



THE UNITED CHURCH OF SANTA FE
A United Church of Christ

A SERVICE OF CAROLS AND CANDLES
for
CHRISTMAS EVE

December 24, 2025
5:00 P.M.

For quiet reflection on entering the Sanctuary:

*I will light Candles this Christmas:
Candles of joy despite all sadness,
Candles of hope where despair keeps watch,
Candles of courage for fears ever present,
Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days,
Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens,
Candles of love to inspire all my living,
Candles that will burn all the year long.*

Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman
20th c. African American Theologian
Inspiration to Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks and the Civil Rights movement.

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

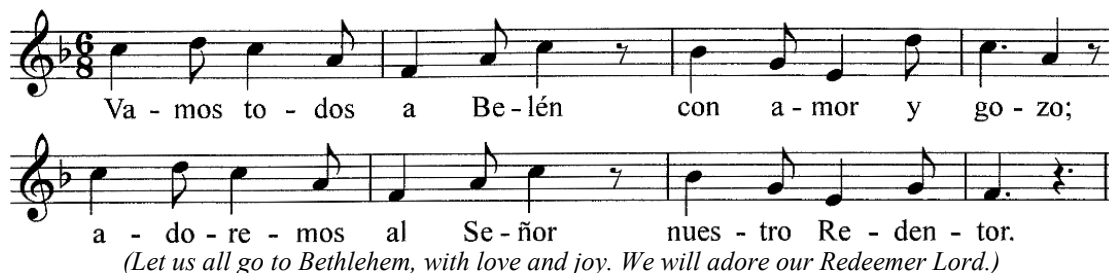
Prelude

Carols of the Season

*Congregational Introit

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

Northern New Mexico



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

Musical Call to Worship

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Rev. 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, Emmanuel, 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.

*A French Carol

Angels We Have Heard on High

Gloria

*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

Light One Candle

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 their Christmas Candle.)

*(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

A Thousand Candles

Emmy Köhler

Tonight's offering shares God's love for our neighbors in need in two ways. Half of all donations go to **Santa Fe Habitat for Humanity** to support their work to build houses for families throughout this community. (**Santa Fe Habitat** was started by the United Church of Santa Fe in 1987.) The other half of the offering goes to **The Christmas Fund of the United Church of Christ** for retired UCC ministers and their families who served inner city or rural churches and whose pensions haven't kept up with inflation and health care expenses. 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 neighbors and kindred, 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.*

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; Dana Bender, Director of Family Ministry; Michelle Schumann, Music Director and Pianist; Heather Eaves, Maya Harris, Tina and Stephanie Hubley, and Hazel Blankenship, Musicians; Bob Ansheles, Pam Hyde, Liturgists/Readers. The Larsen-Kalogerini Family (Erin, Daniel, Isaac) were the Advent Candlelighters; the Hubley Family (Stephanie, Tina, Adam and Alison), Christ Candlelighters; Elijah Marquez, Media Coordinator with volunteer Joe Jones. Childcare in the Nurture Center is offered by Maria Navarette and Destiny Muñoz.

The people who greeted you were Pam Hyde, Bob Ansheles, Karen Wilbanks, Louise Cavatta, and Christy Jones. 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 28, at 10:00 am** for "*Let Heaven and Nature Sing!*" a special service for the First Sunday of Christmastide. After the service, we'll also have our annual "Blessing of the Trees" and share an extended fellowship time. Childcare and Kids United offered during the service.

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). And plan to join us in the New Year as we seek to "*Love God by Loving Neighbor and Loving Creation.*"

THANK YOU FOR BEING HERE TONIGHT!

Special Remembrances (2025)

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:

Jean Abel
Rev. Homer and Mary Louise Akers
Elizabeth Standring Arnold and
Lee W. Arnold
Dr. and Mrs. A.A. Ashby
Dr. Charles and Jean Ashby
Sherman and Kathryn Ashby
Katharine Atterbury
Eva Bachicha
Marshall Bagley
Annie Balocating
Clifford S. Beck
Florence and Gardner Black
Nancy Blake
Rev. Betsy Bueschel
William Burnett
Kaye Burr
Rev. Robert Burt
Judith Call
Mary Lou Carson
Dr. and Mrs. W.A. Cassidy
The Cavatta Family
James E. Corbin
U. Lee and Nora Corbin
Charles Cranford Sr.
Charlie Cranford Jr.
John Benjamin Crews
Mort and Annikki Elkind
Dilys Evans
Moira and Richard Flanagan
Dr. Viola Florez Tighe
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Fricke
Rev. Paul Gaston
Rev. Mary and Rev. Shirley Greene
William Hanson
Patricia and Luther H. Hoopes
Helen Jackson
Rev. Kathleen Jimenez
A.E. and D.J. Johnson
Steve Kerchoff
Paul Knudsen

Maggi Konzen
Rev. Mary Kuhns
Denise Kuzel
Bob Langsenkamp
Judy Laughlin
Brett Lindsey
Bea Loennecke
Evelyn and Bill Lohmann
Mary Ann Lundy
Bernadette Martinez-Apodaca
Leon and Christela Mattingly
Phyllis Pruden McDonald
Evelyn J. Menzies
Monica Merchand
Suzanne Poling
Seth Pollack
Jean and Dave Popp
Flossie Shamblen Pruden
Oliva Rindone-Dotson
Rev. Bruce Rolstad
The Romero Family
Cleo C. Romo-Rogers
Dorothy Moellering Russell
Gladys and Ed Rutschman
Sarah Cady Sartorius
Gloria and William Sawtell
Tony Sawtell
Mr. and Mrs. W.A. Sawtell, Sr.
Stephen and Helen Sawtell
Jimmy Seitz
Marj and Bud Sewing
Rev. Dr. Reuben A. Sheares, II
Grace Dexter Skeen
John and Beatrice Skeen
Fred Smith
Glen Smith
Nicolas "Nico" Smith
John and Helen Snider
Jennifer Wilkison Stahl
Talitha B. and T. Wirt Standring
John B. Stewart

Royce Stewart
Tom and Vera Swantner
Rico Tapia
Cheryl Tongate
Phyllis Tribble
Edith and Edward Vogel
Helen Wagner
Barbara Wheeler
Ben Whitehill, M.D.
Bob Wilpolt
Kay Wilson
Don and Linda Zillman

In Grateful Honor and with Love for:

Rev. Joan Bates Forsberg
The People of Ukraine, Gaza, Israel,
Palestinian Territories and Sudan
Persons Caring for Loved Ones
Lin Raymond
United Church Staff

