

Newark First United Methodist Church Welcomes You

December 24, 2021 7PM

Christmas Eve

† indicates please stand if you are able

PRELUDE: *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly* Stephanie Mercer

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS: Kyle Houser
Christmas Offering

INTROIT: *Once in Royal David's City* Chancel Choir
Soloist Jean Bendix

CANDLE LIGHTING: Liturgist

Tonight, we light the CHRIST candle remembering the entrance of Jesus into the world and into our hearts!

The Savior has been born! *The love, by which God will save us and renew this whole creation, became flesh among us in Mary's child. We dare to believe that God loves this world, God loves every one of us, and God loves each of our fellow human beings so much that God gave the life of his only begotten Son for each of us.*

There is no other place to find the true promise of Christmas. I know of nowhere else in this frightened and lonely world to find HOPE. I know of no other WAY for sorrow to be transformed into JOY. I know of no other way that this violence - addicted world will ever find PEACE. I know of no other WAY to experience the SAVING LOVE of the Almighty God than in the gift of this small child and in the LIFE to which he invites us. There is no greater news than that which the shepherds heard: "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great JOY for all the people; to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11, NRSV). The greatest gifts we can give another are: the gift of the news of Christ from our lips and the gift of the experience of God's love through our lives.

Christmas remains a mystery. *But, like the mystery of childbirth, it is a mystery that we can experience even when we cannot fully explain it. This same Jesus, who was born in Bethlehem so long ago, can be reborn in our lives, and he can satisfy the deepest needs and desired of our souls. He comes to save us from all those things that would destroy us, and by his love, he enables us to become the person we long to become; to be the gifts we know God deeply desires to give to our own broken and hurting generations.*

RESP.: *Light the Advent Candle* TFWS 2090

SPECIAL MUSIC:*Jason Cornwell on harp guitar**O Little Town of Bethlehem/ It Came Upon the Midnight Clear***THE BIDDING PRAYER:***Kyle Houser*

Beloved in Christ, as we await the great festival of Christmas, let us prepare ourselves so that we may be shown it's true meaning

Let us hear, in lessons from Holy Scripture, how the prophets of Israel fortold that God would visit and redeem the people.

Let us rejoice, in our carols and hymns, that the good purpose of God is being mighty fulfilled

Let us celebrate the promise that our Lord and Savior, Jesus, the Christ, will bring all peoples and all things into the glory of God's eternal kingdom.

The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

But first, let us pray for the world that God loves, for those who have not heard the good news of God, or who do not believe it; for those who walk in darkness and the shadow of death; and for the Church in this place and everywhere, that it may be freed from all evil and fear, and may in pure joy lift up the light of the love of God.

These prayers and praises let us humbly offer to God, in the words that Christ Himself taught us.

SPECIAL MUSIC:*O Holy Night**Jean Bendix*

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THE LORD'S PRAYER**ANTHEM:***Blessed Is the Lord (Benedictus)**Chancel Choir*

FIRST LESSON: To God's people in exile in a faraway land, the prophet Isaiah announces good news: God is coming back and bringing exiles home!

Isaiah 40:1 - 8

CAROL:*Prepare the Way of the Lord**UMH 207*

SECOND LESSON: The prophet Jeremiah offers hope for a righteous branch, a just king who is yet to come

Jeremiah 23:5 - 6

CAROL:*Emmanuel, Emmanuel**UMH 204*

THIRD LESSON: To a nation grown weary of war and weapons, God promises a king who will establish a reign of peace.

Zechariah 9:9 - 10

CAROL: *Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus vs. 7* UMH 196

FORTH LESSON: The prophet Haggai promises to God's people a temple even more glorious than the temple of old.

Haggai 2:6 - 9

CAROL: *Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates* UMH 213

FIFTH LESSON: The prophet Isaiah announces the renewal both of the land of God's people.

Isaiah 35:1 - 6

CAROL: *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel vs 7* UMH 211

SIXTH LESSON: The Angel Gabriel announces to the virgin Mary that she will give birth to a ruler whose reign shall never end.

Luke 1:26 - 35, 38

CAROL: *To a Maid Engaged to Joseph* UMH 215

SEVENTH LESSON: Jesus proclaims the coming of the kingdom of God.

Mark 1:1 - 15

CAROL: *Star Child* TFWS 2095

SILENT NIGHT WITH CANDLE LIGHTING:

Under the current COVID-19 protocol our users will light their candles from the Christ candle, then light candles at the end of each pew as they pass up the aisle. As the Light of Christ is passed among us, we symbolically receive the Light of Christ in order to carry it into our world. While we sing Silent Night, the words will be on the screens. We will leave in silence.



Merry Christmas
&
Happy New Year!