

THE UNITED CHURCH OF SANTA FE  
A United Church of Christ

A SERVICE OF CAROLS AND CANDLES  
for  
CHRISTMAS EVE

December 24, 2024  
5:00 P.M.

*For Reflection on Christmas Eve:*

The good news of Christmas is that God has visited us. God has remembered the people. God has never forgotten us actually. But I think we missed God too often, because we did not expect to see the Holy One in humility and poverty. We probably looked in the wrong places: In fancy palaces and temples; among armies; among the rich and powerful. Surely, God is with them, we thought!

Christmas reminds us where and when to find God. If you want to find God in the midst of our troubled and messy world, look for him in a cave with a homeless family. Look for God in the midst of refugees. Look for God in places where there is suffering and need.

This is why the message of Christmas is one of comfort. . . Today we are not hopeless. We are not in despair. Today we remember that God has visited us. Immanuel, God is with us, even today. God is so near. This is our comfort and joy today. God has visited all people.

Rev. Hiba Allati, Christmas Lutheran Church in Bethlehem, West Bank of Palestine

**WELCOME TO THE UNITED CHURCH!**

*We are glad you have joined us for worship this evening. Your presence enriches the experience of us all this Christmas Eve. Tonight's service is designed to be inclusive of all ages. Childcare for little ones is also available in our Nurture Center. Please turn off cell phones to focus your attention on God and the mystery and power of this night. Again, welcome!*

**WE GATHER**

Prelude

*Carols of the Season*

\*Congregational Introit

**Vamos todos a Belén** (2x)  
*(\*Please rise in body or in spirit.)*

Northern New Mexico

Two staves of musical notation in 6/8 time, key of B-flat major. The melody is simple and repetitive. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Va - mos to - dos a Be - lén con a - mor y go - zo;  
a - do - re - mos al Se - ñor nues - tro Re - den - tor.  
*(Let us all go to Bethlehem, with love and joy. We will adore our Redeemer Lord.)*

Welcome and Breathing in God's Gifts of Peace, Hope, Joy, and Love

Musical Call to Worship **O Come, O Come, Emmanuel** Rev. Dr. Barbara Lundblad/15th c. Plainsong

*O come, O come, Emmanuel, And bless the place your peo-ple dwell.  
Melt ev'ry weapon craft-ed for war. Bring peace u-pon the earth for-ever more.  
Rejoice, rejoice! Take heart and do not fear, God's chosen one, Emmanuel, draws near.*

*O come, dear child of Mary, come; God's Word made flesh within our earthly home;  
Love stir within the womb of night, revenge and hatred put to flight.  
Rejoice, rejoice! Take heart and do not fear, God's chosen one, Immanuel, draws near.*

*O come, Desire of Nations, bind . . . all peoples in one heart and mind;  
Make envy, strife, and quarrels cease, fill the whole world with heaven's peace.  
Rejoice, rejoice! Take heart and do not fear, God's chosen one, Immanuel, draws near.*

## The Call to Worship

Listen, what do you hear?

(Whispering) **Good news, good news! ¡Noticias buenas! ¡Paz y amor!**  
Angels singing,  
(Softly) **Good news, good news! ¡Noticias buenas! ¡Paz y amor!**  
Shepherds coming,  
(Louder) **Good news, good news! ¡Noticias buenas! ¡Paz y amor!**  
Christ is born, Christ is born!  
(Very Loudly) **Good news, good news! ¡Noticias buenas! ¡Paz y amor!**

\*An Ancient Hymn

*O Come, All Ye Faithful*

Adeste Fideles

*O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,  
O come, ye, o come ye, to Bethlehem!  
Come and adore him, born this happy morning!  
O come, let us adore him! O come, let us adore him!  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!*

[Latin] *Adeste fideles, laeti triumphantes,  
Venite, venite in Bethlehem:  
Natum videte, Regem angelorum:  
Venite, adoremus, venite, adoremus,  
Venite, adoremus, Dominum.*

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

## WE PREPARE

### The Lighting of the Advent Candles

Why is tonight different from all other nights?

**Tonight is the Eve of Christ's birth, and the night we light all the candles on the Advent Wreath.**

Why do we light candles?

