



image: Freepik.com

A Service of Lessons and Carols
Christmas Eve, 2023 4:00 p.m.

The service of worship for this holy night has its roots in the English tradition of a service of lessons and carols, dating back to the turn of the twentieth century. God's Word is proclaimed in an intentional sequence of readings, prayers, choral and congregational songs. This special service begins with creation, the prophets, the Matthew and Luke birth stories, and comes full circle with the theme of light overcoming darkness, understood in John's gospel as the incarnation, Emmanuel, meaning "God-With-Us." May you find the presence of the living Christ in our worship tonight.

WELCOME

RINGING OF THE BELL

PRELUDE

"Noel Suisse"

Louis-Claude Daquin

***CALL TO WORSHIP: LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE**

One: In the beginning was the Word—spoken and breathed, a promise made and kept.

All: Glorify the Lord with us—God's promise is true!

One: The Word was in the beginning, and through him all things come into being.

**All: Eternal and near at hand, already and not-yet,
God's promise is the foundation of all life.**

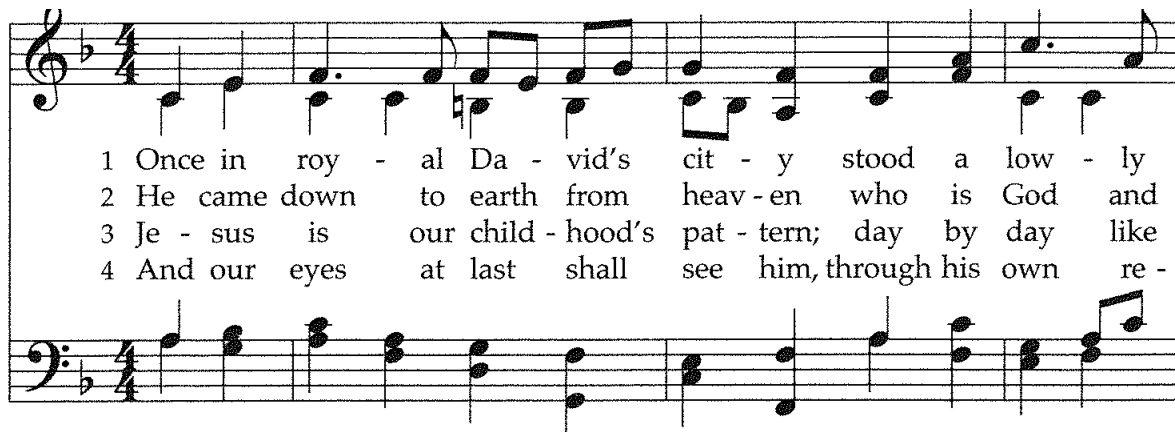
One: Glory to God in the highest! The Word is made flesh,
giving voice to God's promise yet again.

~Candles are lit~

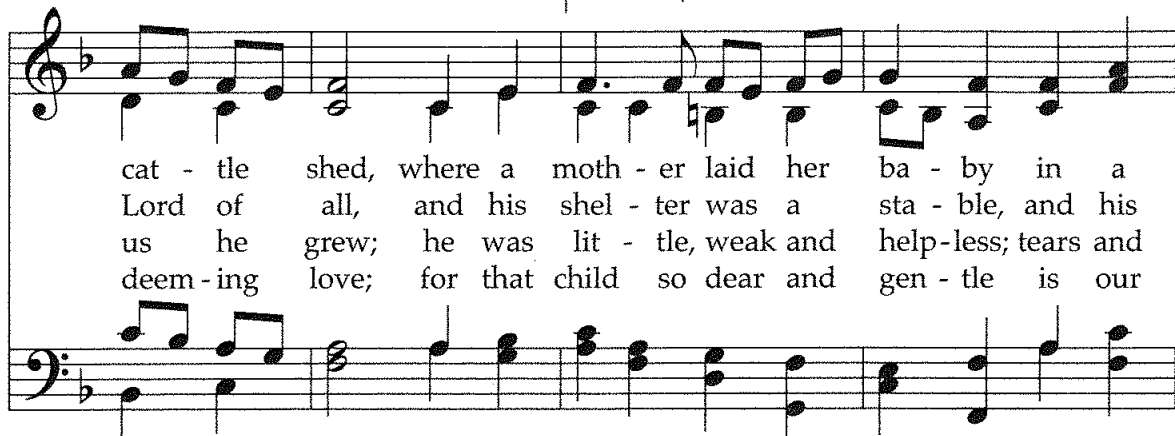
*CAROL "Once in Royal David's City"#140 *Glory to God Hymnal*

