



Worship Notes.

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CHRISTMAS EVE

Rev. Thomas Bentley

CENTRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

United Church of Christ

5 Summer Street, Lynnfield, Massachusetts

December 24, 2023

5:00 pm



Prelude

"Follow the Brightest Star"

Paxton

Words of Welcome

Rev. Tom Bentley

AN ADVENT CALL TO WORSHIP

Invitation:

Rev. Tom Bentley

Come, all who are faithful and all who seek joy in your lives. Come also all those who may feel heavy laden with the struggles of life. God lifts up all who seek the truth of love through the presence of Jesus the Christ.

Advent Prayer

Rev. Tom Bentley

Loving God, we offer you our praise and worship. With that, we also offer our lives, so you may use them to fulfill your purpose. We ask these things in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Parish Council

The Congregation in Unison: We are a people who seek to be brought together by the love of Christ. Our faith teaches us that God gives us unconditional love and forgiveness. Acknowledging God's free gift of grace, we light the Candle of Love.

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

Rev. Tom Bentley

Tonight, is the night for which we have all been waiting. Our Advent wreath will now be completed by the lighting of our Christ candle. "For unto us a child is given, unto us a Savior is born and the order of the world will be upon his shoulders." With the birth of Jesus, our lives can be forever changed. We can be transformed by his model and message. We light this candle to represent that Christ is truly invited to be the center of our lives.

***Opening Carol**

"O Come All Ye Faithful"

#19 booklet

Meditation

"What Child is This?"

Rev. Tom Bentley

OCome all Ye Faithful (p.19 in Booklet)

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!

2 Sing, choirs of angels; sing in exultation;
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest! [Refrain]

3. Child, for us sinners poor and in the manger
We would embrace thee, with love and awe;
Who would not love thee, loving us so dearly? [Refrain]

4 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 Little Town of Bethlehem (page 23 in Booklet, vs 1 and 4)

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 holy Child of Bethlehem! Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in; Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels The great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Emmanuel!

Angels we Have Heard on High (#7, booklet)

Angels we have heard on high, Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply Echo back their joyous strains:

Refrain: Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
Say what may the tidings be, Which inspire your heavenly song? [Refrain]

Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee, Christ the Lord, the new-born King. [Refrain]

What Child I This, Who, Laid to Rest (#24 in Booklet)

What Child is this, who, laid to rest, On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, While shepherds watch are keeping?

Refrain: This, this is Christ, the King, Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring Him laud, The Babe, the Son of Mary!

Why lies He in such mean estate, Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear: for sinners here The silent Word is pleading. [Refrain]

Children's Time (All children present are invited to come forward to spend a few minutes with the Pastor. Parents are invited, if they wish to come)

The Christmas Offering

Call to Offering

Offertory "A Quiet Invitation" Nix

* Doxology (sung to the Tune of 'Greensleeves')

Praise God from whom all blessings flow
Praise God all creatures here below
Praise God all heavens and the earth
reflecting the sacred story.

This, this is Christ the One
Who mirrors peace for all of us.
Haste, haste, to bring him laud
The Word of time eternal.

Prayer of Dedication

LUKE 2:1-5 Linda Ladd
In those days a decree went out from Caesar 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.

Carol: "O Little Town of Bethlehem" #23 vs 1, 4 booklet

LUKE 2:6-7 Jeff Langill
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 in the guest room.

Carol: "Away in a Manger" #22 booklet

ANTHEM "Christmas Lullaby" Beck

LUKE 2: 8-14 Raden Sorli Hawk
Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks 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!"

Carol: "Angels We Have Heard on High" #7 Booklet

LUKE 2: 15-19 Linda Ladd
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, and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.

*** Carol:** "What Child is this Who Laid to Rest" #24 vs.1 & 2 booklet

LUKE 2:20 Jeff Langill
The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.

CANDLE LIGHTING

The pastor will take the flame from the Christ Candle and offer it to the Deacons who will share the light with the congregation while they remain seated in the pews. As the persons on the end of the pew receives the flame, they will pass this on to their neighbors until all the candles are lit in the sanctuary. As the flame is passed everyone is invited to sing all four verse of Silent Night, Hymn #12 in the Booklet

John 1: 1-5 Rev. Tom Bentley
(While the scripture is read everyone is requested to extinguish their candles. At the end of reading all the sanctuary is made dark save for the one flame in the Christ Candle.)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Benediction Rev. Tom Bentley

Postlude "Christmas Postlude on In Dulci Jubilo" Martin



Our Ushers today are Steve Riley, Raden Sorli Hawk, Jeff Law and Phil Fisher