



WORSHIP AT ELEVEN

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

January 1, 2023

The First Sunday after Christmas Day

WELCOME TO FIRST CHURCH!

If you are visiting today and looking for a church home, welcome! *For more than 170 years our Covenant has been: We covenant with the Lord Jesus Christ and one another, and bind ourselves in the presence of God to live together in all God's ways as revealed to us by the Holy Spirit and holy scripture. The church acknowledges that all members have the right of individual interpretation of the principles of the Christian faith and respects them in their honest convictions. In accordance with the teaching of our Lord, the church recognizes two sacraments: Baptism and Holy Communion.*

*Enter to Worship – Depart to Serve. Please use this time for quiet preparation for worship.
'We have waited in silence on your loving-kindness, O God, in the midst of your temple.'
(Psalm 48:9)*

PRELUDE

Three Settings of "Good Christian Friends, Rejoice!"

P. Manz,
D. Buxtehude, J.S. Bach

ENTER TO WORSHIP

Antoinette Koolemans-Beynen

Leader: The Word became flesh and dwelt among us,

People: And we have seen his glory.

** Then all stand.*

L: Arise, shine, for your light has come!

P: The glory of the Lord has risen upon us!

L: Like sages from afar, come and behold your Christ!

P: Let us fall on our knees in his honor! Let us lift our voices in praise of his name!

* OPENING HYMN 22

Angels, From the Realms of Glory

Regent Square

1. An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
 2. Shep - herds, in the fields a - bid - ing, Watch - ing o'er your flocks by night,
 3. Sa - ges, leave your con - tem - pla - tions, Bright - er vi - sions beam a - far;
 4. All cre - a - tion, join in prais - ing God, Cre - a - tor, Spir - it, Son,

Ye, who sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry Now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:
 God with us is now re - sid - ing, Yon - der shines the in - fant light:
 Seek the great de - sire of na - tions; Ye have seen Christ's na - tal star:
 Ev - er - more your voic - es rais - ing To th'e - ter - nal Three in One:

Come and wor - ship, come and wor - ship, Wor - ship Christ, the new - born King!

* INVOCATION

The Rev. Sarah Reed

L: God be with you.

P: And also with you.

L: Let us pray.

P: O God, who wonderfully created, and yet more wonderfully restored, the dignity of human nature: Grant that we may share the divine life of him who humbled himself to share our humanity, your Son Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

* WELCOME AND PASSING OF THE PEACE

The Rev. Joanna Samuelson

L: Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and his name shall be called the Prince of Peace. The peace of the Lord be always with you.

P: And also with you.

L: Let us greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.

**Please find the attendance pad at the end of the pew,
sign it and pass it on to your neighbor so you may greet them by name.*

CHILDREN'S TIME

Rev. Samuelson

THE HEBREW SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 63:7-9

Ms. Koolemans-Beynen

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah, chapter 63.

I will recount the gracious deeds of the Lord, the praiseworthy acts of the Lord, because of all that the Lord has done for us and the great favor to the house of Israel that he has shown them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love. For he said, "Surely they are my people, children who will not act deceitfully," and he became their savior in all their distress. It was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them; in his love and pity it was he who redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

L: The Word of God for the people of God.

P: Thanks be to God.

THE EPISTLE

Hebrews 2:10-18

Ms. Koolemans-Beynen

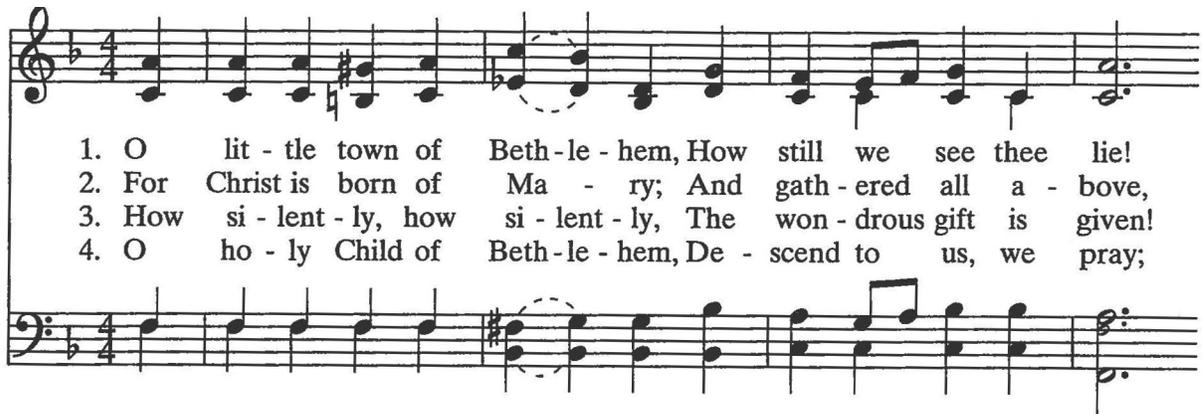
A reading from the letter of Paul to the Hebrews, chapter 2.

