FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
United Church of Christ
Partners in Christ’s Service since 1890

A child is Born
TO US, A SON IS GIVEN TO US.
— Isaiah 9:6

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
December 24, 2021
Prelude
“Miraculum”
Lincoln Brewster
Dave Benziger, guitar

Welcome and Announcements
Martha Mendoza

*Call to Worship
Meg McGarry
Leader: Tonight, is a night long awaited. Tonight, hope is fulfilled as God’s promise meets us in a lowly manger.

People: For unto us a child is given, a Savior is born. Praise be to God this Christmas Eve as we celebrate the birthday of Christ our King!

*Opening Carol
#148 O Come All Ye Faithful (vs. 1, 2, 4)

*Passing the Wave of Peace
Martha Mendoza

Lighting of the Advent Wreath with the Christ Candle

Advent Song
“Of the Father’s Love”
J. Raney
Chancel Choir

Responsive Litany
Al Thurkow
Leader: Tonight, we conclude our Advent journey as we light the Christ Candle, welcoming the one promised in scripture.

People: He is called Emmanuel: God with us!

Leader: We celebrate the hope brought to earth by our Wonderful Counselor.

People: He is called Emmanuel: God with us!

Leader: We rejoice in the strength and power of a Mighty God.

People: He is called Emmanuel: God with us!

Leader: We sing of peace on earth and good will to all people.

People: He is called Emmanuel: God with us!

Leader: And we lift our hearts in praise to our Everlasting God.

People: He is called Emmanuel: God with us! Joy to the world, the Lord has come!
Candle Lighting Reading
Al Thurkow
Tonight, we light all the candles as we celebrate the birth of Christ, the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. As the light from the candles fills this room, we light the Christ Candle, welcoming the newborn King. The one who is Emmanuel, Jesus Christ, God with us.

Advent Wreath Candle Lighting
Carrie, Doug, Erin, Julia, and Alex Stone

Christmas Prayer (Unison)
Rev. John Gibbon
Loving God, we gather to celebrate the birth of Jesus, to share the song of angels, to know the gladness of the shepherds, and to worship in the way of the wise men. Emmanuel, God is with us! May we never forget the gift of peace this night brings. In Jesus’ name we pray, amen.

Christmas Children’s Message
“Don’t Miss Christmas”
Martha Mendoza
Children will remain in the sanctuary with their families to enjoy the service.

Carol
#151 The First Noel (vs. 1, 2, 3)

Pastoral Prayer
Rev. John Gibbon

Lord’s Prayer (Unison)
Rev. John Gibbon
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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Scripture
Isaiah 9:2-7
Morgan and Olivia Scumaci

For to Us a Child Is Born
The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil.

For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder,
the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.
For every boot of the trampling warrior in battle tumult
and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness
from this time onwards and for evermore.

**The Service of Scripture and Carols**

**Scripture Reading 1**  Luke 1:26-35  Carrie Stone

**The Story of Mary**
In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”

“How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”

The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So, the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.”

**Song Response:**  “Mary, Did You Know?”  M. English; arr. M. Hayes

*Carina Kanzler, Meg McGarry, Kevin Loeper, Al Thurkow, vocals*
The Birth of Jesus Foretold

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register.

So, Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

Song Response:  
“A Manger Carol”  
arr. Keith Christopher  
Chancel Choir

Shepherds Hear the Angels’ Song

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

Carol Response:  
#155 Angels We Have Heard On High (vs. 1, 2, 4)

Shepherds Give Glory to God

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God, and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”
So, they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

**Carol Response:** #150 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

**Sermon**
“Heaven and Earth Intersecting”
Rev. John Gibbon

**Response**
“O Holy Night”
Adolphe Adam

*Carina Kanzler, solo*

**Christmas Offering**

*Offertory*
“Gesu Bambino”
Pietro Yon

*Carina Kanzler, solo*

**Doxology**
*Go tell it on the mountain*
*Over the hills and everywhere;*
*Go tell it on the mountain*
*That Jesus Christ is born*

**Prayer of Dedication**
Rev. John Gibbon

**The Service of Light**
John 1:1-5
Rev. John Gibbon

*The ushers will pass the light to the person sitting at the end of each pew. As the light is passed to you, please tilt the unlit candle to receive the light. If you hold the candle upright it will not drip. The light will be extinguished following “Silent Night”. You are welcome to carry your candle home as a reminder of the birth of the Light of the World.*

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. All things were made through the Word, and without the Word was not anything made. In the Word was life, and the life was the light of all. The light shines in darkness, and darkness has not overcome it.

**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 a far. Heavenly hosts sing alleluia.
Christ the savior is born! Christ, the savior is born!

Silent night, holy night, Son 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.

Silent night, holy night, wondrous star, lend thy light;
With the angels let us sing alleluia to our King;
Christ, the Savior is born, Christ, the Savior is born.

Benediction
Rev. John Gibbon

*Closing Carol
#143 Joy to the World!

*Postlude
“As With Gladness, Men of Old”
arr. Brent Edstrom
Dave Benziger, guitar
Jim Molina, piano

*Please stand if you are able. Songs and prayers printed in bold are to be recited out loud together. Please silence your cell phones. Thank you!

This Evening’s Worship and Music Leaders
Rev. John Gibbon, Guest Minister
Martha Mendoza, Director of Christian Education
Jim Molina, Director of Music, Pianist and Organist
Dave Benziger, Guitarist
Meg McGarry, Carina Kanzler, Lisa Griffith, Kevin Loeper, and Al Thurkow, Vocalists

Chancel Choir
Mary Swanson Meg McGarry
Lorelyn Koehler Lisa Griffith
Carina Kanzler Jim Mowers
Dorothy Hamby Kevin Loeper
Sue Forsyth Al Thurkow
First Church Announcements and Upcoming Events

**Poinsettias**
A big thank you to all who purchased poinsettias. They have beautified our altar on this Christmas Eve and will make a beautiful addition in your home or as a gift. Please don’t forget to take your poinsettia with you at the end of our service this evening. Your $16.00 donation can me mailed to the church or dropped in the offering plate labeled for what it is for. Thank you, The Green Team

**Our Christmas Celebration Continues**
On the second day of Christmas, Sunday, December 26, we will be carrying out a beautiful service at our usual time of 10:00 a.m. We hope you will come and participate in the festivities. There will be Sunday School for children and an uplifting message and music.

**Our Organic Seedlings Store is Open for Business!**
Are you feeling a little low now that the holidays are drawing to an end? There’s nothing better to raise one’s spirits than to start dreaming of all the potential your summer garden may hold. We’re taking orders for our Organic Seedlings sale right now. Our grower moved the deadline for getting preorders in up from the end of March to the end of February this year. Given that, we’re kicking off the sale early to give everyone the chance to still have plenty of time to think about what they want in their 2022 garden. To place your order, go to https://elmhurstucc.org/store/ or pick up a hardcopy order form in the Tree of Life Foyer. Plants will be available for pick up at our Green Garden Fair on Saturday, May 7, 2022 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

**Give with Tithe.ly** from anywhere at any time. Download the Tithe.ly giving app to get started. Look for First Congregational United Church of Christ, Elmhurst, IL. Your gift is safe and secure and goes directly to our church. More information is available online at https://get.tithe.ly.

**Our Contact Information**
First Congregational Church of Elmhurst UCC
235 South Kenilworth, Elmhurst, Illinois 60126

630.832.2580      elmhurstucc@sbcglobal.net
www.elmhurstucc.org   facebook.com/FirstCongregationalUCCofElmhurst

Worship Services at 10:00 a.m. every Sunday.