



First Central Congregational

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

January 3, 2021

Second Sunday after Christmas

Prelude

Christmas Pastorale

Welcome and Announcements

Rev. Katie Miller

***Greeting and Passing of the Peace**

"The Peace of God be with you."

In Unison: **Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love;
the fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.**

** Let us rise in body or spirit.*

Call to Worship

Laura Mitchell, liturgist

God reigns; let the earth rejoice.

Praise the God who dreams a Beloved Community.

Even when our sight is dimmed, and we cannot see clearly,
the Beloved Community is already present in creation.

God holds the vision, and we are part of it.

God offers us rebirth and renewal.

May this worship open us to the gifts of God.

***Processional Hymn**

Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light

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Luke 2:8-14

St. 1, Johann Rist, 1641

Transl. John Troubeck, c. 1885; alt.

St. 2, Fred Pratt Green, 1986

1 Break forth, O beau-teous heaven - ly light, and ush - er in the
2 Come, dear - est child, in - to our hearts, and leave your crib be -

mor - ning; O shep - herds, shud - der not in fright, but
hind you! Let this be where the new life starts for

hear the an - gel's warn - ing. "This child, now weak in
all who seek and find you. To you the hon - or,

in - fan - cy, our con - fi - dence and joy shall be, the
thanks, and praise, for all your gifts this time of grace; come,

power of Sa - tan break - ing, our peace, e - ter - nal mak - ing."
con - quer and de - liv - er this world, and us, for - ev - er.

***Invocation**

Savior of the world, we are your people, rescued and redeemed. We break forth in joyful song. Send your light to guide us on our way. We will share your good news that a child has come, renewing the world. Together, we glorify and praise your Holy Name. Amen.

***Gloria**

Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Conversation with the Children

Psalm Lesson

Psalm 147:1-11

Epistle Lesson

Ephesians 1:3-14

For the Word of God in scripture,
For the Word of God among us,
For the Word of God within us,
Thanks be to God.

Sermon

A Plan for the Fullness of Time

Rev. Dr. Scott Jones

***Hymn**

Brightest and Best

Brightest and Best

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Reginald Heber, 1811; alt.

Matt. 2:9-11; Luke 2:10-14

1 Bright - est and best of the stars of the morn - ing,
2 Cold on the cra - dle the dew - drops are shin - ing,
3 Shall we not of - fer our cost - ly de - vo - tion,
4 Vain - ly we of - fer each am - ple ob - la - tion,

dawn on our mid - night and lend us your aid.
God's ho - ly Child with the beasts of the stall;
fra - grance of E - dom and of - ferings di - vine,
vain - ly with gifts would we fa - vor se - cure;

Star of the East the ho - ri - zon a - dorn - ing,
An - gels a - dore while this ba - by lies sleep - ing,
Gems of the moun - tain and pearls of the o - cean,
Rich - er by far is the heart's ad - o - ra - tion,

guide where our in - fant Re - deem - er is laid.
Mak - er and Mon - arch and Sav - ior of all.
myrrh from the for - est or gold from the mine?
dear - er to God are the prayers of the poor.

An Anglican priest, Reginald Heber became bishop of Calcutta

Tune: MORNING STAR 11.10.11.10.

***Prayer of Confession**

Rev. Dr. Jim Harmon

Just and righteous God, the child in the manger leads us back to you. We want to rediscover faithfulness and joy. Draw us away from cynicism and fear. We repent of all that distracts us from you. Renew us now, as we seek our freedom in Christ. Amen.

***Words of Assurance**

God hears our cries and listens to our silent longings. God penetrates our doubts and fears with good news of great joy. We are beloved children of God, forgiven and set free.

Prayers

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 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.

Offertory

Sweet Little Jesus Boy

Lyn Bouma

***Hymn of Dedication**

VENI EMMANUEL

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Christ, all creatures here below. Praise Holy Spirit evermore. Praise Triune God whom we adore. Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel has come to thee, O Israel!

***Offertory Prayer**

Wonder-making God, your gifts are surprising, beyond our expectations. Like the shepherds and the magi, we bring our gifts to you. May they be blessed for the work of gathering a Beloved Community and bringing salvation to all. Amen.

Celebration of the Sacrament of Communion

God be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to God.

Let us give thanks and praise to God.

We give thanks for your creation, fragile, yet fruitful, enough for all. We give thanks that you call us into community where love and justice may flourish, enough for all. We give thanks that you invite us to rejoice, enough for all. Take us deeper into the mystery of your abundant life: a world healed and renewed; all nature and all people at peace. And now we join our voices with those of all created beings in Heaven, and on Earth singing:

*Holy, Holy, God, you are holy. Ruler of the sea and sky. Angel hosts above adore you. Earth sings out its endless cry: "Hail, hosanna in the highest!"
"Peace on earth," the heav'ns reply.*

Words of Institution and Invitation to the Table

The Bread and Cup

Prayer of Thanksgiving

***Recessional Hymn**

'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime

'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime

Matt. 1:23; Luke 2:11

Jean de Brébeuf, c. 1643

Transl. Jesse Edgar Middleton, 1926; alt.

(Flute, bells, or voice)

Unison

Gm Cm6 Eb Dm Gm

1 'Twas in the moon of win-ter-time, when all the birds had fled, that
 2 With - in a lodge of bro-ken bark the ten-der babe was found; a
 3 The ear-liest moon of win-ter-time is not so round and fair as
 4 O chil-dren of the for-est free, O seed of Man - i - tou, the

El Bb Eb F Gm

might-y Git-chi Man - i - tou sent an - gel choirs in - stead; Be -
 rag-ged robe of rab - bit skin en - wrapped his beau-ty round; But
 was the ring of glo - ry on the help - less in - fant there. The
 ho - ly Child of earth and heaven is born to - day for you. Come

Bb Cm F7 Bb Eb Cm6 Dm7

fore their light the stars grew dim, and won-dering hunt-ers heard the hymn:
 as the hunt-er braves drew nigh, the an - gel song rang loud and high:
 chiefs from far be-fore him knelt with gifts of fox and bea - ver pelt.
 kneel be - fore the ra - dant Child, who brings you beau-ty, peace, so mild.

Refrain

Gm F Bb Eb Dm Gm Dm Gm

***Benediction**

Postlude

Lift Up Your Heads

Open & Affirming Statement

In our ongoing quest for hearts that open, minds that understand,
and lives that serve, we welcome into our fellowship, membership, leadership, and employment,
all people, regardless of abilities, race, gender, sexual orientation, or any God-given characteristic.

Announcements

January 3, 2021

Prayers: for our frontline workers.

Happy Birthday this week: to *Eli Bock, Else Richards Bailey, Matt Schalles, Chris Steffen, Valerie Garver, and Elliott Mitchell.*

Food Pantry: Donations will be accepted at church. Checks may be mailed to First Central with "pantry" in the memo line. Frozen meats are now being accepted (and are needed).

FirstYouth: 8 p.m., Zoom.

Activities for the Coming Week, January 4 – January 9

Lectionary Readings: Genesis 1:1-5; Psalm 29; Acts 19:1-7; Mark 1:4-11.

Monday: Staff meeting, 1:30 p.m.

Wednesday: Vespers, 6 p.m., FaceBook Live
Choir, 7 p.m., Zoom

Friday: Annual reports due!

Sunday, January 10

Worship: 10:30 a.m. on YouTube.

FirstYouth: 8 p.m., Zoom

Want to donate electronically? Please scan the QR code.