It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, saying, "I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you." And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again, "Here am I and the children whom God has given me."

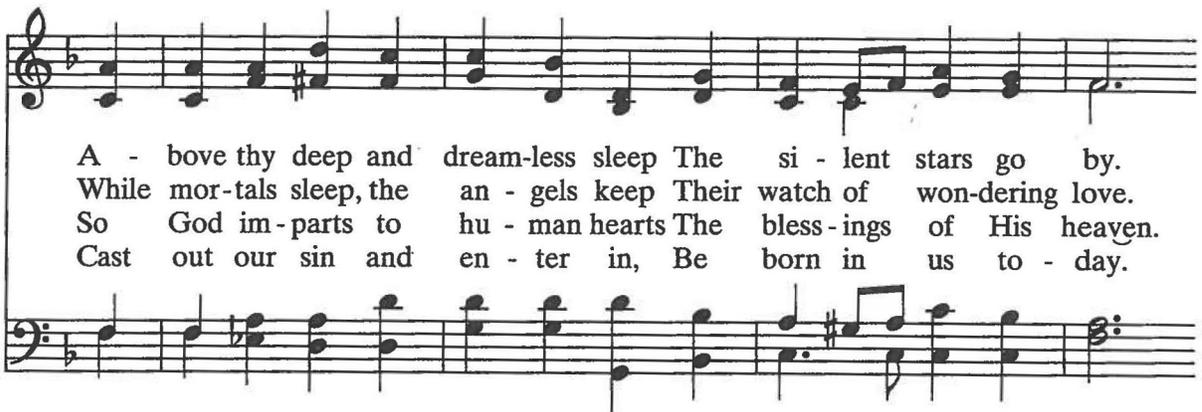
Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. For it is clear that he did not come to help angels but the descendants of Abraham. Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

L: The Word of God for the people of God.

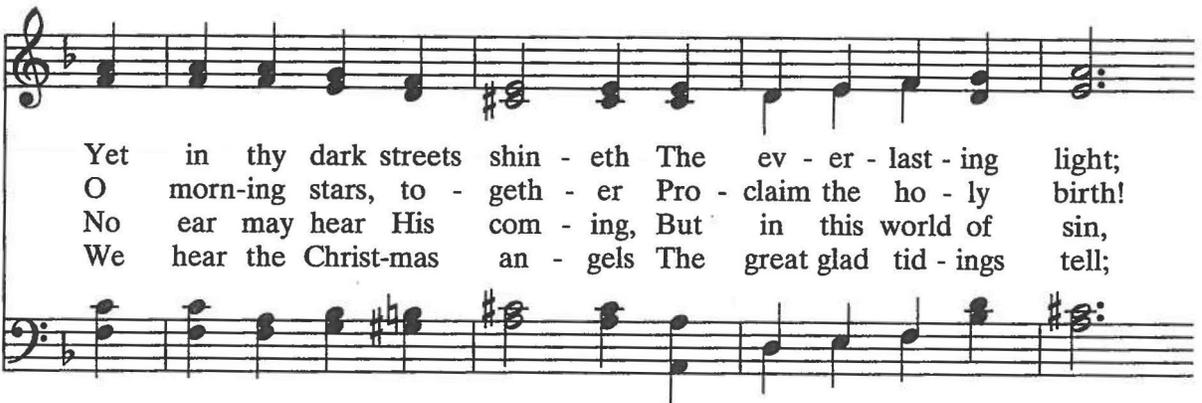
P: Thanks be to God.



