

Fourth Sunday of Advent
24 December 2006
4 PM



Order of Worship

Christmas Eve 2006 ~ Four o'clock in the afternoon

PRELUDE

John Stansell, organ

Pastoral *Johann Sebastian Bach*

**All who are able may stand.*

*OPENING CAROL

O Come, All Ye Faithful

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;
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest;
O come, let us adore him...

CALL TO COMMUNITY

Rev. Susan M. Craig

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: This night is one of profound mystery,

People: A night for unusual sounds and sights in the heavens.

Leader: This night is one of wonderful clarity,

People: A night for the blessed event of our Savior's birth into this world.

Leader: This night is one of far-reaching complexity,

People: A night for strangers crowding into a stable and for kings starting upon a journey.

Leader: This night is one of touching simplicity,

People: A night for receiving a gift and for cradling God's love in our hearts.

All: We gather to worship on this best of all nights!

LIGHTING THE ADVENT

The College Pilgrim Fellowship

WREATH AND CHRIST CHILD CANDLE

Opening Sentences

Scripture: Luke 2: 6-7 & Psalm 46: 10

Prayer: O God, who has visited our world in the soft hush of Jesus' birth, touch our lives at the deepest places with the wonder of this Bethlehem Babe, that we might be

filled with your joy and truth in the stillness of this special night. Amen.

Lighting of the Christ Child Candle

We light the Christ Child Candle in the pause of this night of wonder and delight, as we dare to journey to the stable where our salvation lay cradled in stillness.

A CHRISTMAS LITANY

Rosemary Lamie

*Leader: Tonight old dreams die and new dreams come to life.
The Promise is fulfilled!*

People: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace.

Leader: Hope gives way to joy and prayer to proclamation.

People: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace.

*Leader: Our candles illuminate our story. Dawn invades midnight.
The Light of the World has come.*

People: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace.

Leader: And this light is a light for all: igniting a flame within the soul, warming us from within, radiating love, lighting our lives with the presence of God-come-alive in human flesh within us and among us now and always.

People: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, and goodwill to all.

*CAROL

O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL

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?
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Grace Walmsley Jung, daughter of Craig and Alexandra Jung

*BAPTISMAL RESPONSE

Lo How a Rose E're Blooming

Lo, how a rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming as men of old have sung.
It came, a floweret bright, amid the cold of
winter, when half spent was the night.

THE CHRISTMAS STORY IN SCRIPTURE, SONG AND DRAMA

The Prophecy

CAROL: O Little Town of Bethlehem (verse 1)

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.

The Decree

CAROL: O Little Town of Bethlehem (verse 2)

For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of
wondering love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing to God the King, and peace to men on
earth.

The Kings Arrive in Jerusalem

CAROL: O Little Town of Bethlehem (verse 3)

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ
enters in.

The Shepherds on a Hillside

CAROL: O Little Town of Bethlehem (verse 4)

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 Emanuel!

ANTHEM *The Children's Choir, Nancy McLarnan, accompanist*
Go, Tell It On the Mountain arranged by Mark Patterson

Mary and Joseph Come to Bethlehem

CAROL: Away in a Manger

Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The Shepherds Arrive at the Manger

CAROL: **Angels We Have Heard on High**

Angels we have heard on high sweetly singing o'er the
plains,
And the mountains in reply echo back their joyous strains,
Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.

The Kings Present their Gifts

CAROL: **We Three Kings of Orient Are**

We three kings of Orient are, bearing gifts we traverse afar,
Field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder
star.
O star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty
bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect
light.

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERING OUR GIFTS TO THE CHRIST CHILD

This afternoon we present our gifts and offerings to the Christ Child, which will be distributed to those in need in our area shelters and soup kitchens. The ushers, starting with the front pews, will invite the congregation to come forward, placing envelopes and money in the offering plates held by the ushers at the front of the church. While we make our offerings, those who remain seated will sing the following carols:

CHRISTMAS CAROLS

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

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!"
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold him come, offspring of the Virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail the incarnate Deity,
Pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

Hail the heaven-born Prince of peace! Hail the Sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings,
Mild he lays his glory by, born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

What Child is This, Who, Laid to Rest

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.
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh, come peasant, king, to own him.
The king of kings salvation brings, let loving hearts enthrone him.
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.

The First Nowell

The First Nowell, the angel did say,
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Refrain: Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel.

They looked up and saw a star
Shining in the east, beyond them far,
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night.
Refrain

In the Bleak Midwinter

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, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign;
In the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed
The Lord God almighty, Jesus Christ.

What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;

If I were a wise man, I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give him—give my heart.

Silent Night, Holy Night

Silent night, holy night,
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child,
Holy infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night,
Shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing alleluia,
Christ, the Savior, is born!
Christ, the Savior, is born!

A PRAYER FOR CHRISTMAS

Dr. David D. Young

THE LORD'S PRAYER (*using 'debts'*)

*CAROL

Joy to the World! The Lord is Come

Joy to the world! The Lord is come:
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heaven and nature sing, And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

He rules the world with truth and love,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness,
And wonders of his love, and wonders of his love,
And wonders, wonders of his love.

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Carillon (24 Pieces in Free Style) *Louis Vierne*

Our grateful thanks to Anne Wachsman for her generous arrangement for and donation of the rental of the costumes for the three kings and the centurion.

Please join us for our traditional Carol Sing in Binney Park at 5 PM, following which we will cross the street in a Pilgrimage to the Crèche on the Church Lawn and sip hot cocoa. Additional services this evening are: Communion and Carols at 8 PM and Pre-Recital Music at 10:30 PM prior to the Candlelight Service at 11 PM. Merry Christmas and a Healthy, Happy New Year to All from the Staff and Officers of First Congregational Church.
