



First United Methodist Church of Torrance

Online Church in Worship

December 24, 2023 (Evening)

PRELUDE - Hani

O Holy Night

Adolph Adams

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WELCOME & CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Come, faithful watchers, and behold, your salvation is here!

People: We greet the Wondrous Light, our Messiah, Christ the Lord.

Leader: We have waited and watched, longing for God to show up and save us from the suffering and pain in our world.

People: We greet the Wondrous Light, the fulfillment of our shocking hope.

Leader: We have waited and watched, longing for peace to reign among us, a peace that removes unjust barriers, frees us from sin, and binds us together as neighbors, family, and friends.

People: We greet the Wondrous Light, the bringer of our just peace.

Leader: We have waited and watched, longing for joy that is persistent in the face of the grief, lament, chaos, and oppression that weigh on us day in and day out.

People: We greet the Wondrous Light, the source of our fierce joy.

Leader: We have waited and watched, longing to encounter the love that transforms us the Love that is now here among us, first as a babe in a manger, then as a teacher, a friend, and our Savior.

People: We greet the Wondrous Light, Love Incarnate who has come to save us and transform us. Amen.

(Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries)

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

Family 1: To a people longing for hope and yearning for deliverance, the prophet Isaiah declared, 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...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 (Isaiah 9:2, 6).

Family 2: Tonight, we come seeking hope, peace, joy, and love, and we find these things in a child. God made flesh as a baby in a manger. A baby who is both the beginning and the end of our salvation, who dwells with us even now, our Emmanuel, God with us.

Congregation: We live as people in the in-between who celebrate the arrival of the Light that shines in lost and broken places as we wait for the day when we will live in the fullness of God's kingdom.

Family 1: We light these candles as signs of our shocking hope, our just peace, our fierce joy, the love that transforms us, and Jesus Christ, our wondrous Light. May the Light burning in our hearts guide us, comfort us, protect us, and tend us in all seasons and circumstances, reminding us that day and night, in the light and in the darkness, God is with us. Our salvation has come! Amen.

(Light the Christ candle of the Advent wreath.)

The Prophecy

HYMN #211 *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (v. 1)

1. O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Refrain

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

O Come O Come Emmanuel (Veni Emmanuel)

Henry Sloane Coffin | Laurence Hull Stookey | Thomas Helmore
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SCRIPTURE *Isaiah 9:2-7 (NRSV)*

2 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.
3 You have multiplied the nation,
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.

4 For the yoke of their burden,
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

5 For all the boots of the tramping warriors
and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

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.

7 His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

CHOIR RESPONSE

Do You Hear What O Hear?

Noel Regney | Gloria Shayne | Arr. Harry Simeone

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SCRIPTURE Isaiah 11:1-5 (NRSV)

- 1 A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
- 2 The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.
- 3 His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.
He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide by what his ears hear;
- 4 but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
- 5 Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

MESSAGE*The Conception***SCRIPTURE** Luke 1:26-38 (NRSV)

26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, 27 to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." 29 But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. 30 The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 32 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. 33 He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." 34 Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" 35 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. 36 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. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God." 38 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.

CHOIR RESPONSE**What Child Is This**

Traditional English Melody, 16th Century
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SCRIPTURE Matthew 1:18-25 (NRSV)

18 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. 19 Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. 20 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. 21 She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." 22 All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

23 "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, "God is with us." 24 When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, 25 but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

MESSAGE*The Birth***HYMN #245** *The First Noel* (v. 1)

1. The first Noel 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.

Refrain

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,
born is the King of Israel.

The First Noel

Traditional English Carol
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SCRIPTURE *Luke 2:8–20* (NRSV)

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, 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, praising God and saying,

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

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.

CHOIR RESPONSE

Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow

Arr. Mark Hayes

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SCRIPTURE Matthew 2:1-11 (NRSV)

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.

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 - Josh

O Holy Night

Adolphe Adam | Placide Cappeau

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CHRISTMAS DOXOLOGY

Glory be to God the Father, glory be to Christ the Son,
Glory to the Holy Spirit, to the Three-in-One.
Here we offer to you gladly all the gifts that you impart,
As we glory in your Presence, giving from a grateful Heart.

Christmas Doxology (W Zlobie Lezy)

Brenda J Heard | Edith Margaret Gellibrand Reed

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OFFERTORY PRAYER

Giving God, as we recount the story of your gift of a Savior on that night long ago, we remember there were some who said, “There’s no room”, and others who responded, “Come, we’ll make room.” As we bring our gifts to your altar, which group will be the best fit for each of us? Help us give with a heart of abundance and not one of scarcity! On this holiest of nights, let us dwell with those whose chorus is, “Come, we’ll make room...,” remembering your abundant love for us. In the name of our Savior and Redeemer, we pray. Amen.

(Luke 2:1-14, (15-20))

The Massacre and Refuge

HYMN #230 *O Little Town of Bethlehem* (v. 1)

1. O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie;
above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Lewis Henry Redner | Phillips Brooks

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SCRIPTURE Matthew 2:12-15 (NRSV)

12 And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

13 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." 14 Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, 15 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."

CHOIR RESPONSE**Child of the Poor**

Scott Soper

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SCRIPTURE Matthew 2:16-21 (NRSV)

16 When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, 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 wise men. 17 Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

18 "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."

19 When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, 20 "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." 21 Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel.

MESSAGE*The Christ***SCRIPTURE** Luke 1:68-75 (NRSV)

68 "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them.
69 He has raised up a mighty savior for us
in the house of his servant David,
70 as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,
71 that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who
hate us.

72 Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors,
and has remembered his holy covenant,
73 the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham,
to grant us
74 that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies,
might serve him without fear,
75 in holiness and righteousness
before him all our days.

Praise Response - Rachelle and Leah

Joy To The World (Joyful Joyful)

Edward Hodges | George Frideric Handel | Henry Van Dyke | Isaac Watts | Ludwig van Beethoven | Phil Wickham

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SCRIPTURE John 3:16-17 (NRSV)

16 “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

17 “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Praise Response - P.A.L.A. Singers

Nothing Turned In

HYMN #238 Angels We Have Heard on High (v. 1, 2)

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!

2. Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
which inspire your heavenly song?

*Refrain***Angels We Have Heard on High**

Edward Shippen Barnes | James Chadwick

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Response**Hallelujah Chorus, from Messiah**

George Frideric Handel

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BENEDICTION**HYMN #239 *Silent Night***

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;
heavenly 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!

Silent Night (Stille Nacht)

Franz Xaver Gruber | John Freeman Young | Joseph Mohr

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