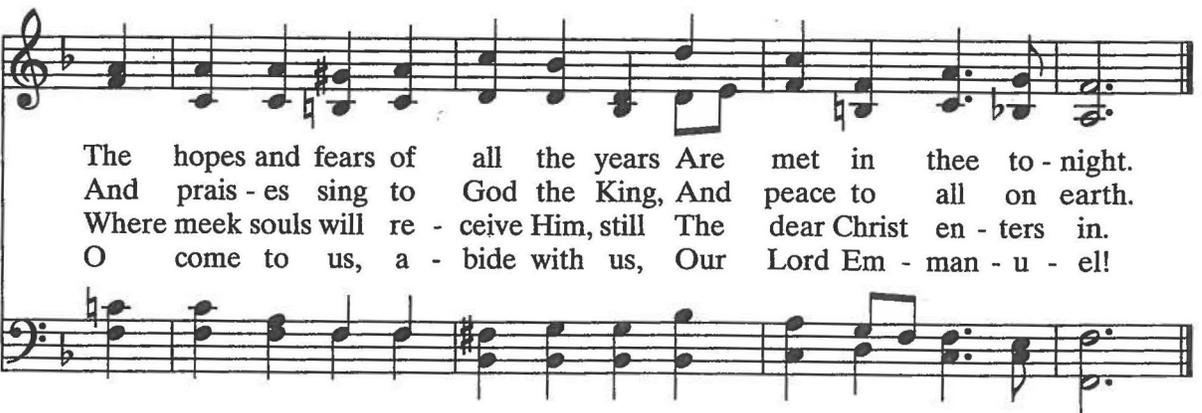
1. O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, How still we see thee lie!
 2. For Christ is born of Ma - ry; And gath - ered all a - bove,
 3. How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly, The won - drous gift is given!
 4. O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - hem, De - scend to us, we pray;



A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep The si - lent stars go by.
 While mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep Their watch of won - dering love.
 So God im - parts to hu - man hearts The bless - ings of His heaven.
 Cast out our sin and en - ter in, Be born in us to - day.



Yet in thy dark streets shin - eth The ev - er - last - ing light;
 O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er Pro - claim the ho - ly birth!
 No ear may hear His com - ing, But in this world of sin,
 We hear the Christ - mas an - gels The great glad tid - ings tell;



The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee to - night.
 And prais - es sing to God the King, And peace to all on earth.
 Where meek souls will re - ceive Him, still The dear Christ en - ters in.
 O come to us, a - bide with us, Our Lord Em - man - u - el!

A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew, chapter 2.

Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son." When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the magi. Then what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."

When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazarene."

L: The Word of God for the people of God.

P: Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION MEDITATION

"Faithful and Discerning"

Rev. Samuelson

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rev. Reed

THE OFFERTORY

To give online, please scan this QR code link, or see additional instructions in the Depart to Serve leaflet.



MISSION INVITATION

Fran Panek

Designated gifts go to support the weekly feeding ministry of **The Largest Table** at St. John's United Church of Christ in Columbus. Every Wednesday for more than ten years, volunteers provide food for individuals and families in the community who are in need. This program transitioned to grab-and-go lunches during the Spring of 2020. The First Church meal team gathers on the third Wednesday of each month to make and pack up to 100 lunches. Your gifts will help purchase the supplies for our meal team to support this feeding ministry. Thank you for your generosity.

ORGAN OFFERTORY

"Good Christian Friends, Rejoice!"

M. Dupre

* PRESENTATION HYMN

What Child Is This (*third stanza*)

Greensleeves

**So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh; Come, one and all, to own Him.
The King of kings salvation brings; Let loving hearts enthrone Him.
This, this is Christ the King, Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring Him laud, The Babe, the son of Mary.**

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

We practice open communion: Wherever you are on your faith journey, you are welcome at the Lord's table. As directed by the Deacons, please come forward in single file via the center aisle, receive the elements of communion on the side in which you are seated, and then return to your seat via the side aisles. Please hold the elements until you are directed to partake together. Sealed and separated gluten-free elements are available in the center. Please deposit the empty communion cups in the baskets located at each entrance. If you are worshipping online, you are invited to gather elements of communion in your home.

* INVITATION

Rev. Reed

As we come to this table, we are reminded that this is the table of Jesus Christ, a banquet prepared for everyone. All who seek to be nourished and sustained in the journey of faith, all who seek wholeness and compassionate paths toward peace and justice, are welcome here.

God be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift our hearts in prayer.

Let us give thanks to God.

It is good to give God thanks and praise.

* COMMUNION PRAYER

Rev. Samuelson and Rev. Reed

Blessed are you, Breath of Peace, Giver of All Life, Source of Love that knows no boundaries. Your song of wisdom rang out before the world began; and throughout the ages, your song of liberation has filled us with your hope for a world: where those considered last and least are first and most; where violence is overcome by the power of your love; and where all people work together for peace.

You bring our longings to birth, and send prophets to awaken us to your coming among us.

We thank you for those who, like Mary, have the strength and courage to give birth to your love in the world; for those who, like the shepherds, dare to seek out the Child of Bethlehem; and for those who, like the magi, actively challenge violent and oppressive powers.

