



Trinity United Church of Christ Christmas Eve Worship Bulletin

*The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness has not overcome it.
John 1:5 NIV*

December 24, 2023

www.trinityuccwestville.org

Christmas Eve Candlelight, Carols, and Communion

**Denotes that you are invited to stand, in body or in spirit*

Sounding of the Bells

Throughout the centuries, bells have rung to call people to worship or bring them news. During Advent we use the chiming of the bell to joyously call us to worship, and prepare for coming of the Christ child.

Words of Welcome

*Opening Carol O Come All Ye Faithful

1) O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.
Come and behold him, born the king of angels;

Refrain:

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

2.) God of true God, Light of true Light
born of the Virgin's womb in human form;
Truly our God, begotten, not created

Refrain

3.) Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
sing, all ye bright hosts of heav'n above:
"Glory to God, all glory in the highest;"

Refrain

4.) Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;
O Jesus to thee be all glory given;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing;

Refrain

Call to Worship

adapted from Rev. Lori Walke

One: Another year has gone by, and we kept waiting for things to return to normal.

Many: **This year we do find ourselves close to normal, but still not quite there yet. We may worship at church or at home in our jammies, but we still are able to find the time to worship together tonight.**

One: It would have been easy to have opted out of worship tonight. It would have been understandable to be a no-show. The weather can be challenging and everything can still be too hard, too painful, too different, too complicated to be present on this night.

Many: **But we come from a long tradition of showing up - the star, the angels, Joseph and Mary – each in their own way, Elizabeth, the shepherds, the magi. They all showed up even though the night wasn't what they thought, or hoped it would be.**

One: Dear ones, lean in and listen closely.

Let this night be what it is, instead of what it is not.

Let us celebrate the birth of Jesus.

For indeed, we have everything we need - open hearts, joyful spirits, and a light that will shine into all our tomorrows. Come, let us worship the newborn King.

Many: **Let us give thanks and worship the babe laying in the manger.**

Lighting of the Christ Candle

One: On this cold night, we warmly gather to bear witness to the light of Christ with all the faithful of every time and place:

Many: **Like Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the prophets of Israel, we await the coming salvation of the Lord, and look for the coming of the One who will bring justice and righteousness to the earth.**

The first candle, the light of Hope, is lit.

One: With John the Baptist, calling from the wilderness, we cry: "Prepare the way of the Lord!"

Many: **"Repent for the kingdom of heaven has come near."**

The second candle, the light of Peace, is lit.

One: With Mary, the mother of Jesus, we magnify the Lord, rejoicing in God our Savior,

Many: **Remembering that "the Mighty One has done great things for us, and holy is God's name."**

The third candle, the light of Joy, is lit.

One: With the writers of the gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, we tell the good news

Many: **We tell the story of Jesus, the child of Bethlehem born in a barn, yet came to save us and is coming again to rule in glory.**

The fourth candle, the light of Love, is lit.

One: With choirs of angels, and with the entire heavenly host, we sing:

Many: **"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace and goodwill to all."**

The Christ candle in the center is lit.

All: **The Word became flesh and lived among us, full of grace and truth, and we have seen his glory! Alleluia!**

Opening Prayer

Adapted from Rev. Thom Shuman

One: Let us pray...

Lord we gather tonight awaiting the birth of your son, our savior, Jesus.

During this time of worship, be with us.

In the comfort of carols,

Many: **Be with us as we sing of hope which can lift any despair which may envelop us. In the familiar words, scriptures, stories and rituals tonight, speak to us of grace which is born into barren lives, to bring us hope. In the silence, let us hear your still speaking voice whisper joy filling our souls with peace and reassurance. In the expectant wide eyes of little ones whose attention is turned towards Christmas day, give us youthful eyes and ears of awe that come with the Christmas season. Draw us closer to Your heart so we can be surprised by wonder, embraced by tenderness, and discover miracles all around us. Amen.**

*Carol Away in a Manger

1) Away in a manger, no crib for his 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 in the hay

2) The cattle are lowing the poor baby wakes
But little Lord Jesus no crying he makes
I love thee Lord Jesus look down from the sky
And stay by my side til morning is nigh

**3) 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 take us to heaven to live with thee there**

Luke 2: 1-20 The Birth of Jesus

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.

He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

Carol O Little Town of Bethlehem Sung by Paulette Myers

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,
“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace, goodwill among people.”

