



THE CHURCH AT WORSHIP  
*Christmas Eve*

December 24, 2021

4:30 p.m.

**OUR STATEMENT OF WELCOME**

As a congregation which covenants to walk together in Christian love,  
believes that all persons are created equal before God,  
and affirms the inclusive love of Jesus Christ,  
we welcome to our work and worship all people  
regardless of race, gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation,  
ability, or economic circumstance.

*Adopted at Annual Meeting, June 26, 2005*

WELCOME

Pastor Reed Baer

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES (Maren Tirabassi and Howard Thurman)

*One: We have gathered at this wreath  
all this Advent season to light candles.*

*We claim that Emmanuel, God with us  
is Light and Darkness in a world  
that must work and rest  
be generous and self-careful,  
experience tears and laughter,  
in order to share  
both the hurt and humor of others  
from the deep place of knowing it.*

*Let us light these candles on this holy night.*

Two: I light the candle of hope,  
and hopelessness cannot hide.

I light the candle of peace,  
and expose hatred as fear turned inside out.

I light the candle of joy,  
and everyone is welcome with a smile,  
a moment of beauty or wonder.

I light the candle of love,  
and hands are clasped around the world.

**All: THIS IS CHRISTMAS**

**The evergreen singing aloud its poem of constant renewal,  
The festive mood spreading liting magic everywhere,  
The gifts of recollection calling to heart the graces of life,  
The star in the sky calling to mind the wisdom of hope,  
The warmth of candlelight glowing against the darkness,  
The birth of a child linking past to future,  
The symbol of love absorbing all violence  
THIS IS CHRISTMAS**

*One: O Holy God, we light the Christ candle.  
It shines on smiles and tears.  
It shines into the lives of everyone.  
It shines and we remember the story.  
It shines around angels  
who sing for the most vulnerable,  
and guides the long traveling  
of those from far away.*

Two: It shines on a manger,  
a child and parents,  
with animals gathered all around.  
It shines on here and now people  
just like Bethlehem long ago.

It can never be extinguished,  
because, Christ, you are tonight's candle,  
and we promise –  
to lift our wicks to tomorrow's flame. Amen.

PRELUDE

Carols At The Manger

Lani Smith

\*RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP

Associate Pastor Christie Burns

*One: If you are like Joseph, and you are seeking truth,*

**All: There is room here for you.**

*One: If you are like Mary, and you are seeking rest.*

**All: There is a seat here for you.**

*One: If you are like the wise men, and you are looking for a sign,*

**All: These candles are here for you.**

*One: If you are like the angels, and you cannot help but sing,*

**All: There is a melody here for you.**

*One: Come in. You are in God's house.*

*Love was born tonight, and there is love here for you.*

**All: Let us worship the God of love.**

\* HYMN #132 (Red)

*"O Come, All Ye Faithful"*

ADESTE FIDELES

UNISON PRAYER

Pastor Reed

**God of kings and shepherd,**

**God of teenage mothers and step parents,**

**God of angel choruses and starlight –**

**We confess to waiting.**

**We have waited to extend grace.**

**We have waited to say "I love you."**

**We have waited to apologize.**

**We have waited to be just,**

**Choosing comfort and convenience over the needs of our neighbors.**

**We have waited –**

**Waited for someone else to make a move,**

**Waited for a sign,**

**Waited until it was our issue.**

**You ask us to be the body of Christ, but in many ways, we have waited.**

**Forgive us.**

**Change us.**

**Remind us of your love for this world, which can't wait.**

**In your name we pray. Amen.**

THE 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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

HANDBELL ANTHEM

Lo! How a Rose E'er Blooming

Michael Praetorius, 1609/Text by Theodore Baker, 1894

CHRISTMAS ON THE ROAD Luke 2:1-5 (The Message)

HYMN (seated) #134 (Red) “O Little Town of Bethlehem” ST. LOUIS

CHRISTMAS WITH THE ANIMALS – Luke 2:6-7 (N.R.S.V.)

