



**“MAKING ROOM FOR CHRIST” COLLABORATIVE PAINTING
DECEMBER 2014**

**“The Work of Christmas”
Howard Thurman**

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among others,
To make music in the heart.

We will not worship in-person Christmas morning.
Please join us on the live-stream at 11AM for a collection of
musical excerpts from Advent seasons past at
www.HolyCovenantUCC.org/virtual-hc/



PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Members

Andrew & Britany Bomely, Linda Carver, Gary & Linda Clark, Cindy Coble, Kevin Decker, Linn Finger, Tom & Kathy Habel, Carl Johnson, Helen Lambert, Sharon Landis, Irene Mikkelson, Sue & Bill Pascucci, Isabelle Reddy Powell, Jerry & Marion Rhyne, Cynthia & Tommy Simpson, Anita Taylor

Friends & Family Members

Nikki Arrigo (Kathleen Wagner), Tom Chevrier & Rob Lux (Kathleen Wagner), Laura Christian (Beth Sharp), Sandra Dobson (Joy Decker), David & Cecelia Griffin (JP Griffin), Henry Hildebrand (Bill & Connie Hildebrand), Ann Johnson (Joy Johnson), Geraldine Mobley (Jeff Edwards-Knight), Joe Parks (Beth Christian Sharp), Marie Raley (Jean Raley-Dennis), Barbara Rutelonis (Eric Miner), Matthew Sharp, Michelle Sharp (Beth & Ed Sharp), Christopher Sizemore (Tina Ettesen), Eulene Shepherd (Robert Shepherd), Joyce Tyler (Bill & Kim Tyler), Kathryn Vickery (Ed Vickery), Joyce Ward (Ed Vickery), Tamber Watson (Jeff Edwards-Knight), John Zastrow (Barb Schneller)

If you wish to add someone to the list, please send a note to
prayers@holycovenantucc.org.

HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
CHRISTMAS EVE ~ THE BIRTH OF JESUS

December 24, 2022 7:00 pm

Prelude "What Child Is This?" arr. Weindensaul
Kristin Andes, harp

Chiming of the Hour

Welcome and Announcements Cheri Dennis
One: May the peace of God be with you.
Many: **And also with you.**

Choral Introit "Still, Still, Still" arr. R. Lau

* Call to Worship & Invocation Gregg Walker
One: Starlight and song have once again summoned us home to the stable.
Many: **And so, with the beasts of the field, and the humble and the high,
we come to gaze on the face of God.**
One: Story and supper have once again drawn us home to God's table.
Many: **And here, through words worn smooth with telling, and gifts given
life through sharing, may we once again see and know you,
Emmanuel - God with us and for us.**
One: Christmas Child, as we wait now for you, steal softly into our lives:
Many: **Still our clamorous busyness with the quiet of your coming.**
One: Christmas Child, as we look now for you, steal softly into our minds:
Many: **Transfigure our dull thinking with the colors of your seeing.**
One: Christmas Child, as at Bethlehem's stable,
All: **Steal softly in among us now and heal and hallow us with your
Presence.**

** Please take a comfortable posture that supports your
worshiping, reading, and singing.*

* Hymn 135

“O Come All You Faithful”

ADESTE FIDELES

O come, all you faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come now, O come now to Bethlehem.
Come and behold the ruler of all angels:
O come in adoration, O come in adoration,
O come in adoration: Christ is Lord!

God of true God - Light of true Light -
Born of the Virgin's womb in human form;
Truly our God, begotten, not created:
O come in adoration, O come in adoration,
O come in adoration: Christ is Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
Sing all you messengers of heavenly love:
“Glory to God, all glory in the highest”:
O come in adoration, O come in adoration,
O come in adoration: Christ is Lord!

Amen, Lord, we greet you, born this happy morning;
Jesus to you shall all glory be given;
Word of our God now in flesh appearing:
O come in adoration, O come in adoration,
O come in adoration: Christ is Lord!

Prayer of Confession (*unison*)

Gregg Walker

Christmas Child - becoming flesh, you showed what it was to serve and share, to live and love, as God intended. As we stand at the stable door, we confess that all too often our serving and sharing have concealed or mocked your generosity, rather than making it present and plain. Christ have mercy.

As we stand at the stable door, we confess that all too often our living and loving have displaced and distorted your image, rather than making it present and plain. Lord have mercy.

Christmas Child, as we kneel again at your manger, restore, renew, and reshape us so that our serving and sharing, living and loving may, now and always, incarnate you in the world. Christ have mercy. Amen.

Words of Grace

Gregg Walker

God's grace, ever present in the world since creation, came to us in human form through the Christmas Child. And God's grace is with us now and will be with us always. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Lighting of Advent & Christ Candle "Candle of Christ"

Jean & Terry Raley-Dennis

Voice 1: "Do not be afraid; for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people." (Luke 2:10)

Voice 2: What gifts does Jesus bring to the new world?

Voice 1: Jesus brings hope for the future, peace like a river, joy everlasting, and love for all.

(Christ candle is lit.)

