December 24, 2021
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
First Congregational United Church of Christ
945 G Street NW, Washington, DC

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.
ORDER OF WORSHIP
(Please prepare your heart and space for worship)

OPENING VOLUNTARY
Prelude in E Flat
B. Marcello

WELCOME
Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH:
Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss and Rev. Sam McFerran

CAROL
“O Come, All Ye Faithful”
(see page 8)

CHRISTMAS LITANY
ONE:  An unwed teen was called–
MANY: to carry Christ into this world.
ONE:  A simple carpenter was invited–
MANY: to be the face of love for a child like no other.
ONE:  Outcast shepherds were beckoned–
MANY: to glorify God after glimpsing the Christ child.
ONE:  The Magi from afar were drawn–
MANY: to follow a star and pay homage.
ONE:  And if they were invited—the ordinary, the outcast, the stranger–
MANY: then we too can trust the invitation is for us.
ONE:  This story is for us.
MANY: This love is for us.
ONE:  Family of faith, this is our invitation. Let us Worship God. Amen.

CHILDREN’S MOMENT
Rev. Sam McFerran

PASSING OF THE PEACE
Rev. Sam McFerran
(Please unmute yourself and greet those around you with words such as “The peace of God be with you.” Let us bless one another with deep peace across time and space.)

LESSON 1
Gabriel Speaks to Mary
Jessica Prentice

Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. Her name was Mary. And the angel came to her and said, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.” But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be
called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

**CAROL**

“What Child is This”

(see page 9)

**LESSON 2**

Joseph Listens to the Angel

Rev. Dale Ostrander

Matthew 1:18-24

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.” When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife.

**SLIDE SHOW**

"Angels we have Heard on High"

**LESSON 3**

A Bethlehem Birth

Lucille Dickinson

Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. 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 family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. 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.

**MUSICAL OFFERING**

“O Holy Night”

Adolphe Adam

**LESSON 4**

Shepherds and Angels

Sandy Sorenson

Luke 2:8-20

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 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: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find
a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom God favors!" 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." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

ANTHEM

"Evergreen"
by Daniel Pinkham
Text by Robert Hillyer

How fine the sweetness from the bough,
   Evergreen, ever living,
Like the prayer offered now
   For a whole world's forgiving;
While the Christ child is sleeping,
   Worlds of woe in his keeping,
   Worlds of joy in his dream.
   Lord, redeem us, redeem us!
   That when thou art waking,
The hearts we uplift shall be thy Christmas gift
   And be well worth thy taking.

How bright the radiance of the tree,
   Evergreen, everlasting,
Like the feast day to be after long years of fasting.
   Bright in hope Christmas morning
   To the Christ Child returning,
   Once again we believe.
   Lord receive us, receive us!
When we come before thee,
   The heart's joy we bring Noel!
   Noel! shall sing and forever adore thee.
Matthew 2:1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: ‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.’" Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

CAROL

“Joy to the World”

CHRISTMAS PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE PRAYER OF THE SAVIOR

Our God, 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

OFFERING

This evening’s special offering is dedicated to Olaiya’s Cradle, an independent living program of Sasha Bruce for young mothers experiencing homelessness. As we worship virtually, we invite you to give virtually. Send your check to the office, give online through our website at www.firstuccdc.org, which includes options to give through PayPal or Vanco. Consider signing up for auto-giving in this time of physical distancing.

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE & UNISON PRAYER

Most Holy God, we rejoice that you choose to come to us in the still, pregnant weight of a silent night. We give thanks that you come to us just as we are—common, broken, yet beloved. We hear the glad tidings of angel voices, and the good news of great joy for all people. We behold the light of the world, which draws us home. May we lift our face to your light, and may it lead us to the shining truth of God with us, God for us, God in us. Amen.
A LIGHT SHINES IN THE DEEPEST NIGHT  

Rev. Sam McFerran

John 1:1-5

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word was in the beginning with God, all things were made through the Word, and without the Word was not anything made. In the Word was life, and the life was the light of all. The light shines in the deepest night, and the night has not overcome it.

SHARING IN THE LIGHT OF CHRIST  

Rev. Sam McFerran

Let us all share now in the light of Christ by holding up our candles as we sing.

