



First United Methodist Church of Torrance Online Church in Worship

December 17, 2023

PRELUDE - Hani

“I Know That My Redeemer Liveth” from Messiah

G. F. Handel

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WELCOME & PASSING THE PEACE

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES

Family 1: When God’s people were surrounded by hardship, suffering, and grief, Isaiah proclaimed,
The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit (Isaiah 61:1-3a).

Family 2: We come today as people who are also surrounded by suffering and grief. And yet, the Spirit hovers among us, tending and anointing, inspiring freedom where there is captivity, declaring blessing in places the world has cursed, and igniting fierce joy where mourning and heartache prevail.

Congregation: We wait as people who experience hardship and pain, yet we are called to witness to the persistent joy that sustains our life as God’s people.

Family 1: We light these candles as signs of our shocking hope, just peace, and fierce joy. May our lives shine with the fierce, tenacious joy of the Light who lives in our hearts as we wait and work for the coming of God’s kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

(Light the third, pink, candle of the Advent wreath.)

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Have you noticed? Are you paying attention? God is doing a new thing.

People: **We watch and wait in the fierce joy of the coming Messiah.**

Leader: You know the captives? God is bringing freedom. You know the brokenhearted? God is bringing healing.

People: **We watch and wait in the fierce joy of the coming Messiah.**

Leader: Beloved, listen. God is calling you. To be freed and to free your neighbors. To be healed and to heal your community. To testify to the Light among us.

People: **We watch and wait in the fierce joy of the coming Messiah.**

Leader: So, let us join our voices and our hearts as we proclaim the story of the one whose coming we anticipate and yet is already as close as our own breath.

People: **We come to watch, to wait, and to worship in the fierce joy of Jesus Christ, the coming Messiah. Amen.**

(Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries)

HYMN #234 O Come, All Ye Faithful (v. 1, 6)

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.

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

*Refrain***O Come, All Ye Faithful**

C. Frederick Oakeley | John Francis Wade
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JOYS AND CONCERNS / PASTORAL PRAYER / LORD'S PRAYER

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and glory forever. Amen.

Anthem - Chancel Choir

Have You Heard? (A Christmas Spiritual)

Jay Althouse

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OFFERING

For those who are called and able, gifts and tithes can still be made through [online giving](#), by mailing them in, and by dropping them off to the church office through the secure mail slot to the left of the double door entry to the church hallway.

OFFERTORY MUSIC - Phillip and Phoebe

Silent Night

Franz Xaver Gruber | John Freeman Young | Joseph Mohr

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DOXOLOGY FOR ADVENT

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.

Praise God, all creatures here below.

Praise God above, ye heavenly host.

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow

Louis Bourgeois | Thomas Ken | Dean McIntyre

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OFFERTORY PRAYER

God of hope and compassion: Just as John the Baptist came long ago in Judea to witness to your light, we remember that light he heralds is the savior of hope. Sometimes it seems our world is determined to extinguish hope and light. We admit that there are times when we feel the darkness is just too prevalent, too strong, and hope is just wishful thinking. May we witness through our giving not scarcity and despair but fierce joy, hope, and compassion. May we also witness through what we say and what we do. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

(John 1:6-8, 19-28)

MESSAGE - Rev. Jacob Lee

HYMN # *Hark! the Herald Angels Sing* (v. 1, 3)

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 host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Refrain

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

3. Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun 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

Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

Charles Wesley | Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy
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Christmas Program

Entrance of the Readers, Little Angels, Singers, and Dancers

SCRIPTURE READING - Luke 2:1-7 (NRSV)

The Birth of Jesus

1 In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2 This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 All went to their own towns to be registered. 4 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. 5 He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. 6 While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. 7 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.

SPECIAL MUSIC - Josh Beall

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Lewis Henry Redner | Phillips Brooks
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Entrance of Mary and Joseph

SONG AND DANSPARATION - Little Angels and Singers

Accompanied by James Concepcion

Silent Night

Franz Xaver Gruber | John Freeman Young | Joseph Mohr
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SCRIPTURE READING - Luke 2:8-21 (NRSV)

The Shepherds and the Angels

8 In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 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: 11 to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, a the Lord. 12 This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, a praising God and saying,

14 “Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”^a

15 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.” 16 So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. 17 When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; 18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. 19 But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. 20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

21 After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

HYMN #238 – *Angels We Have Heard on High* (v. 1, 3)

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
Christ whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee,
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.

Refrain

Angels We Have Heard on High
Edward Shippen Barnes | James Chadwick
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Entrance of Shepherds, Sheep, and Angels

SCRIPTURE READING - Matthew 2:1-12 (NRSV)

The Visit of the Wise Men

1 In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, 2 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." 3 When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; 4 and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. 5 They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

6 '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.'

7 Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. 8 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." 9 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. 10 When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. 11 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. 12 And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

SPECIAL MUSIC - Marshall and Richard

Entrance of the Three Wise Men

DANSPIRATION - Sung by Leah

Accompanied by James

O Come O Come Emmanuel

Henry Sloane Coffin | Laurence Hull Stookey | Thomas Helmore

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HYMN FWS 2097 – One Holy Night in Bethlehem

1. One holy night in Bethlehem
the air was filled with song.
Angelic voices sang on high
and shepherds piped along:

Refrain

Sing glory, glory, gloria!
God's love is given birth!
Be not afraid! Sing gloria,
and peace to all the earth!

2. Their music echoed through the town
in to the stable stall,
where Mary sang a lullaby
and rocked her baby small:

Refrain

3. As Joseph touched the lamb's soft wool
and fed the donkey hay.
he whistled his own happy tune
and thanked God for this day:

Refrain

4. Be still, and you will hear
tonight these melodies of old.
Then join your voice in
harmony until the tale is told:

*Refrain***One Holy Night in Bethlehem**

Mary Nelson Keithahn | John D. Horman

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SCRIPTURE READING - Isaiah 9:6 (NRSV)

6 For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

HYMN #204 - Emmanuel, Emmanuel**Rejoice Singers**

Accompanied by James Concepcion

Emmanuel, Emmanuel,
his name is called Emmanuel.
God with us, revealed in us,
his name is called Emmanuel.

Emanuel, Emmanuel

Bob McGee

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CLOSING PRAYER - Rev. Jacob Lee**HYMN #251 Go Tell It on the Mountain****Rejoice Singers, Teachers and Congregation**

Accompanied by James Concepcion

Refrain

Go, tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere;
go, tell it on the mountain,
that Jesus Christ is born.

1. While shepherds kept their watching
o'er silent flocks by night,
behold throughout the heavens
there shown a holy light.

Refrain

2. The shepherds feared and trembled,
when lo! above the earth,
rang out the angel chorus
that hailed the Savior's birth.

Refrain

3. Down in a lowly manger
the humble Christ was born,
and God sent us salvation
that blessed Christmas morn.

Refrain

Go Tell It On The Mountain

John W. Work Jr. | William Farley Smith

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BENEDICTION

CLOSING SONG - *We Wish You a Merry Christmas*

(with Santa Gary)

POSTLUDE - Hani

Go, Tell t on the Mountain

Arr. Marvin Gaspard

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