

First Congregational Church
Our Church in Worship

December 24, 2018 8:00 PM

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

PRELUDE *Savior of the Nations, Come* – Johann Sebastian Bach Adam Peithmann
Lo, How a Rose e'er Blooming – Johannes Brahms
Noël, grand jeu et duo – Louis-Claude Daquin

WELCOME Rev. Kevin Pleas

THE LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

Pip & Cecile Adams

CALL TO WORSHIP (Responsive)

LEADER: Let us go, in heart and mind, to see what has come to pass. Let us go with the shepherds:

PEOPLE: Let us go to find the Savior!

LEADER: Let us go with the wise ones:

PEOPLE: Let us go to find God's promise, born for us!

LEADER: Let us go with the poor and humble:

PEOPLE: Let us go to find our King, born in a lowly manger.

LEADER: Let us go with all the world, with all the peoples of the nations. Come, let us worship; come let us adore him:

PEOPLE: Christ the Lord!

INTRODUCTION

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

PRAYER (UNISON)

O Holy God, thank You that the time for waiting and preparing is over and that the light of Christ shines so very clearly tonight. May our joy be full and our hearts rejoice for the world shall never be the same again. Truth and justice and righteousness have come to free all from the bondage of sin. Thank You, God, for this holy night of nights! Amen.

*OPENING CAROL NO. 148 *"O Come All Ye Faithful"*

THE CHRISTMAS STORY

HOPE FOR A SAVIOR Isaiah 9:2, 6-7 Ruth Knowles
ANTHEM: *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* – arr. Ron Mallory Sabbath Bells

THE ANNOUNCEMENT TO MARY Luke 1:26-33, 38 Peter Perich
*CAROL NO. 162 *What Child is This*

THE BIRTH OF JESUS Luke 2:1-7 D. T. Lewis
*CAROL NO. 155 *Angels We Have Heard on High*

THE SHEPHERDS HEAR THE GOOD NEWS Luke 2:8-20 Lisa Allen
ANTHEM: *He is Born, Hallelujah!* Sabbath Bells
Incorporating "He is Born", "Angels We Have Heard on High" and "Hallelujah" Chorus by Handel

THE WISE MEN SEEK THE CHILD Matthew 2:1-12 Sam Knowles
*CAROL NO. 151 *The First Noel (vs. 1, 2, 3, and 5)*

OUR CHRISTMAS OFFERING

INVITATION

OFFERTORY MUSIC: *Wexford Carol* – arr. Mack Wilberg Chancel Choir
Good people all, the Christmastime, consider well and bear in mind what our good God For us has done in sending his beloved Son. With Mary holy we should pray to God with Love this Christmas Day; In Bethlehem upon that morn there was a blessed Messiah Born. Near Bethlehem did shepherds keep their flocks of lambs and feeding sheep; To Whom God's angels did appear, which put the shepherds in great fear. 'Prepare and go' The angels, said 'To Bethlehem, be not afraid; For there you'll find, this happy morn, a Princely babe, sweet Jesus born.'

*DOXOLOGY – To the tune of "O Come, O Come Emmanuel"
Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly hosts;
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (UNISON)

God of wonder, we offer you these humble gifts, signs of your goodness and mercy. Receive them with our gratitude, that through us all people may know the riches of your love in the Word-made-flesh. Amen

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

PASTORAL PRAYER

THE SERVICE OF CANDLE LIGHTING

(To avoid dripping of hot wax, please tilt your unlit candle toward the lighted one)

INVITATION: "In the Beginning..."

CAROL: *Silent Night, Holy 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, 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: "This is the light which Christ has given us..."

*CAROL OF DEPARTING – NO. 143 *Joy to the World*

POSTLUDE *Carillon* – Louis Vierne

*You are invited to stand if you wish.

First Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

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FCCManchesterNH.org ▪ 603-625-5093

You are welcome here! ▪ We are an Open & Affirming Congregation