First verse by soloist

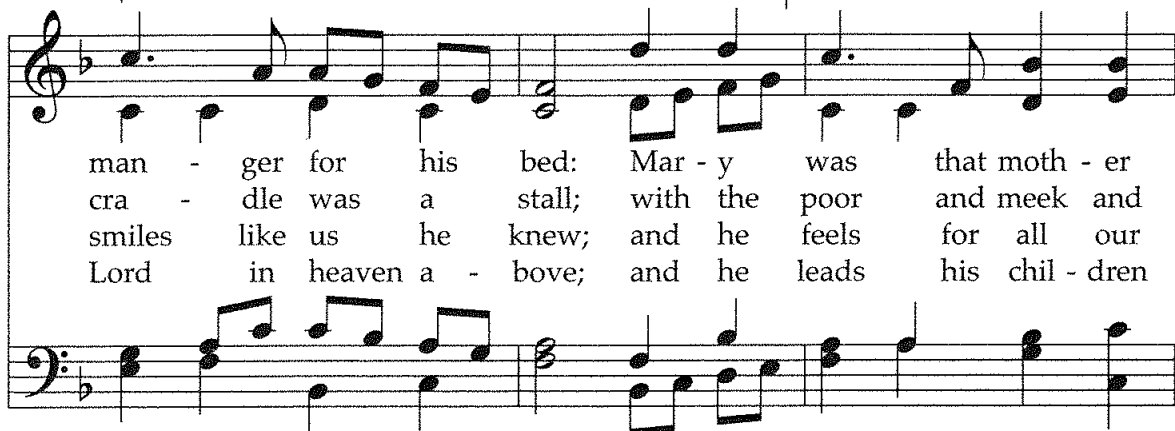
Congregation sings verses 2-4



1 Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y stood a low - ly
2 He came down to earth from heav - en who is God and
3 Je - sus is our child - hood's pat - tern; day by day like
4 And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own re -



cat - tle shed, where a moth - er laid her ba - by in a
Lord of all, and his shel - ter was a sta - ble, and his
us he grew; he was lit - tle, weak and help - less; tears and
deem - ing love; for that child so dear and gen - tle is our



man - ger for his bed: Mar - y was that moth - er
cra - dle was a stall; with the poor and meek and
smiles like us he knew; and he feels for all our
Lord in heaven a - bove; and he leads his chil - dren



mild; Je - sus Christ, her lit - tle child.
low - ly, lived on earth our Sav - ior ho - ly.
sad - ness, and he shares in all our glad - ness.
on to the place where he is gone.

BIDDING PRAYER

FIRST LESSON

Jack Jennings, reader

based on Genesis 1:1-4 "The presence of God at Creation"

ONE: In the beginning of creation, when God made heaven and earth,
the earth was without form and void.

Darkness was over the face of the deep, and a mighty wind swept over the waters.
God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

ALL: God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from darkness.

SECOND LESSON

Gus Buck, reader

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7 "The presence of God in the darkness"

CAROL "O Come All Ye Faithful" #133 *Glory to God Hymnal* (v.1,3 & 4)

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant; O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!

O come and behold him, born the King of Angels!

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!

O come, let us adore Him; O come, let us adore him;

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; O come, let us adore him;

O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

THIRD LESSON

Sue Rainer, reader

Isaiah 11:1-3, 6-9 "The presence of God in the Peaceable Kingdom"

CAROL "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming" #127 *New Century Hymnal*

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung!

Of Jesse's lineage coming, as saints of old have sung.

It came, a flow'ret bright, amid the cold of winter,

When half spent was the night.

Isaiah had 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.

FOURTH LESSON

Sara, Alice, and Charlie Karcher, readers

Luke 1: 26–35; 38 “The presence of God with Mary”

CHORAL ANTHEM "The First Noel" Arr. Trevor Manor
Megan Richmann, Violin

FIFTH LESSON: CONVERSATION WITH OUR CHILDREN

CAROL “Angels We Have Heard on High” #125 New Century Hymnal (v.1-3)

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, 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, Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Come to Bethlehem and see Christ whose birth the angels sing;

Come adore on bended knee, God, our world now entering.