HANDBELL ANTHEM The Coventry Carol  
Traditional 16th c. carol/arr. Noel A. Piercy

CHRISTMAS IN COMMUNITY, BELOW AND ABOVE – Luke 2:8-18

HYMN (seated) #122 (Red) “God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen” (v. 1) GOD REST YOU MERRY

A CHRISTMAS REFLECTION “The Christmas Guest”  
Pastor Reed and Pastor Christie

\*HYMN #130 (Red) “Joy to the World!” ANTIOCH

ANNOUNCEMENTS, JOYS, AND CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH

CALL TO PRAYER

*One: God be with you.*

**Many: And also with you.**

*One: Let us pray.*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

INVITATION TO OFFERING OUR TITHES AND GIFTS

*In thanksgiving to God and giving witness to generous hearts,  
our financial gifts support our ministries here and in the wider community.*

*Instructions on giving by text are on the back page.*

A CANDELIGHT LITURGY

*One: this, then, is how Love is born: like a seed planted in the darkest of soils that rises to meet the sun’s warming rays, so love emerges from the deepest places. Despite our willing it, and without the force of hand, may love rise graciously to life.*

**Many: This, then, is how Love is born: as the morning slowly dawns – first a sliver, then a burning horizon – causing the night to fade away, so love transforms our sorrow and fear. Into our need, moving against resistance, may love change things in our lives and in the world.**

*Two: This, then, is how Love is born: as winter's gentle hibernation gives way to the bursting of spring and the delights of summer, so love is woven through every season. Amidst our doubts and disappointments, when the sands seem to shift under our feet, may love be steadfast and present at all times.*

**All: The light from even a single flame makes watching an easier task. Christ's flame reminds us that God is with us.**

*(The Meetinghouse will be darkened during this part of the service. The central candle in the Advent Wreath is symbolic of Christ's light. Lighting their candles from that candle, the pastors will light the candles of the ushers. The ushers will then light the aisle candles of each pew. In turn, the aisle candles will light the candles of those next, and so on. During the singing of the last verse of "Silent Night", the candles will be held aloft. To prevent the hot wax from dripping, please tilt your unlit candle as you receive the flame from your neighbor's lit candle. Please be age-appropriate with respect to sharing candles with children.)*

CAROL (seated) #138 (Red)

"Silent Night"

STILLE NACHT

WORDS OF SENDING

(Following the benediction and during the Postlude,  
please extinguish your candles and take them with you to the door as you leave)

POSTLUDE

Joy To The World

Tune: *Antioch* by G.F. Handel/arr. Lani Smith

\* All who wish, please stand.

## *Christmas Poinsettia Sponsors*

- Steve and Mindy Abbott      in loving memory of Howard and Lois Abbott  
and Fred and Martha Strauss
- Rik and Sandy Clark      in memory of Eleanore and Bill MacCallum,  
Doris and Allen Clark and Sharon Clark
- Clayton Family      in memory of Paul Clayton
- Corinne Lilie      my dear pets: Minette, Samantha and Magic
- Jacquie and Don Martin      in honor of Elizabeth Crocker Jenkins and  
her cousin, Jaquie's grandfather, Thornton Jenkins
- Bob and Shirley Stolte      in memory of Alber and Lucia Stolte  
and Alfred and Elizabeth Hodgkins
- Sharon and Bob Wyman      in memory of Sunn and Wes Merritt  
and Evelyn and Edward Wyman
- The 1717 Meetinghouse Foundation in memory of:  
William Breisky  
Robert Jones  
Holbrook R. Davis  
Peggy Newton  
Catherine Coffman Crocker  
Miles Leonard  
Lois Leonard  
Rosita Fattler  
William Reiland  
Silja Emrich  
Linda Oberly  
Lucille McCallum  
Judith Rockwell  
Nancy Wood  
Robert Wood  
Frances Dickson  
James W. Gould  
Thomas Jenkins  
Richard White  
Robert W. Bamberg  
Jane Alcock

A special word to our Christmas Eve visitors: We are *delighted* to have you with us tonight, particularly if you are from the area and are perhaps thinking it might be nice to find a church home. We hope you will consider coming back again – we gather at 4:30 each Saturday (but NOT 12/25 and 1/1) and 10:00 each Sunday.

### **Text to Give!**

If you haven't tried it out, it's easy:

1. Text 866-586-0169 (the give-by-text number for West Parish) and in the body of the message enter the amount you wish to donate and send.
2. You will receive a registration link. Click on it, enter your contact and payment information then press "Process."
3. After registration is complete, you will receive a verification text and receipt via email.

You only need to register and set up your payment information once.

For future giving, simply send a text with the amount you wish to give, and it will process automatically.

Add "West Parish Give by Text" as a contact on your phone to make it even easier!

If you have questions or would like help setting it up, see Marianne Williams.

### **Church Staff**

Reed Baer, Pastor and Teacher  
Donna Murphy, Music Director  
Kristen Lind, Family School Director  
Wendy Northcross, Council Chair

Christine Burns, Associate Pastor  
Susan McEwen, Office Administrator  
Fred Clausen, Sexton  
Susan Moeller, Deacons Chair

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