**Their light symbolizes the coming of God's light into our world. Each week before Christmas, as the world moved into deeper darkness, we lit another candle to proclaim God's light.**

What is the meaning of the candles?

**The purple and rose candles represent the *true* gifts of Christmas—hope, peace, joy, and love. They have reminded us how to prepare our lives for Christmas.**

As we begin this holy night, let us light these candles and open our lives to receive God's gifts. And let us open our hearts to share those gifts with others.

A Carol

*Away in a Manger*

James R. Murray

*Away in a manger, no crib for a 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 cattle are lowing, the poor baby wakes, but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.  
I love you, Lord Jesus; protect me, I pray, and stay by my side until night turns to day.*

I light this candle for the coming of hope.

I light this candle for the coming of peace.

I light this candle for the coming of joy.

I light this candle for the coming of love.

### A Prayer of Invocation

Stir up your power and come, O Lord.

**Come into the shadows of our world. Come with your gifts of peace and hope, joy and love. Come with your good news—*noticias buenas, paz y amor*—for all people. Give us the courage, O Lord, to share that good news through our words and our lives. Amen.**

*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!*

*Come to Bethlehem and see, Christ whose birth the angels sing,  
Come adore on bended knee, Christ our Lord the newborn King!  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!*

## WE LISTEN

The Story of Christmas Night from the Gospel of Luke

Luke 2:1-7

Reflection

*Whose Birthday is It Anyway?!*

Silent Reflection

A Christmas Lullaby

*What Child Is This?*

English Carol

*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?  
(Chorus) 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?  
Give heed, draw near; for all you here, the silent Word is pleading. (Chorus)*

The Lighting of the Christ Candle

Tonight as we celebrate the birth of the Light of the World, we light the last candle on the Advent Wreath, the Christ Candle. Through our words and our lives, may we carry this Light from this place into our world to give hope to all people.

*(The Christ Candle in the center of the wreath is lit.)*

## WE RESPOND

A Musical Response

*Star Child*

(music: Carlton Young, 1994; text: Shirley Erena Murray, 1992)

*(As the congregation sings the carol, children and youth are invited to come forward to receive a Christmas Star with the inscription: "Rejoice in the birth of a brown-skinned, Middle-Eastern undocumented immigrant"—aka Jesus Christ)*

*(All) Star-Child, earth-Child, go-between of God,  
love Child, Christ Child, heaven's lightning rod.  
This year, this year, let the day arrive  
when Christmas comes for everyone, everyone alive!*

*(All) Street child, beat child, no place left to go,  
hurt child, used child, no one wants to know.  
This year, this year, let the day arrive  
when Christmas comes for everyone, everyone alive!*

*(Men) Grown child, old child, memory full of years,  
sad child, lost child, story told in tears.  
This year, this year, let the day arrive  
when Christmas comes for everyone, everyone alive!*

*(Women) Spared child, spoiled child, having wanting more,  
wise child, faith child, knowing joy in store.  
This year, this year, let the day arrive  
when Christmas comes for everyone, everyone alive!*

*(All) Hope-for-peace Child, God's stupendous sign,  
down-to-earth Child, Star of stars that shine.  
This year, this year, let the day arrive  
when Christmas comes for everyone, everyone alive!*

## Offering Ourselves in *A Prayer for All God's Children*

(from a poem by Ina Hughes, published by Marian Wright Edelman of the Children's Defense Fund.)

God of all peoples and places, God of all children of all ages, we come before you this night to offer our prayers for your people. You, who were born a child in a world that had no room for you, hear our prayers for the children of this world. *El niño de Belén*, Child of Bethlehem, bless the children.

**El niño de Belén, bless the children.**

We pray for children who put chocolate fingers everywhere, who like to be tickled, who stomp in puddles and ruin their pants.

**El niño de Belén, bless the children.**

We pray for children who stare from behind broken screen windows and chain link fences and who can't bound down the street in a new pair of sneakers.

**El niño de Belén, bless the children.**

We pray for children who bring us sticky kisses and fistfuls of dandelions, who hug us in a hurry and forget their lunch money.

