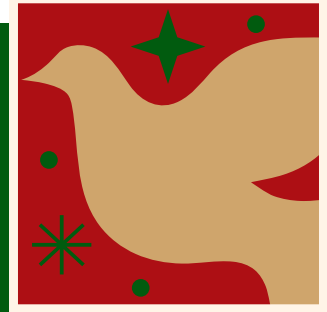


First Congregational United Church of Christ December 24, 2023



Christmas Eve Service

Partners in Ministry: All who are a part of this church

Pastor: **Rev. Enno K. Limvere**

Musician: **Francie Beaster** Choir Director: **Ann Russ**

Advent Wreath: **Luke and Neil Pederson**

Peace Candle Lighter: **Steve Aldrich**

Greeter/Usher: **Jenny Delfs**

Peace Candle Lighter: **Steve Aldrich**

Liturgists: **Jenny Delfs, Ann Russ, Bruce Tyler**

grandmaraisucc.org ~ (218) 387-2113
300 West 2nd Street, Grand Marais, MN 55604





Gathering Music

Words of Welcome

Prelude

Words to Light the Advent Candle of Love & Christ Candle

One: O God, who finds room when there is no vacancy, and swaddles us in the promise of prophets, we rejoice in how you dwell among us,

Many: and are born in us this day.

One: We gather on our journey towards the star, only to find that the light is within and between us,

Many: for God is born in us this day.

(light the Advent candle of Love)

One: We give ourselves over to the manger of this moment, and allow ourselves to be nourished and nuzzled and held in our wholeness,

Many: for God is born in us this day.

One: When the night's exhaustion overwhelms us, and the wise ones come with their gifts,

Many: our God is born in us this day.

One: We come with stories to offer and burdens to set down—not knowing how life will turn out or what angel will come to us next,

Many: yet God is born in us this day.

One: So, let us adore our God who comes to us and through us,

Many: who is born in us each day. Amen.

(light middle Christmas Eve candle)

Words of Poetry & Lighting the Candle of Peace

It is a custom in our congregation to light our Peace Candle during worship, as a witness to the Prince of Peace and our communal intention to be peacemakers as a Just Peace Church.

Christmas Eve

by Christina Rossetti

Christmas hath a darkness Brighter than the blazing noon,
Christmas hath a chillness Warmer than the heat of June,
Christmas hath a beauty Lovelier than the world can show:

For Christmas bringeth Jesus, Brought for us so low.

Earth, strike up your music Birds that sing and bells that ring;

Heaven hath answering music For all Angels soon to sing:

Earth, put on your whitest Bridal robe of spotless snow:

For Christmas bringeth Jesus Brought for us so low.

Passing of the Peace

Special Music – Hope is a Star (Words by Brian Wren, Music by Joan Collier Fogg)





FIRST READING: Isaiah 9:2-7

2 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.

3 You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder.

4 For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

5 For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. 6 For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

CAROL Red Hymnal #90 "Angels We Have Heard on High" (All verses) ([click here](#))

SECOND READING: Psalm 96

1 O sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth.

2 Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day.

3 Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples.

4 For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; he is to be revered above all gods.

5 For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but the Lord made the heavens.

6 Honor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

7 Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

8 Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts.

9 Worship the Lord in holy splendor; tremble before him, all the earth.

10 Say among the nations, "The Lord is king! The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved. He will judge the peoples with equity."

11 Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it;

12 let the field exult, and everything in it. Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy

13 before the Lord; for he is coming, for he is coming to judge the earth.

He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with his truth.

CAROL Red Hymnal #100 "The First Nowell" (First verse only) ([click here](#))

THIRD READING: Titus 3:4-7

4 But "when God our savior's kindness and love appeared, 5 he saved us because of his mercy, not because of righteous things we had done. He did it through the washing of new birth and the renewing by the Holy Spirit, 6 which God poured out upon us generously through Jesus Christ our savior. 7 So, since we have been made righteous by his grace, we can inherit the hope for eternal life."

