | Mike Dodson | Mike Hogan
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Into Music; sixsteps Music; We Are The Digital Age; worshiptogether.com songs
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The first Noel the angels 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

This star shone bright in the northwest,
o'er Bethlehem it took its rest, and there it did both
stop and stay, right over the place where Jesus lay.

Refrain

Refrain

***TIME OF CONFESSION**

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION²

ALL: Gracious God, it was with joy that you brought us into being. You created the world and called it good. And yet we have done so much to quell that goodness; we have fought with one another and failed to live in peace; we have shut out the stranger and disparaged the immigrant; we have ignored the needy and judged the poor; we have fallen short of your command to be the Beloved Community. Forgive us, Merciful God, and bring us back to the joy we find in you. This we pray in your holy name. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

***PRAISE RESPONSE²** *Sing Out, All God's People (tune: O Come All Ye Faithful)*

ALL SING: O Lord, we're reminded in this holy season:
Though we may struggle we are never alone.
Christ is our joy, our hope and peace unending:
In Christ, we know your presence; You heal us and restore us,
You give us joy and bless us, Bringing us home.

***THE LIGHTING OF THE PEACE CANDLE AND PRAYER FOR PEACE**

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

L: The Christ in me greets the Christ in you.

P: The Christ in me, greets in the Christ in you also.

A TIME FOR ALL AGES

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 1:18-25

PARTICIPANTS: Mark Hollen (Narrator), Emily Dickey (Messenger), Alan Neff (Joseph)

One: God is still speaking!

All: *Thanks be to God.*

SERMON

ANTHEM

"Joyful Joyful"

Edward Hodges, Henry Van Dyke,
Ludwig van Beethoven, Rend Collective
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JOYS & CONCERNS

"A Christmas Alleluia"

Chris Tomlin, Jonas Myrin
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Worship Together Music
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PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER (sins/sin against)

All: Our Father, (Creator, Mother, Friend), who art in 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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

TIME OF DISCIPLELSHIP & GENEROSITY

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY

"Joy, Joy, Joy"

Music by Bill Cain
The Organist's companion vol.21, number 11
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*OFFERTORY RESPONSE *"Angels From the Realms of Glory"*

NCH #126, vs. 1

Public Domain

**ALL SING: Angels from the realms of glory, wing your flight o'er all the earth;
As you sang creation's story now proclaim Messiah's birth:
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, give thanks and sing.**

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

ALL: God of peace and possibility, we offer these gifts so that they may be transformed into your good news for the sake of the world. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN**

“All Earth Is Waiting”

NCH #121

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**All earth is waiting to see the Promised One,
and open furrows, the sowing of our God.
All the world, bound and struggling, seeks true liberty;
it cries out for justice and searches for the truth.**

**Thus says the prophet to those of Israel,
“A virgin mother will bear Emmanuel”:
One whose name is “God with us,” our Savior shall be,
through whom hope will blossom once more within our hearts.**

**Mountains and valleys will have to be made plain;
open new highways, new highways for our God,
Who is now coming closer, so come all and see,
and open the doorways as wide as wide can be.**

**In lowly stable the Promise One appeared,
yet feel that presence throughout the earth today,
for Christ lives in all Christians and is with us now;
again, on arriving Christ brings us liberty.**

***BENEDICTION**

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING—

TODAY we will have a congregational meeting immediately following worship. The purpose of this meeting is to approve the 2024 Mission Spending Plan and elect incoming consistory members and trustees. Your attendance is needed. Copies of the agenda and mission spending plan are available in the sanctuary.

References

¹ The worship service is based on the series “Angels Among Us”, with much of the liturgy in the service written by Marcia McFee.

² The words to the praise response were written by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette and set to the tune of *O Come All Ye Faithful* and posted at https://carolynshymns.com/sing_out_all_gods_people.html and accessed on November 27, 2023.

CHURCH STAFF

Rev. Danielle Neff, Pastor
Caleb Murray, Director of Faith Formation & Programming
Carol Ann Day, Organist
Gillian Austin, Director of Music
Kristen Adams, Communications Coordinator
John Mentzer, Custodian
Kim Lark, Secretary

WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS

Media Team: Karen Adams, Hal Bitner, Mark Hollen,
Nick Mowen, Andrew Mowen, Joe Thompson
Usher Team: Sarie Dickey*, Jim Cooper, Teresa Needham,
Scott and Kathy Shaffer
Children’s Sermon: Pastor Dani
Acolyte: Molly Thompson

OUR MISSION

Because of our love of God, who first loved us, we empower disciples to let their lights shine through love of neighbor, love of children, and love of creation.

OUR VISION

As Jesus modeled first for us, we are working to create a just world where all are welcomed, all are loved, and all are included.

OUR PURPOSE

Celebrating the Christ in all of us by joyfully serving our community.