**El niño de Belén, bless the children.**

We pray for children who never get dessert and have no safe blankets to drag behind them.

**El niño de Belén, bless the children.**

We pray for children who spend all their allowance before Tuesday, who shove dirty clothes under the bed, and who can never find their shoes.

**El niño de Belén, bless the children.**

We pray for children whose monsters are real, who aren't spoiled by anybody, and who go to bed hungry.

**El niño de Belén, bless the children.**

We pray for children who squeeze toothpaste all over the sink, who slurp their soup, and whose smiles can make us cry.

**El niño de Belén, bless the children.**

We pray and accept responsibility for children who want to be carried and for those who must, for those we never give up on and for those who don't get a second chance, for those we smother and for those who will grab the hand of anyone kind enough to offer it.

**El niño de Belén, bless the children.**

Child of Bethlehem, we pray for all your children—of this church family and all families. You whose love came to us as a child, and gave us that love to bless, keep and hold all your children. In the name of the Christ who came to us as the Child of Bethlehem, we pray as he taught us . . .

*(Please pray any version of the Lord's Prayer familiar to you.)*

## Presenting Our Offering

The Offertory 128

*In the Bleak Midwinter*

Christina Rossetti/Cranham

(Tonight's offering shares God's love through **The Christmas Fund of the United Church of Christ** for UCC ministers and their families in need and the purchase of **supplies for Ukrainian, Sudanese, and Palestinian families** in refugee camps in their homelands and other countries. We invite you to be generous.)

### \*A Prayer of Dedication

**Gracious God, on that first Christmas, you offered this world the gift of your love in human form, with a human heart and hands. Bless now these gifts and bless our lives with your transforming love, so that we might offer our hands and hearts in love for your children, our brothers and sisters, and to care for your creation. Amen.**



## WE SHARE GOD'S LIGHT

### The Lighting of the Candles

A German Carol

*Silent Night*

Franz Gruber/Joseph Mohr

*(Please stand after all the candles are lit. Raise your candle on the refrain of each verse.)*

*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.*

*¡Noche de paz, noche de amor!  
Todo duerme en derredor.  
Entre los astros que esparcen su luz,  
Bella anunciando al niño Jesús,  
Brilla la estrella de paz,  
Brilla la estrella de paz.*

*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!*

\*Benediction

\*A Musical Benediction

*Silent Night*

Franz Gruber/Joseph Mohr

*Silent night, holy night,  
Child 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.*

\*Postlude

*O Come All Ye Faithful*

Adeste Fideles/arr. Robert D. Vandall

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### ***A BLESSED CHRISTMAS FROM THE UNITED CHURCH OF SANTA FE!***

We are glad you have joined us for worship tonight, and we invite you to join us in the New Year, too! If you're visiting, we invite you to take a copy of the newsletter with information about our programs and ministries. Again, welcome!

Children are invited to share with the adults. Childcare is also available for infants and preschoolers in the Nurture Center.

Sharing leadership in this evening's service are Rev. Talitha Arnold, Senior Minister; Dr. Jacquelyn Helin, Pianist; Bonnie and Maggie Bannerman, Liturgists/Readers; the Pak-Hay Family (Linda, Craig, Althea, August), Advent Candlelighters; Weston Puglisi, Christ Candlelighter; Elijah Marquez, Media Coordinator.

The people who greeted you were Pam Hyde, Rosemary Thompson, Dusty and Catherine Caruso, Bob Ansheles, Karen Wilbanks, and Worship Aide Luis Zapata. The Sanctuary was prepared by the Sacred Space Team, and the Christmas Angel Banner was made by Dorothy Mendelson.

We also invite you to return **this Sunday, December 29, at 10:00 am** for a service for the First Sunday of Christmastide and share an extended fellowship time after the service.

*Follow the Star (and the Donkey, the Cat, the Dove, etc.)*

**Sunday, Jan. 5 – Epiphany Sunday**

Lots of travelers had a hard time that first Christmas. Joseph and Mary ended up in Bethlehem with no place to stay. The shepherds needed an angel chorus to show them the way. The Wise Ones got off-track and ended up in King Herod's court. Luckily, lots of God's creatures were around to help! On Epiphany Sunday (Jan. 5), a Readers' Theater of United children, youth, and adults offer the Epiphany story in a whole new way. A good Sunday to invite friends—of all ages!