Gloria, in excelsis Deo, Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

SIXTH LESSON

Chloe Jennings, reader

Luke 2:8-16 “The presence of Christ proclaimed”

CHORAL ANTHEM "Peace, Peace" Rick and Sylvia Powell; Arr. Fred Bock
Megan Richmann, Violin

PASTORAL MEDITATION: *Sarah Fredriksen McCann*

SOLO "O Holy Night" Adolphe Adam
Annalise McCann, soprano

SEVENTH LESSON

Susan Meyer, reader

Matthew 2:1-12 “The presence of Christ for the world”

PASTORAL PRAYER

THE LORD’S PRAYER (*in unison*)

Our Father, 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

OFFERTORY "On Christmas Night" Sussex Carol; Arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams
Ian McCann, Baritone

(Offer to God and then use this time for prayer and meditation. A QR code at the end of the bulletin is available for online giving.)

*RESPONSE OF PRAISE "In the Bleak Midwinter" #128 *New Century Hymnal* verse 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 can I offer: all my heart.**

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

***EIGHTH LESSON** *Sarah McCann, reader*
based on John 1: 1–5 "The presence of God in the Word"

One: When all things began, the Word already was.
The Word dwelt with God, and what God was, the Word was.
Through him all things came to be; no single thing was created without him.
All that came to be was alive with his life,
and that life was the light of the world.

All: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness will not overcome it.

*INVITATION TO SHARE THE LIGHT *(Those who are able are invited to bring a bulletin and candle, and come forward to receive light. Please tip your unlit candle toward the pastor's lit candle. Form a circle around the Sanctuary for closing carols and benediction. Those unable to come forward will be served by an usher.)*

*CANDLELIGHT CAROLS

"Silent Night"

**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, Child of God, love's pure light,
Radiant beams from your holy face bring the dawn of redeeming grace;
Jesus Christ at your birth, Jesus Christ at your birth.**

“Away in a Manger”

**Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus lay down his sweet head,
The stars in the sky, looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.**

**The cattle are lowing, the Baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.
I love Thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.**

**Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
And fit us for heaven to live with Thee there.**

***MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION**

***CLOSING CAROL “Joy to the World”**

**Joy to the world, the Lord is come; let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room, and heaven 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**

***COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION**

***POSTLUDE “Good Christians All, Rejoice” Michael Higgings**

SENDING

With God’s blessing, we are sent forth to follow Christ in the world.

Thanks to God, we at Hope United Church of Christ have good news to share. And we should feel compelled to share it, because there are people in St. Louis who are looking for a progressive and loving faith community. When we share Hope, we make it easier for them to find us!

December 24, 2023 4:00 p.m. Worship Service

Pastor: Sarah McCann

Organist: Jim Threlkeld

Advent Wreath Candles: The Moore Family

Tech team: Jim Richmann, Aaron Wagner and Jack Jennings

Donate from your smart phone



Thanks for your contribution to the ministries of Hope UCC!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Childcare - No childcare is offered during our Christmas Eve services, but a crib room is available in the corridor outside the front Sanctuary double doors.

End of Year Giving – Final 2023 contributions need to be received in the church office by December 31st. If no one is in the office, please leave your donations in the secure mailbox near the Eichelberger door. Thanks for your generosity!

Holiday Week Office Schedule: During the week between Christmas and New Year's Day, the church office will be open only Wednesday, December 27th from 9am-12pm. Regular office hours will resume on Tuesday, January 2nd. For pastoral care needs, please contact Pastor Sarah on her cell phone 314-303-4161



Chamber Concert at Hope UCC Sunday, January 21, 2024 | 3:00 p.m.

Hope will host a concert featuring the music of Richard Strauss, Franz Schubert, and Felix Mendelssohn. The musicians and vocalist are brought together by Amy Greenhalgh (viola) who is the Director of Strings and Chamber Music at Washington University in St. Louis.

All are welcome! There is no cost, however donations are welcome, all of which will go directly to Hope. We hope to see you there!

Donate from
your smart
phone



Thanks for your
contribution to
the ministries of
Hope UCC!



6273 Eichelberger St. | St. Louis, MO. 63109
314-353-2288

Our Special Thanks to Amy Greenhalgh for gathering these wonderful musicians and helping us organize this concert. Amy is director of Strings and Chamber Music at Washington University in St. Louis and holds degrees from Oxford and Trinity College of Music

Images by Freepik.com