



# Christmas Eve

## Service of Lessons & Carols

December 24, 2023 - 9:00 p.m.  
First Congregational Church of Fresno, U.C.C.

### The Preparation

#### PRELUDIAL MUSIC

"Prelude on Adeste Fideles" - arr. Mitchell Eithun  
"In the Bleak Midwinter" - arr. Anna Laura Page  
"Patapan" - arr. Susan Nelson  
Handbell Choir

"Amaryllis" - Matt Riley  
John Morrice, violin & Scott Horton, piano

#### WELCOME

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi

#### \*\* CALL TO WORSHIP (*Standing and responsively*)

Hilary Ross, liturgist

*On this holy night, you come to us, God, into a silent and fear-filled world,  
**to be known in Jesus, born at Bethlehem; born that we might have life with you.***

*On this holiest of nights, we come,  
**joining the shepherds who are stunned by wonder.***

*On this most silent night, we come,  
**our hopes and dreams joining those of Mary and Joseph.***

*On this night of carols and candlelight, we come,  
**our glad songs joining with the choirs of angels over us.***

\*\* CAROL for Congregation and Choir “O Come, All Ye Faithful”

(1) Choir and Congregation  
***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***

(2) Choir and Congregation  
***Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation  
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above.  
Glory to God, all glory in the highest!***

Refrain: ***O come let us adore him...Christ the Lord.***

(3) Choir Only On Verse  
***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?***

(4) Choir and Congregation  
***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 come let us adore him...Christ the Lord.***

### **Journey to the Manger**

FIRST LESSON Luke 1:26-38 *The message of the angel*

Hilary Ross, liturgist

*Lighting of the first Advent candle—Hope*

CAROL “Angels We Have Heard on High”

(1) ***Angels we have heard on high,  
sweetly singing o’er the pains;  
and the mountains in reply  
echoing their joyous strains.***

(2) ***Shepherds, why this jubilee?  
Why your joyous strains prolong?  
What the gladsome tidings be  
which inspire your heav’nly song?***

Refrain: ***Gloria, in excelsis Deo...***

(3) ***Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing;  
come adore on bended knee Christ, the Lord, the new-born King.***

Refrain: ***Gloria, in excelsis Deo...***

SECOND LESSON Luke 1:39-45 *Good news for Mary and Elizabeth.*

Emily Lopez, liturgist

*Lighting of the second Advent candle—Peace*

CAROL “It Came Upon the Midnight Clear”

(1) ***It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,  
from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold,  
“Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heaven’s all gracious King”;  
The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.***

(2) ***For lo, the days are hastening on, by prophets seen of old,  
when with the ever encircling years shall come the time foretold,  
when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,  
and the whole world give back the song which now the angels sing.***

THIRD LESSON Luke 1:46-55 *Mary’s hymn of praise.*

Vanessa Valdez, liturgist

*Lighting of the third Advent candle - Joy*

ANTHEM

“Gentle Mary Laid Her Child” - K. Hoefler

Chancel Choir,  
Jane Davis-Maldonado, piano

FOURTH LESSON Matthew 1:18-25 *Joseph’s Dream.*

Emily Lopez, liturgist

*Lighting of the fourth Advent candle—Love*

**\*\* CAROL “Joy to the World!”**

(1) ***Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her king;  
let every heart prepare him room  
and heaven and nature sing...***

(2) ***Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!  
Let all their songs employ,  
while fields and floods, rocks hills  
and plains repeat the sounding joy...***

(3) ***No more let sins and sorrows grow,  
nor thorns infest the ground;  
he comes to make his blessings flow  
far as the curse is found...***

(4) ***He rules the world with truth and grace,  
and makes the nations prove  
the glories of his righteousness  
and wonders of his love...***

FIFTH LESSON Luke 2:1-7 *The birth of Jesus.*

Vanessa Valdez, liturgist

ANTHEM

“Gloria” - A. Vivaldi

Chancel Choir

SIXTH LESSON Luke 2:8-20 *The Shepherds and the Angels.*

Emily Lopez, liturgist

**\*\* CAROL “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”**

(1) ***Hark! The herald angels sing,  
“Glory to the newborn king.  
Peace on earth and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled!”  
Joyful, all ye nations rise;  
join the triumph of the skies;  
with the angelic host proclaim,  
“Christ is born in Bethlehem!”***