CAROL Red Hymnal #99 "O Little Town of Bethlehem" (First verse only) ([click here](#))

FOURTH READING: GOSPEL – Part 1 Luke 2:1-7

1 In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered.

2 This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 All went to their own towns to be registered. 4 Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and

cont'd next page.





family of David. **5** He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. **6** While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. **7** And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

CAROL Red Hymnal #93 "Away in the Manger" (All verses) ([click here](#))

FIFTH READING: GOSPEL – Part 2 Luke 2:8-14

8 In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. **9** Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. **10** But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: **11** to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. **12** This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." **13** And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, **14** "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom God loves!"

CAROL Red Hymnal #94 Hark the Herald Angels Sing (Verses 1 & 3) ([click here](#))

SIXTH READING: GOSPEL – Part 3 Luke 2:15-20

15 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." **16** So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. **17** When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; **18** and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. **19** But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. **20** The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

CAROL Red Hymnal #313 "Joy to the World" (All verses) ([click here](#))

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Our Father, Mother God, you are in heaven, holy is your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen

Our Time of Giving

Doxology

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen*

Lighting of Candles

CAROL Red Hymnal #95 Silent Night, Holy Night (All verses) ([click here](#))

Benediction

Sending Music

Cover: Nativity Scene at the Lutheran Church in Bethlehem, Palestine (photo by Rebecca Collard)



Red Hymnal #90 Angels We Have Heard on High

1. Angels we have heard on high
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains

Refrain: Gloria in excelsis Deo
Gloria in excelsis Deo

2. Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heav'nly song?

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

[return to bulletin](#)

*Words, Traditional French Carol
The New Church Hymnal Copyright 1937, renewed 1965,
Fleming H. Revell Co.
Tune, French Carol Melody
One-License No. A-738474*



Red Hymnal #100 “The First Nowell” (First verse only)

The first Nowell, the angel did say,
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as
they lay;
In fields where they law keeping their
sheep,
On a cold winter’s night that was so deep.

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

[return to bulletin](#)

*Traditional English Carol and Melody
Harm. by John Stainer, 1871
One-License No. A-738474*



Red Hymnal #99 “O Little Town of Bethlehem”
(First verse only)

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 ever lasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are meet in thee tonight.

[return to bulletin](#)

*Words, Phillips Brooks, 1868
Tune, Lewis H. Redner, 1868
One-License No. A-738474*



Red Hymnal #93 “Away in the Manger” (All verses)

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

2. 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 side
until morning is nigh.

[return to bulletin](#)

*Words, Anon. American Carol, c. 1884
Tune, William J. Kirkpatrick,
Harm. by John Ferguson
One-License No. A-738474*



Red Hymnal #94 Hark the Herald Angels Sing (Verses 1 & 3)

1. 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!”

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

3. 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 man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give the second birth.

[return to bulletin](#)

*Words, Charles Wesley, 1739; alt.
Tune, Felix Mendelssohn, 1840
Arr. by William H. Cummings, 1856
One-License No. A-738474*



Red Hymnal #313 Joy to to World

1. Joy to the world! the Lord is come:

Let earth receive her king;
Let ev'ry heart prepare him room
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and heav'n and nature sing.

2. Joy to the earth! the Savior reigns:

Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rock, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

3. He rules the world with truth and grace,

And makes the nations prove
The glories of this righteousness,
And wonders of his love,
And wonders of his love,
And wonders, wonders, of his love.

[return to bulletin](#)

Words, Isaac Watts, 1719

Tune, Attr. to George F. Handel, 1742

Arr. by Lowell Mason, 1839

One-License No. A-738474



Red Hymnal #95 Silent Night, Holy Night

1. 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.

2. Silent night, holy night,
Shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heav'nly hosts sing alleluia;
Christ, the Savior, is born!
Christ, the Savior is born!

3. 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.

[return to bulletin](#)

*Words, Joseph Mohr, 1818
Tr. John F. Young c. 1863
Tune, Franz Gruber, 1818
One-License No. A-738474*