Christmas Eve
December 24, 2021
Alexandria, VA

A Candlelight Service of Lessons, Carols, and Communion

Finding Our Way

HOPE

JOY

PEACE

LOVE

Journey to the Manger
WORDS OF WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE  “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”  James Neuroth
          “O Holy Night”  Jayden Bowers

CALL TO WORSHIP
One: The people who once lived in darkness have been given a great light!
All:  Praise to God who has heard our cries and answered with love.
One: Our souls sing out God’s praise!
All:  God has brought us Hope and Peace.
One: Tonight, in this place, God’s Love is given to us!
All:  We shall know that Love and let it shine through our lives. Amen.

HYMN  “O Come All Ye Faithful”

O come all ye faithful joyful and triumphant
Oh come ye O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him born the King of angels;
O come, let us adore him (3x)
Christ the Lord.

Sing choirs of angels sing in exultation
Sing all ye citizens of heaven above;
Glory to God in the highest:
O come, let us adore him, (3x)
Christ the Lord.

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be glory given;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:
O come, let us adore him, (3x)
Christ the Lord
Reader: Every journey requires us to move towards a destination. Tonight, we have arrived at this most humble of stops. A stable. A baby. Animals. Shepherds. Angels. All familiar and yet all somehow still new and amazing. Even though we have reached this journey’s end, we still need God to continue to light the way before us. As we light the Christ candle, we know that Jesus is here with us – in our hearts, in this space, in our homes, and in our community. We are thankful.

(All the candles are lit.)

(All singing) We are pilgrims on a journey, we are travelers on a road; We are here to help each other go the mile and bear the load. I will hold the Christ-light for you in the shadow of your fear; I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.

Reader: Holy One, we thank you for lighting our way as we have journeyed together to the manger. As we light this candle, let us be reminded that no matter where we go you are here with us, lighting our way and urging us forward towards the promise of your new creation. Amen.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

CHILDREN’S ACTIVITY: Finding Our Way
HEARING AND SINGING AT THE MANGER

FIRST LESSON
Isaiah 9:2,6-7 *(New Revised Standard Version)*
The prophet brings hope.
*Rachael King*

CAROL *(All Singing)* “O Little Town of Bethlehem”

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 darkness shineth the everlasting Light.
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

How silently, how silently, the wondrous Gift is giv'n!
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.

SECOND LESSON
The Angel Gabriel visits Mary.
*Rae Gunawardena*

Children bring up Mary and Joseph figures

CAROL *(All singing)* “The Snow Lay on the Ground”

The snow lay on the ground, the stars shone bright,
When Christ the Lord was born on Christmas night.
Venite, adoremus Dominum
Venite, adoremus Dominum

Twas gentle Mary maid, so young and strong,
And brought into this world the Word made flesh.
Venite, adoremus Dominum
Venite, adoremus Dominum
CHILDREN’S ACTIVITY: Preparing the Manger

THIRD LESSON

Luke 2:1-7 *(King James Version)*

Jesus is born!

*Ruth Simmons*

Children bring up Baby Jesus and Animal figures

CAROL *(All singing)*

“Jesus, Our Brother”

Jesus, our brother, kind and good,
Was humbly born in a stable rude;
And the friendly beasts around him stood,
Jesus, our brother, kind and good.

"I," said the donkey, shaggy and brown,
"I carried his mother up-hill and down,
I carried her safely to Bethlehem town."
"I," said the donkey, shaggy and brown.

"I," said the cow, all white and red,
"I gave him my manger for a bed,
I gave him my hay to pillow his head."
"I," said the cow, all white and red.

FOURTH LESSON

Luke 2:8-14 *(The Message)*

Angels and shepherds celebrate together.

*Klaus Family*

Children bring up Angel figures
CAROL (All singing)  “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 angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ the everlasting Lord;
Late in time behold Him come, Offspring of the favored one.
Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see; Hail the incarnate Deity
Pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King"

Hail! the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail! the Son 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 them second birth
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King"

The shepherds come to the manger.
Tim Elfrink

Children bring up Shepherd figures

CAROL (All singing)  “Go Tell It on the Mountain”

Go, tell it on the mountain
Over the hills 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

Go, tell it on the mountain
Over the hills and everywhere
Go, tell it on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born

CHRISTMAS MEDITATION
Rev. Amber Henry Neuroth

OFFERING OUR GIFTS OF LOVE

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

SHARING OUR GIFTS
https://hopeucc.org/give/

OFFERTORY MUSIC
“Mary on a Mountain”
Voices of Hope

OFFERTORY PRAYER
All: Thank you, God of love, for the promise of this season. We are grateful for the generosity we feel as Christ’s light comes to us. May these gifts represent a new joyous sharing among us for the benefit of all. Amen.
(At Hope UCC, we believe that all are welcome to the table – this is Christ's table. We celebrate your being with us and welcome you to join us for Communion.)

COMMUNION PRAYER
One: God be with you.
All: And also with you.
One: Lift up your hearts.
All: We lift them up to God.
One: Let us give thanks to God.
All: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

One: Holy God, your Spirit of Creation and Redemption is, and has always been, with us. You have cast the stars into the heavens to guide our way and brought life forth from the shadowy deep. In the darkness of Mary’s womb, you nurtured your child, born to demonstrate your great love.

