

First Congregational Church of Ithaca
Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols (December 24, 2020)

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!

Prelude

An Appalachian Christmas
Handbells

arr. Tammy Waldrop

Welcome and Call to Worship

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and goodwill toward all!

For out of God's own being Christ has come to bring love and light!

Christ is our Emmanuel – God with us – come to earth to show us what God's love looks like in action!

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and goodwill toward all!

***Hymn**

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, Christ the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,

Sing all ye citizens of heaven above,

Glory to God, glory in the highest,

O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Yea, Lord we greet thee, born this happy morning,

Jesus to thee be all glory given;

Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing;

O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

***Lighting the Advent and Christ Candles**

Here is good news of great joy, for all people; God has rescued us from the domain of darkness, and brought us into the realm of Christ, in whom our release is secured, and our sins are forgiven. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never captured it.

(Luke 2:10; Col. 1:13-14; John 1:5)

Let us pray that we may know the warmth and brightness of Jesus Christ, and show Christ's love to the world.

Risen Christ, Light of the world, shine in our lives and shine among us now. Hallelujah! Amen!

***Christmas Prayer**

O God of Christmas, we come to hear the glad tidings of the angel voices. We come to experience this good news of great joy for all the people. May the meaning of Christmas fill our hearts to be treasured and pondered anew. We are here; we are ready, O God! Let the light of your love break forth! Amen

***Advent Candle Song, v. 5**

Five bright candles, light our way. Tell of Jesus, born today,

Born to bring us from above hope and peace and joy and love.

Candles burning, candles bright, fill the world with endless light;

Fill our hearts that we may, too, burn more brightly, burn more true.

***Sharing the Peace of Christ**

Scripture Lesson

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

Hymn*It Came Upon the Midnight Clear**

It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold
“Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heaven’s all-gracious King.”
The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come, with peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats o’er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lowly plains they bend on hovering wing,
And ever o’er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.

For lo, the days are hastening on, by prophet bards foretold,
When with the ever-circling years comes round the age of gold;
When peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
And the whole world send back the song, which now the angels sing

Scripture Lesson**Luke 2:1-7****Hymn****O Little Town of Bethlehem***Please remain seated*

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep, the silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth, the everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above,
While mortals sleep the angels keep
their watch of wond’ring love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing to God the King; and peace to men on earth.

How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.

Musical Interlude**Pifa from Messiah****G. F. Handel****Homily****“‘God, Speak to Me,’ and the Gospel According to Dr. Seuss”*****Hymn****Hark! The Herald Angels Sing**

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 host proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”

Hail the heav’n-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 all from earth, born to give us second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”

Scripture Lesson**Luke 2:8-20**

Hymn

Angels We Have Heard on High

Please remain seated

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply echo back their joyous strains

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
Say what may the tidings be Which inspire your heavenly song

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come adore on bended knee Christ the Lord the newborn King

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Scripture Lesson

John 1:1-5, 14

***Hymn**

The First Nowell

The first Nowell 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.

Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell! 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

Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell! Born is the King of Israel.

And by the light of that same star
Three wise men came from country far;
To seek for a king was their intent,
And to follow the star wherever it went.

Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell! Born is the King of Israel.

This star drew nigh to the northwest,
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest,
And there it did both stop and stay,
Right over the place where Jesus lay.

Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell! Born is the King of Israel.

Then entered in those wise men three,
Full reverently upon their knee,
And offered there, in his presence,
Their gold and myrrh and frankincense.

Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell! Born is the King of Israel.

Sharing our Gifts

Es ist ein Ros (Lo, How a Rose)

J. Brahms

***Sung Response**

Joy to the World

Joy to the world! The Lord is come:
Let earth receive her king;
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! the Savior reigns:
Let all their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy.
He rules the world with truth and grace
And makes the nations prove,
The glories of his righteousness,
And wonders of his love.

***Prayer of Dedication and Lord's Prayer**

Lighting the Candles

Hymn Silent Night, Holy Night! *Please remain seated*
Silent night, holy night, All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night, Shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia;
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born!

Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace.
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

Benediction

Postlude In Dulci Jubilo
Choral Postlude (YouTube) Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

J. S. Bach
M. Praetorius

* Congregation stands (*live-streamers, feel free to lift your hearts!*)

Participating Today

Rev. Dr. David A. Kaden, Senior Minister
Susan Fast, Director of Caring Ministries, sustfast@yahoo.com
Dr. William Cowdery, Director of Music
David J. Kaden, Tech Support
The Silva and Weislogel families, handbells (prelude)