

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF VERNON, UCC

~Christmas Eve Candlelight Service ~

December 24, 2015

PRELUDE "Lo, How a Rose Is Growing" Leavitt
"I Am So Glad Each Christmas Eve" Ore/Gabrielsen
(Swedish carol)
"Prelude on 'Mendelssohn'" Willcocks

WELCOME

INTROIT "Christmas Lullaby" A. Grant
Duet – Leanne Connolly, Joanne Myer

***CALL to WORSHIP (Luke 2:8-20)**

Leader: Through lush farmland and bleak alleys

People: sweeps good news of great joy!

Leader: Through empty wants and desperate needs

People: blazes a star to light our way.

Leader: Through pounding turmoil and dazing fear

People: sounds an angel chorus: Glory to God in the highest; peace to God's people on earth!

Leader: Receive the news! Follow the star! Heed the angels!

People: Through song and silence, word and wonder, let us make our way to Bethlehem.

Leader: Let us worship the Holy One who beckons in an infant's cry.

***OPENING HYMN #148 "O Come, All Ye Faithful"**

ADVENT WREATH (Isaiah 9:2, 6, Reading from the Old Testament)

The CHRIST Candle

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in the land of the shadow of death - on them a light has shined. For unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given; all authority shall rest upon his shoulders; and he shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

As we gaze upon these lights, we thank God for the hope God gives us, for the peace God bestows, and for the love that redeems us and shows us the way for the joy God pours into our hearts.

We also celebrate the Light of the World, born to us! With the birth of our Savior Jesus we know the gift of Emmanuel – **God-with-us!**

Lighting the Christ Candle (in silence)

Prayer (unison)

Loving God, God with us, we thank you for your presence, for sending your Son to walk *with us* and to lead us. Open our hearts to joy and peace. Fill us with new hope. Show us again the miracle of your saving love this Christmas. Amen.

***Hymn #160** "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"

READING from the NEW TESTAMENT Luke 2:1-20 (p.53)

ANTHEM/HYMN #155 "Angels We Have Heard on High"
(congregation joins in on vs. 2 & 4)

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE Rev. Suzanne Personette

HYMN #147 "Away in a Manger"

PRAYER

The LORD'S PRAYER (unison)

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.

BRINGING OUR GIFTS

(Tonight's offering will be given in whole to the Christmas Fund of the United Church of Christ. The Christmas Fund provides support for those who serve the church and are experiencing financial distress. Your gracious giving can be a light for those walking in shadows, it can be a hope for those in trying times, it can be love for those who feel forgotten. In the spirit of Christmas joy, please give as you are able.)

OFFERTORY "O Holy Night" Fettke/Grassi

***DOXOLOGY**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below; praise him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

***PRAYER of DEDICATION (unison)**

Gracious God, we pray that you would richly bless and multiply these gifts. May all who receive these gracious offerings know that you are with them. And in our giving may we know that you are with us. We pray this in the name of Jesus the Christ, our Emmanuel, *God with us*, in our giving and our receiving. Amen.

HYMN

“In the Bleak Midwinter” (vs.1-2)

*In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;*

*Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow, in the bleak midwinter, long ago.
Our God transcends all heaven, earth, and its domain; heaven and earth shall flee
away when Christ comes to reign. In the bleak midwinter
a stable place sufficed the sovereign God almighty, Jesus Christ.*

READING from the NEW TESTAMENT The Gospel of John 1:1-5, 14

***The LIGHT SHINES ON: LIGHTING of the CANDLES**

Leader: We come to a special portion of tonight’s service. As Christ comes to bring the light of God’s love, we light our individual candles to signify our commitment to bear light and to live as Christ’s faithful in the world. We will form a circle around the Sanctuary as the Choir sings verse 1 of *Silent Night* in German, after which the congregation will sing verses 1-3 in English. Please bring your bulletin and candle with you. Once the circle is complete, we will pass the light. (You may now come forward.)

***HYMN** “Stille Nacht/Silent Night” (insert)

***BLESSING and EXTINGUISHING of the CANDLES**

(Please place candles in the basket as you exit.)

***HYMN** “Joy to the World” (vs. 1, insert)

POSTLUDE “Fantasia on “Joy to the World”” Cheban

****All who are able are invited to stand.***

The Poinsettias are given by the church family.

The light shines in the darkness and the darkness does not overcome it!!!

A very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from FCCV!