Even though you are always with us, we forget, we stumble, and we lose our way. Again and again, you have sought us and patiently waited for us. You offer yourself in the splendor of angels and in the lowliness of the manger.

For the gift of your love, we join with the angels singing, with the shepherds rejoicing, and with all of heaven and earth to proclaim this holy birth.

(All Singing) Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

One: Holy are you, known in Jesus, Babe of Bethlehem, Wonderful Counselor, Prince of Peace, Teacher, Savior, Friend, Living Lord.
One: We remember when Jesus ate with his friends,
    He took bread and after blessing it, broke it, said
    “Take, eat, this is my body given to you.
    Eat this in remembrance of me.”

    *(Hold up your bread for blessing)*

Then he took a cup and giving thanks, passed it to his friends saying:
    “Drink. This is the cup of the new covenant
    which is poured out for you and many.
    Drink this in remembrance of me.”

    *(Hold up your cup for blessing)*

In Bethlehem, House of Bread,
    the empty are filled and the full are emptied.
    Around this table, there is healing, justice and equity.
    Around this table, we are united in Jesus, our Emmanuel.

**BLESSING OF THE BREAD AND CUP**

**SILENT PRAYERS**

**THE PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR**
*(Please sing or pray in a language or tradition that is familiar to you.)*

    Our Creator, 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 trespasses
    as we forgive those who trespass against us
    and lead us not into temptation,
    but deliver us from evil.
    For the kingdom, and the power, and the glory are yours
    now and forever, amen.
    Now and forever, amen.
SHARING THE BREAD AND CUP
(Serve Communion elements to yourself or to those in the room with you with words such as “The Bread of Life” and “The Cup of Blessing”)

COMMUNION MUSIC
Bill Robinson

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION
All: Holy God, we are grateful –
for this journey to manger and table,
for your bread of hope, your cup of blessing,
for Christ born to us this night. Amen.

LEAVING THE MANGER – REJOICING IN THE LIGHT

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES
(While music plays, share in the lighting of candles, glowsticks, Christmas lights, etc., and hold them up to your screen. Envision passing the light from the Christ candle throughout the entire congregation, joining together around the manger, helping to magnify our small lights in the world.)

CAROL (All singing)  “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 Hallelujah
Christ the Saviour is born! Christ the Saviour 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

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CHRISTMASTIDE AT HOPE UCC

Saturday, December 25
Merry Christmas!

Sunday, December 26
Christmas Celebration worship service from the Central Atlantic Conference UCC, available to stream (no live Hope UCC service)

Wednesday, December 29
7:30pm Silent Prayer & Meditation, on Zoom

Epiphany Sunday, January 2
10:30am Epiphany worship service with Holy Communion, at Hope UCC and on Zoom
Packing up the Greens, at Hope UCC

WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS

Ministers: Everyone
Pastor: Rev. Amber Henry Neuroth
Minister for Mission & Justice: Rev. Dawn Jefferson
Ministry Coordinator & Choir Director: Naomi Velluttini

Musician: Bill Robinson
Church Administrator: Ellen Ebeling
Nursery Care: Shanté Parker
Greeter: Adele Coble

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
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The poinsettias are given with love by.

Yvonne L. Allen
In memory of Dr. and Mrs. Addison S. Hobbs
In memory of Stephonia M. Owolabi
In memory of Phyllis W. Pinkney

Jack Barnes
In honor of the welcoming and caring congregation of Hope UCC

The Bowers Family
In honor of Jayden’s grandparents

Amy, Jonas, and Caroline Bowman
In memory of Rich Bowman

Kathy Chamberlain
In memory of Kenneth Russell Chamberlain
In honor of the Jones and Chamberlain families
In memory of Ida and Henry Welch, Mary and Abraham Jones, Russell and Jacqueline Chamberlain, Thomas Chamberlain, and Nelson Jones

Adele and Tim
In honor of journalists all over the world

Kate Dydak
In memory of Mary Abigail Mathews (Grandma Gail)

Terry & Sarah Ford
In loving memory of Wesley Barnett

continued...
Doug & Laurie James  
In honor of Hope’s creative and hardworking leadership, staff, and teams of volunteers during COVID.

Pastor Dawn & Marquita  
In honor of Naomi Brooks, Nellie Quander, Elease Watson, and Faye Kronisch

Jeff and Diana Nelson  
In honor of John and Ann Nelson
In memory of Steve and Shirley Fessenden

The Neuroth Family  
In memory of all our loved ones who now shine for us like stars in the sky: Bill Neuroth, Bob Neuroth, Mary Ann Neuroth, Charles and Donna Henry, Mike and Donna Fletcher

Harry Shepler  
In memory of my parents, Harry and Lillian Shepler
In memory of Clifton and Pauline McDonald

Rob and Ruth Simmons

Sarah Yergeau  
In memory of Paul and Sally Cook
In memory of Rose Yergeau