CAROL

“Silent Night”  
(see page 11)

BENEDICTION

Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss

CLOSING VOLUNTARY  

Jesus, The Light of The World  
Traditional Gospel

Music reprinted with permission by OneLicense A-720443.

Connect with us!

Connect with us! If you are worshiping from afar but would like to connect with the First Church community, please click here to fill out a Visitor’s Card and check out our newsletters on our website www.firstuccdc.org.

We are so grateful to be extending our reach beyond the DC region and welcome you warmly! With gratitude we thank Alyx Cheng, Abigail Cipparone and Allison Truhlar for serving as our Zoom moderators each week.

Their work makes our worship possible! We also thank Tom Sowers and Graham Marsh, our sound designers in the sanctuary on Sunday mornings.

Participating in Worship

First Church Choir
Mary Catherine Hayes, Violin
Dennis Turner, Guest Musician

(All pre-recorded hymns were created under the direction of John Horman)

Christmas Eve Offering for Olaiya’s Cradle

On Christmas Eve please donate generously to support young mothers and their babies in the Olaiya’s Cradle program. Olaiya’s Cradle is a supportive, independent living program for homeless young mothers ages 18-21 and their children, for up to 18 months. Women are self-referred, and receive individual counseling, comprehensive maternal and infant health care, life skills training, education and career guidance, and child care support and parenting training to enable them to achieve self-sufficiency. Residents graduating from the program receive follow-up support and housing assistance to help them
Prayer List

Prayers of comfort for the family and friends of Peg Lorenz, following her death.
Prayers of comfort for the family of Cindy Dobbs following the death of her husband Will.
Prayers of strength for LaTayna Purnell as she provides care for her ailing parents.
Prayers of healing for Hugh Bushmiller.
Prayers of comfort for Andre, the mother of Scott Prentice, and for the entire Prentice family as she is hospitalized with pneumonia and stage 4 leukemia.
Prayers of healing for Liz and Lance Warren, as Liz recovers from a fall and Lance recovers from surgery.
Prayers of healing for Diane Brenneman's daughter Sara as she recovers from surgery.
Prayers of mercy for the people of Afghanistan and Afghan families resettling in the U.S.
Prayers of comfort for the family of Joan King, following her death, and for this community who loved her.
Prayers for Monte Hillis and her husband Bert, as she faces the rapid onset of dementia.
Prayers of peace and liberation for Nicaragua, Cuba, and Haiti.
Prayers of healing for Dwan Reece as she recovers from surgery.
Prayers of comfort for Grace Bassler following Don’s death.
Prayers of hope for our Racial Justice Audit yearlong process.
All those who mourn the loss of a beloved one.
Families struggling to eat and make ends meet.
People’s UCC, our sibling congregation.
Emmanuel Okorie-Dunn and Ellen Bushmiller, who serve as nurses.
Rev. Laura Johnson and Rev. Diana Gomez de Molina, who serve as chaplains.
O Come, All Ye Faithful

1. O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant; O come ye to Bethlehem! Come, and behold him, born the King of angels!
2. True God from true God, Light from light eternal, born of a virgin, a mortal he comes; very God, become all ye citizens of heaven above! Glory to God, all now in flesh appearing!
3. Sing, choirs of angels; sing in exultation; sing, yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning; Jesus, to thee be all glory given; Word of the Father, born the King of angels! O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!
4. Rejoice, all ye nations; O sing, yechains of heaven above! Glory to God, all now in flesh appearing!

From its Roman Catholic origins, this 18th-century hymn has spread to worldwide use by many denominations in both Latin and vernacular versions. Once popular with a wide range of hymn texts, this tune is now firmly associated with this Christmas text from which it is named.

TEXT: John Francis Wade, c. 1743; trans. Frederick Oakeley, 1841, alt. ADESTÉ, FIDELÉS
MUSIC: John Francis Wade, c. 1743; harm. The English Hymnal, 1906 Irregular
What Child Is This

1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?
2 Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?
3 So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; come, peasant, king, to own him.

Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.
The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone him.

This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;
Raise, raise the song on high, the virgin sings her lullaby;

haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!
hail, hail for Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary!
joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary.