We praise you that your everlasting light is shown to us in womb and tomb, in cradle and cross, in tenderness and compassion. And we proclaim your goodness. Amen.

* CHRISTMAS HYMN

The First Nowell

The First Nowell

The first Nowell the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay,
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel.

The congregation may be seated.

In this holy moment, we remember all with whom God would have us share this feast.
We pray for all who are experiencing sorrow or pain;
for all who are ill or alone;
for all who are close to our hearts;
for all who live with fear, oppression, or hunger;
for all whose lives have been blighted by violence, racism, or poverty;
and for all whom the world counts as last and least.

**We pray for the church and its many ministries,
for nations as they strive for peace with justice,
and for an end to violence everywhere.**

O God of Hope, make this bread the means of our rebuilding, this wine the medium of our transformation, this table the foundation of our renewal, and this community the place of our rebirth. Amen.

BREAKING BREAD AND POURING WINE

*The bread is broken and the wine is poured as visible and audible reminders of the sacrificial self-giving of Jesus Christ.
These actions call to mind the cost as well as the joy of Christian discipleship.*

As we gather as one people this morning, we remember how Jesus gathered together with his loved ones on the evening of his betrayal and the night before his death.

We remember how Jesus took a loaf of bread, gave thanks, broke it, and said to his friends and followers, "Take and eat; whenever you do this, remember me."

In the same way, after supper, Jesus took the cup and poured it out, saying, "This is the cup of the new covenant poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins; whenever you do this, remember me."

Gracious God, Breath of Peace, Source of love, we pray for your Spirit.

Make us, while many, one.

Make us, though broken, whole.

Make us, despite death, fully alive.

And so we pray:

Come, Holy Spirit, come.

Let us pray as Christ our Savior has taught us, saying:

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.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,

for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

These are the gifts of God for the people of God. Come, for all things are ready.

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming,
 From tender stem hath sprung!
 Of Jesse's lineage coming,
 As men of old have sung.
 It came, a flow'ret bright,
 Amid the cold of winter,
 When half spent was the night.

Isaiah 'twas foretold it,
 The Rose I have in mind;
 With Mary we behold it,
 The virgin mother kind.
 To show God's love aright,
 She bore to men a Savior,
 When half spent was the night.

SHARING OF THE ELEMENTS

The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ.
 Take and eat, this is the body of Christ, broken for you. **Amen!**
 The cup of blessing which we bless is the communion of the blood of Christ.
 Take and drink, this is the cup of the new covenant, poured out for you. **Amen!**

* PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Rev. Reed

L: Let us pray.

P: We thank you, God, for inviting us to this table where we have known the presence of Christ and have received all Christ's gifts. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and let us show forth your praise in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

COMMUNITY NOTICES - DEPART TO SERVE

Rev. Samuelson

L: Let us depart with a heart to serve.

P: Thanks be to God.

* CLOSING HYMN 28

"Good Christian Friends, Rejoice!"
 (see next page for hymn)

In Dulci Jubilo

* BENEDICTION

Rev. Samuelson

POSTLUDE

"Good Christian Friends, Rejoice!"

L. Sowerby

It is our custom to remain seated for the postlude.

† THE FLOWERS THIS MORNING are given to the glory of God and in celebration of their 50th wedding anniversary by Jane and Mike Weddle. The Weddles were married in this sanctuary on December 23, 1972, by Rev. Chalmers Coe and Jane's father, the Rev. Paul Conley.

† THIS ADVENT/CHRISTMAS COMMUNION LITURGY was adapted from worship resources written by Alydia Smith, worship program coordinator, of the General Council Office of The United Church of Canada.

† GREETING AFTER THE SERVICE TODAY

Rev. Samuelson – In the Narthex

Rev. Reed – In the Education Wing

1. Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice With heart, and soul, and voice;
 2. Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice With heart, and soul, and voice;
 3. Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice With heart, and soul, and voice;

Give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to - day;
 Now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!
 Now ye need not fear the grave: Je - sus Christ was born to save!

Ox and ass be - fore Him bow, And He is in the man - ger now.
 He hath o - pened heav - en's door, And we are blest for - ev - er - more.
 Calls you one and calls you all To gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.

Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!
 Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!
 Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

LEADERSHIP IN THE LITURGY

The Rev. Joanna Samuelson, *preacher and celebrant*

The Rev. Sarah Reed, *liturgist*

Antoinette Koolemans-Beynen, *liturgist*

Barry Moenter, *interim organist*

Peter Murray, Mike Kennedy, Pat Patterson, Geoff Dean, *livestream ministry*

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