(2) ***Christ, by highest heaven adored,  
Christ, the everlasting Lord.  
late in time behold him come,  
off-spring of the virgin’s womb.  
Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see;  
hail the incarnate deity;  
pleased in flesh with us to dwell,  
Jesus our Emmanuel.***

Refrain: ***Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn king.***

### **The Adoration**

INVITATION TO CHRISTMAS OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM “What Shall We Sing for the Child?” - arr. H. Helvey

Chancel Choir; Gina Fazio & Jane Davis-Maldonado, piano duet

PASTORAL CHRISTMAS PRAYER

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi

THE MOMENT ARRIVES IN A DARKENED WORLD

Hilary Ross, liturgist

Holding the hand of his struggling wife as their precious child is born  
to the world, Mary and Joseph now wait with us in a darkened night,  
***Ready to have our hopes fulfilled, ready to kindle that holy light,  
Ready to find the Christ within each of us who has come tonight.***

A CAROL **“A Candle Is Burning”** (Tune: Cradle Song, Mueller; Lyric: )

- (1) **A candle is burning, a flame warm and bright,  
a candle of hope in December's dark night;  
While angels sing blessings from heav'n's starry sky;  
Our hearts we prepare now for Jesus is nigh.**
- (2) **A candle is burning, a candle of peace,  
a candle to signal that conflict must cease.  
For Jesus is coming to show us the way,  
a message of peace humbly laid in the hay.**
- (3) **A candle is burning, a candle of joy;  
a candle to welcome brave Mary's new boy  
Our hearts fill with wonder, and eyes light and glow—  
as joy brightens winter like sunshine on snow.**
- (4) **A candle is burning, a candle of love,  
a candle to point us to heaven above.  
A baby for Christmas, a wonderful birth,  
for Jesus is bringing God's love to our earth.**
- (5) **We honor Messiah with Christ's candle flame;  
our Christmas Eve candles glad tidings proclaim.  
O Come, all you faithful, rejoice in this night,  
as God comes among us, the Christians' true light!**

THE GOSPEL SUMMARY John 1:1-13

Rev. Simon Biasell-Moshrefi

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

\*\* THE LIGHT ENTERS THE WORLD “A Christmas Meditation” - M. Wilberg  
Chancel Choir; John Morrice, violin; Jane Maldonado, piano; Scott Horton, organ

(The sanctuary goes dark as the light from the Christ Candle is brought down the center aisle, to light the candles for those in the body of the church. \*Please tip the unlit candle to the lighted candle to avoid dripping wax and possible burns)

\*\*CAROL **“Silent Night”**

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| <p>(1)<br/><b>Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright<br/>round yon virgin mother, and child;<br/>holy infant, so tender and mild. Sleep in<br/>heavenly peace; sleep in heavenly peace.</b></p> | <p>(2)<br/><b>Silent night, holy night; shepherds quake<br/>at the sight. Glories stream from heaven afar;<br/>heavenly hosts sing “Alleluia.” Christ the<br/>Savior is born; Christ the Savior is born.</b></p> |
|---|--|

(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.**

MOMENT OF SILENCE & BENEDICTION



# *Christmas Poinsettias*

## *Given in Memory of*

Ron and Shirley's Siblings - by Shirley and Ron Atteberry

Joel Greenberg - by Linda Berg

Christel Biasell and Max Johnson - by the Biasell-Moshrefi Family

Shirley and Harold Pfeninger and Evelyn and Charles Broadbent  
by Jan and Norman Broadbent

Robert Neumann - by Rosalie Neumann Brown

Hazel and Audra Dodd - by Clifford Dodd

Harry and Dora Mae Fry - by the Fry Siblings

Rolf V. Gadebusch - by Ruth M. Gadebusch

John Morris - by Mayo Goliti

Forest and Virginia Halk - by Linda Halk

JoAnn Lund Greiner by Char Lund

Kay & Weber Lund by Char Lund

Jim and Harriet Harris - by The Harris/Meester Family

Priscilla and Harold Adams, Melba and Don Hobson, and Penelope Sukuta  
by Jeannie Hobson

Carlos Torres - by Dolores Torres

Lew Wagman - by Bitsy Wagman

Leonard and Roberta Jean Fischer - by Diane Williamson

## *Given in Honor of*

Sharon Thule, Adua Buttici, and Mary Morrice - by Amanda Phillips