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.” So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

***Carol 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.**

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

Refrain

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

Refrain

**4 See the babe in manger laid
whom the choirs of angels praise
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid
While our hearts in love we praise**

Refrain

A Christmas Eve Reflection

Rev. David Robberts-Mosser

* Carol

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

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 th'angelic hosts proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Refrain:

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King"

2) Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of the Virgin's womb:
veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
hail th'incarnate Deity,
pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel.

Refrain

3) 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 we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth.

Refrain

Offering of Our Gifts and Our Lives

One: As God has so richly blessed us, in our gratitude let us return a portion of these blessings back to God. Please give to the work and ministry of Trinity United Church of Christ. Every donation helps us continue to do God's work in a tired world with so many needs. We graciously thank all who are able to support Trinity UCC during this time.

To mail your offering or pledge, please send it to

Trinity United Church of Christ, 311 E. Moses Ave., Westville, IL. 61883

Tonight's offering will now be received

*Doxology

Emmanuel
Em-man-u-el, Em-man-u-el,
His name is called Em-man-u-el;
God with us, re-vealed in us;
His name is called Em-man-u-el;

*Blessing What We Can Give Back in Prayer

One: Let us pray

Many: There are so many things to be thankful for tonight, God. Receive and bless these tokens of our gratitude for your love incarnate in the babe of Bethlehem. May they breathe magic back into a world that needs to rekindle a sense of wonder and joy on this Christmas Eve. Amen

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

Invitation to the Table

One: This is not the table of Trinity United Church of Christ, but the open and welcoming table of the one who turned nobody away, Jesus Christ. So, whether you join us regularly, are here for the first time, or fall somewhere in between, remember that no matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here to Christ's table of extravagant welcome and Grace.

The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

Adapted from Rev. Thom Shuman

One: May the God of silent nights be with you!

Many: And also with you.

One: Open your hearts to the One born in the little town of Bethlehem.

Many: May Emmanuel come to abide in our hearts.

One: Tonight, join with all in singing of our joy this night.

Many: May our voices blend with those of the angels and shepherds who have gone before us, and with those gathered here tonight.

One: We are gathered here tonight from many different places, yet we gather around this open table of abundant joy and amazing grace.

One: Let us pray

Many: Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these your gifts, that the bread we break and the cup we bless may be true communion with you. By your Spirit make us one with Christ that we may be one with all who share this feast. Give us courage to speak his truth, to seek his justice, and to love others, as He loved us. We ask these things in the name of Jesus who taught us to pray, saying...

The Lord's Prayer (debts/debtors)

**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.**

Words of Institution

One: We gather tonight to celebrate the birth of Jesus. It is only fitting that we also remember his sacrifice as well. On the night on which he was betrayed by a friend, our Lord Jesus took bread, and after giving thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take, and eat. This bread is my body, given for you. Do this remembering me."

(Please take what you are using for the bread of life and hold it up)

One: The body of Christ, broken for you, take and eat.

And in the same manner, he also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant, sealed in my blood, given for the forgiveness of sin. Drink from it, all of you. Do this remembering me."

(Please take what you are using for the cup of salvation and hold it up)

The cup of Salvation, poured out for you, take and drink

One: Let us pray...

Many: As we have been fed by the bread, may we be strengthened to go and bring tangible hope to all who are famished by despair. As we have drank from grace's cup, may it nourish us, so we may go to overflow with love and peace for everyone we meet in every season. Amen.

One: When we begin to sing Silent Night, the ushers will begin to pass around the light of Christ. As you pass the light of Christ please tip the unlit candle toward the lit one as you light your candle to avoid dripping hot wax. Adults are asked to assist any children with their glow sticks for safety. When your candle is lit and you have passed the light along to the next person, please continue to sing Silent Night.

Carol

Silent Night Verse 4 will be sung A Capella

**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!**

**4.) Silent night, holy night!
Wondrous star, lend thy light.
With the angels let us sing
"Alleluia" to our King,
"Christ the Savior is born,
Christ the Savior is born."**

*** Proclamation**

adapted from Isaiah 9:2

One: Arise, shine! Your light has come! 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.

Many: Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!

*** Carol of Joy**

"Joy to the World"

As you are able, please lift your candle high as we sing.
Following the Blessing, please make sure you're your candle is extinguished
and leave it in one of the containers near the doorway.

**1) Joy to the world! the Lord is come; Let earth receive her King.
Let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing, And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.**

**2) Joy to the world! the Savior reigns; Let all their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**

