



First Sunday after Christmas
December 31, 2023 10:30 AM

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

WELCOME AND MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS

RINGING THE BELL

PRELUDE "We Three Kings" John Henry Hopkins, Jr. with "Arabian Dance"
from "Nutcracker Suite" Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky; Arr. Wendy Steven
Chloe Jennings, Piano

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: God is here! Let us celebrate God's presence,

All: With God's help we can make our whole life a celebration.

One: God is here! Let us pledge our love to God.

All: With God's love we serve all people as God pleases.

One: God is here! God has called us into fellowship with Jesus Christ.

**All: With God's calling and our gifts, we are building God's Kingdom
in the world.**

One: God is here! Let us worship the God of our hope, Creator of heaven and earth.

*GATHERING HYMN: "Love Has Come" #110 *Glory to God Hymnal*



1 Love has come: a light in the dark - ness!
 2 Love is born! Come, share in the won - der.
 3 Love has come and nev - er will leave us!

(D) (Bm7) (Em) (A7) (D)
 F Dm7 Gm C7 F



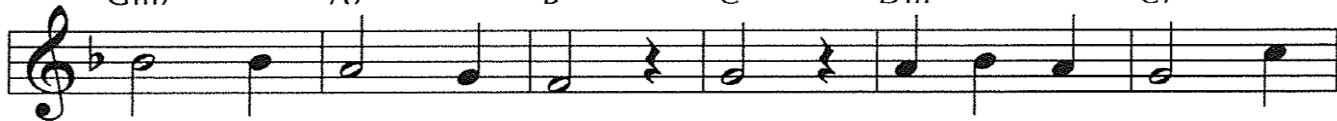
Love shines forth in the Beth - le - hem skies. See, all
 Love is God now a - sleep in the hay. See the
 Love is life ev - er - last - ing and free. Love is

(A) (D) (Bm) (D) (A) (G) (D)
 C F Dm F C Bb F



heav - en has come to pro - claim it; hear how their song of
 glow in the eyes of his moth - er; what is the name her
 Je - sus with - in and a - mong us. Love is the peace our

(Em7) (F#7) (G) (A) (Bm) (A7)
 Gm7 A7 Bb C Dm C7



joy a - ris - es: Love! Love! Born un - to you, a
 heart is say - ing? Love! Love! Love is the name she
 hearts are seek - ing. Love! Love! Love is the gift of

(D) (A) (G) (A) (D) (A) (A7) (Dsus) (D)
 F C Bb C F C C7 Fsus F



Sav - ior! Love! Love! Glo - ry to God on high.
 whis - pers. Love! Love! Je - sus, Em - man - u - el.
 Christ - mas. Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION** *(unison)*

One: Loving God, we come before you aware of what we are and what we are not.

All: **Our pride mixes with our humility. Our accomplishments intermingle with our failures.**

One: We come seeking mercy, strength, and the new life you offer.

All: **Help us to see ourselves and one another as you see us.**

One: Forgive us and embolden in us, through the assurance of your steadfast love,

All: **and a desire to live as your children--worthy and transformed.**

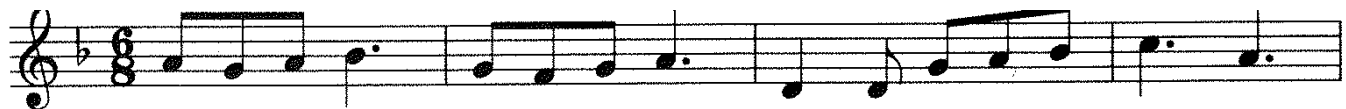
(moment of silent confession)

***ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

Friends, hear the Good News! God's grace is wondrous and everlasting.

Thanks be to God!

***RESPONSE OF PRAISE:** #756 *New Century Hymnal*



Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a, in ex - cel - sis De - o!
Glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God, glo - ry in the high - est!

³ Dm Gm C F ⁴ Dm Gm C F



Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!
Glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

***PASSING THE PEACE**

CONVERSATION WITH OUR CHILDREN

LISTENING

God speaks to us in scripture, preaching, and song.

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 2:22-40

Pew Bible p.833

SERMON

HYMN OF REFLECTION "In the Bleak Midwinter" #128 *New Century Hymnal*
(For full music, the *New Century Hymnal* is located in each pew rack)

**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, in the bleak midwinter, long ago.**

**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 sovereign God almighty, Jesus Christ.**

**Angels and archangels may have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim thronged the midnight air;
But his mother only, in her maiden bliss, worshipped the beloved with a kiss.**

**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.**

RESPONDING

We respond to God's Word through our prayers and our gifts.

NAMING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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 "The Coventry Carol" Andrew Wright

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

*DOXOLOGY #782 *New Century Hymnal*

**To God, all glorious heavenly Light, to Christ revealed in earthly night,
To God our Spirit now we raise our joyful songs of thankful praise.**

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

SENDING

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

*COMMISSIONING HYMN “Go Tell It on the Mountain” #154 *New Century Hymnal*
(For full music, the *New Century Hymnal* is located in each pew rack)

Refrain: Go tell it on the mountain, over the hill and everywhere.

Go tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born!

**While shepherds kept their watching o’er silent flocks by night,
Behold throughout the heavens there shone a holy light. *Refrain.***

**The shepherds feared and trembled when lo! above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior’s birth. *Refrain.***

*COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION

*POSTLUDE “Sing We Now of Christmas” Based on a French Carol; Gordon Young

THE CHURCH DISPERSES TO SERVE

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!

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Worship Leaders December 31, 2023

Pastor: Sarah Fredriksen McCann

Organist: Jim Threlkeld

Liturgist: Sue Rainer

Ushers: Open and Affirming Ministry Team

YouTube: Andy Karcher

Tech team: Jim Richmann, Aaron Wagner,

Jack Jennings

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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!

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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