Words: William C. Dix (1837-1898), P.D.
Music (GREENLEAVES 8.7.8.7 6.8.6.7): English ballad, 16th c., P.D.
Joy to the World!

Isaac Watts, 1719; alt.

Ps. 98:4-9; Luke 2:11-15

1 Joy to the world! the Lord is come: let earth its praises bring; Let every heart prepare Christ's room,

2 Joy to the earth! the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ; While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains nations prove The glories of God's righteousness,

3 Christ rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding wonders of God's love, wonders of God's

and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing, delight in God's love. wonders of God's love, wonders of God's love,

Stanza 1 may be sung, "Joy to the world! the Sovereign comes: ..."

Isaac Watts, an English Congregationalist, freely paraphrased Old Testament psalms to glorify Christ and here develops a hymn of advent and nativity from a psalm.

Tune: ANTIOCH C.M.
Lowell Mason, 1836
Silent Night, Holy Night

Joseph Mohr, 1818
Transl. John F. Young, c. 1863; alt.

Luke 2:1–20

1 Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright
2 Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight,
3 Silent night, holy night, Child of God, love’s pure light,

Round yon virgin mother and child. Holy infant so tender and mild,
Glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing Alleluia;
Radiant beams from your holy face bring the dawn of redeeming grace;

Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born.
Jesus Christ at your birth, Jesus Christ at your birth.
Christmas Gifts of Poinsettias

Jean Alexander  In honor of Nate Rother, in memory of what would have been his 40th birthday

Diane Brenneman  In celebration of the life of Lyle Brenneman

Karen & Peter Byrne  In honor of all those seeking to mitigate climate change

Kristina Campbell  In honor of Sandy Sorensen

Lucille Dickinson  In celebration of the life of Peg Lorenz

Barbara Gerlach, Jessica, Scott, Peter, Sara and all the grandchildren

In celebration of the life of John H. Mack, “Papa John”

Susan Goodman  In celebration of the lives of David Teller and Ed Lottick, my brothers

Polly B. Gordon  In memory of my mother Pauline Palmer Barten and in celebration of the life of Irving Gordon

Mary Hayes  In celebration of the life of Barbara Preston Hayes

Amanda Hendler-Voss  In honor of our beloved church community

Olivia Hoynes  In honor and celebration of the life of Olivia June Wyrick, my beloved aunt who died in the spring

Nora Marsh  In honor of Dwight Marsh

Ann & Tom Mascolino  In honor of Lois and Edward Bliss

In honor of Salvatore and Angela Mascolino

Nan & Nick McConnell  In celebration of our families – past & present

Eric & Carol Olson  In celebration of the lives of Ingrid Jeanne Olson, Rev. Oscar W. Olson, and Sally Wade Olson

Dale Ostrander & Meg Maguire  In honor and celebration of Peg Lorenz

John Smeltzer, Cathy, Julia, Lily

In celebration of the life of Timothy Rolison

Fredda Sparks  In celebration of the life of Jack Sparks
Welcome to First Congregational UCC. We were founded in 1865 by abolitionists as the first racially integrated church in Washington, D.C. In 1867 our mission committee played a prominent role in the founding of Howard University. The church has been located at its present site at 10th and G Streets NW since 1868. In more recent years, the church affirmed its vision as an Open and Affirming (ONA) Church (1987), a Just Peace Church (1985), and a Multiracial/Multicultural Church (2003). Our new building, constructed according to Gold LEED standards, was dedicated in 2012.

First Church continues to follow its faith journey into the future, and to be a prophetic voice for the Spirit in the nation’s capital. If you would like to know more about First Church or would like to make it your spiritual home and community, please contact churchoffice@FirstUCCDC.org or 202.628.4317.

Ministers – Friends & Members of the Church
Senior Minister – Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss
Associate Minister – Rev. Sam McFerran
Building Manager – Mr. Byron Adams
Administrative Assistant – Ms. Trista Dunlap
Sexton – Ms. Ines Marquez
Members in Discernment – Lynaya Morris, LaTayna Purnell

945 G Street NW, Washington DC 20001
Phone: 202.628.4317 • Fax: 202.347.4911

www.firstuccdc.org