For more information about United's ministries with children, youth, and families—and our other programs and outreach partners—please go to the church's website ([unitedchurchofsantafe.org](http://unitedchurchofsantafe.org)). And plan to join us in the New Year as we seek to "Love God by Loving Neighbor and Loving Creation."

## Special Remembrances (2024)

The Advent and Christmas flowers, wreaths, trees, and greens in the Sanctuary and Community Room are given to the glory of God and in memory or honor of the following loved ones:

### In Loving Memory Of:

Rev. Homer and Mary Louise Akers  
The Parents of Gail and Bob Ansheles  
Elizabeth Standring Arnold and  
Lee W. Arnold  
Dr. and Mrs. A.A. Ashby  
Dr. Charles and Jean Ashby  
Sherman and Kathryn Ashby  
Janice Ballard  
Annie Balocating  
Cliff Beck  
Florence and Gardner Black  
Kaky Black  
Nancy Blake  
Jane Bliss  
John Bray-Morris  
Rev. Betsy Bueschel  
Kay Burdette  
William Burnett  
Rev. Robert Burt  
Jack Callaghan  
Dr. and Mrs. W.A. Cassidy  
Jerry Cavatta  
Wayne and Jeanne Cebell  
James E. Corbin  
U. Lee and Nora Corbin  
John Benjamin Crews  
Debbie Crump  
Rev. Dr. David Daniels  
Olivia Angelique Rindone Dodson  
Jean, Vern, and Dove Duncan  
Yvonne Fairchild  
Moirra and Richard Flanagan  
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Fricke  
Friends and Colleagues of the  
Rasmussens  
John Garman and Levone Kail  
Rev. Paul Gaston  
Rev. Mary and Rev. Shirley Greene  
Conferina Gregory  
Susan Greig  
Ruben and Tyra Helin  
Rudolph and Janet Helin  
Richard Herbst  
Patricia and Luther H. Hoopes  
Clifford Jackson

Alda Jansen  
Sven Olaf Johnson  
Dorothy and Plato Karayanis  
Maggi Konzen  
Rev. Mary Kuhns  
Bob Langsenkamp  
Bob and Josie Lanz  
Brett Lindsey  
Bea Loennecke  
Evelyn and Bill Lohmann  
Bernadette Martinez-Apodaca  
Leon and Christela Mattingly  
Phyllis McDonald  
Monica Merchand  
Louise Reid Miller  
Jean and John Mills  
Carla Muth  
Journalist Gustav Niebuhr  
Mary Noonan  
Norman, Dorothy, and Jim Patinka  
Jean and Dave Popp  
Flossie Shamblen Pruden  
John A. Raymond, Sr.  
Gladys and Ed Rutschman  
Bob Sadler  
Gloria and William Sawtell  
Mr. and Mrs. W.A. Sawtell, Sr.  
Stephen and Helen Sawtell  
Clare Standring Schoenfelder  
Jimmy Seitz  
Marj and Bud Sewing  
Rev. Dr. Reuben A. Sheares, II  
Beatrice Pruden Skeen  
John and Helen Snider  
Talitha B. and T. Wirt Standring  
John B. Stewart  
Roy Swackhamer  
Thomas and Vera Swantner  
Bill Templeman  
Harry and Jere Turner  
Viola Varble  
Edith and Edward Vogel  
Rev. Elmer and Florence Wallin  
Ben Whitehill, M.D.  
Phil Wolfe

Dean Woodward  
Harold and Elizabeth Anne  
Wooldridge  
Marie Young  
To honor the memory of those killed  
in Ukraine, Gaza, Israel, and Sudan

### In Grateful Honor and with Love for:

Rev. Delois Brown-Daniels  
Rev. Joan Bates Forsberg  
Joyce Pohl, Accountant  
The People of Ukraine, Israel,  
Palestinian Territories and Sudan  
United Church Staff: Talitha, Brad,  
Elijah, Lin, Maria, Destiny, Steve,  
Yasmeen, Becky, Quiara  
Helen Wagner