Voice 2: Christmas is the beginning of this new world, a better world, that we are boldly invited to create together as followers of the Christ child.

Voice 1: May it be so. Amen

Song

"Jesus, Light of the World"

ELDERKIN

Joyful all you nations, rise. Jesus, the light of the world.

Join the triumph of the skies. Jesus, the light of the world. (R)

Refrain: We'll walk in the light, beautiful light.

Come where the dewdrops of mercy shine bright.

O, shine all around us by day and by night.

Jesus, the light of the world.

Stories for All People

Laura Hankins

Special Music

"This Christmastide (Jessye's Carol)"

D. Fraser

Lisa Cloninger, Meg Houlihan, Kathleen Smith vocalists

Prayers for Christmas

Cheri Dennis

One: O God, our Creator, in your Wisdom we see the reflection of your only begotten Child, Jesus, the Christ.

Many: As wisdom played at your side to make the world, teach us joyfully to engage the world with your beloved Child, together to make all things new.

One: Merciful One, Your Child is born tonight in a stable under the night sky, slipping in among the poor and outcast, revealing your transforming grace and love.

Many: Draw us into the depths of this hidden place, and give us courage to sing with Mary a song of a love that lifts up the lowly and feeds the hungry.

One: O Fragile Savior, You come, unprotected, into this dangerous world and offer yourself as our Peace.

Many: Let our Joy be to seek your Peace. Let our Hope be to foster your Peace. Let our Purpose be to announce your Peace with all the fervor of the Angels and all the courage of the Poor.

All: Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth, God's Peace! Amen

Handbell Choir "T'was in the Moon of Wintertime" arr. M. L. Thompson

Hebrew Scripture Isaiah 9:2-7 Gregg Walker

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.

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.

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.

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

For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named

Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

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 onwards and for evermore.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

One: May we hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church;

Many: **Open our ears, our hearts, our minds.**

Anthem

“By Star and Candlelight”

J. Dalles/K. Powell

* Gospel Lesson

Luke 2:1-20

Gregg Walker

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.

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 he 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.

One: For the word of God in scripture, for the word of God among us, for the word of God within us.

Many: **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

“This Will Be a Sign for You”

Cheri Dennis

Solo

“O Holy Night”
Dorrie Hankins

arr. B. Wolaver

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Preparation

Hymn "Born in the Night, Mary's Child" MARY'S CHILD

Born in the night, Mary's Child, a long way from your home;
Coming in need, Mary's Child, born in a borrowed room.

Clear shining light, Mary's Child, your face lights up our way;
Light of the world, Mary's Child, dawn on our darkened day.

Truth of our life, Mary's Child, you tell us God is good;
Yes, it is true, Mary's Child, shown on your cross of wood.

Hope of the world, Mary's Child, you're coming soon to reign;
God of the earth, Mary's Child, walk in our streets again.

Invitation to Communion

Gregg Walker, Cheri Dennis

Communion Narrative

Thanksgiving

So, as we take this bread and wine - in remembrance of that life and love - we give thanks for the healing and hope which spring from the coming, living, dying, and rising of the Christmas Child.

And, with those who gather round his crib, with the angel choirs, and the singing planets, we join in creation's song of joy as together we sing:

(Congregation sings)

*Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply, echo back their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.*

Consecration & The Sharing of the Gifts

Song during Communion

"All Is Well"
Ed Vickery, Eric Miner

M. W. Smith

Prayer after Communion (*unison*)

May we who have knelt at the manger always have room to hold within ourselves the Christmas Child. May we who have eaten at his table, learn to live fully and to share freely all that we have and are so that Emmanuel, God with us and for us, may once again be incarnated in this world. Amen.

Special Music

“Night of Silence”

D. Kantor

Lisa Cloninger, Kathleen Smith, vocalists

(Individual congregational candles will be lit during this song.

The ushers will bring the light to the congregation.

To light your candle, tip it into the flame of the lit candle.

There are baskets in the foyer for returning your candle.)

Cold are the people, Winter of life, We tremble in shadows this cold endless night,
Frozen in the snow lie roses sleeping, Flowers that will echo the sunrise,
Fire of hope is our only warmth, Weary, its flame will be dying soon.

Voice in the distance, Call in the night, On wind you enfold us You speak of the light,
Gentle on the ear you whisper softly, Rumors of a dawn so embracing,
Breathless love awaits darkened souls, Soon will we know of the morning.

Spirit among us, Shine like the star, Your light that guides shepherds and kings from afar,
Shimmer in the sky so empty, lonely, Rising in the warmth of your Son's love,
Star unknowing of night and day, Spirit we wait for your loving Son.

* Hymn 134

“Silent Night, Holy Night”

STILLE NACHT

**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.**

**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!**

**Silent night, holy night, Child of God, love's pure light,
Radiant beams from your holy face
Bring the dawn of redeeming grace;
Jesus Lord at your birth, Jesus Lord at your birth.**

OUR MINISTRY TEAM

Rev. Cheri Dennis, Interim Pastor

Jon Weddell, M.Div, MSW, Minister of Music

Dawn Simmons, BSBF, Executive Assistant

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