

**First Congregational  
United Church of Christ  
River Falls, Wisconsin**

**Christmas Eve Worship Service  
4:00 pm**



***'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth  
peace among those whom he favors!'***

***Luke 2:14***

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN

December 24, 2024

*Christmas Eve*

4:00 pm

**Gathering**

**PRELUDE**

**WELCOME**

**RINGING OF THE BELL**

**LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH**

Tonight we re-light the Advent candles to remember the light that has come into the world. *(The leader lights each candle in order.)* The light of hope...the light of peace...the light of joy...the light of love.

God is with us! **Christ is come! Because of his presence, we are blessed. As we now light the Christ candle, let us each be thankful for that night long ago when the angels sang, when the shepherds worshipped, when the cattle lowed, when the Savior was born.** *(Leader lights the Christ candle.)*

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

L: On a night long ago, when the stars shone brightly in the sky,

**P: Jesus Christ was born.**

L: Underneath the light of one especially bright star,

**P: Jesus Christ was born.**

L: In a plain and simple manger,

**P: Jesus Christ was born.**

L: With animals gathered all around,

**P: Jesus Christ was born.**

L: Wrapped in a mother's embrace and a father's care,

**P: Jesus Christ was born.**

L: So that we might know God better,

**P: Jesus Christ was born.**

**All: Come let us worship for Christ is born among us!**

**\*HYMN**

***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, 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.***

### **Comfort in Despair**

*When God's people lived in exile in Babylon, they longed for home, for a better future, and for God to make all things new. In the midst of their despair, the prophet Isaiah spoke words of comfort.*

**FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 9:2, 6-7**

**Larissa Lueck**

#### **O Come, O Come, Emmanuel**

***O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,  
that mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear.***

***Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!***

***O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here;  
disperse the gloomy clouds of night and death's deep shadows put to flight.***

***Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!***

### **A Great Expectation**

*When God's people were in distress, Micah delivered a promise from God: a new leader will be born in Bethlehem who will bring peace to all people.*

**SECOND LESSON: Micah 5:2-5a**

**Carol Merriman**

#### **O Little Town of Bethlehem**

***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.***

***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 Emmanuel!***

### **Anticipation of a New Birth**

*Gabriel, God's messenger, announced that the promised leader would be born to Mary, who was engaged to Joseph, a descendant of King David. Mary answered with a powerful statement of hope and trust.*

**THIRD LESSON: Luke 1:26-35, 38**

**Casey and Murphy Beatty**

**Jesus the Christ is Born**

*Against the backdrop of political leaders and taxes, Jesus is born in a stable in Bethlehem, the City of David.*

**FOURTH LESSON: Luke 2:1-7**

**Max Hudnall**

**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 cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,  
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.  
I love You, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky,  
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.*

**The Word Becomes Flesh**

*The shepherds are led to the manger.*

**FIFTH LESSON: Luke 2:8-20**

**Rhett and Stella Theisen**

**The First Noel**

*The first Noel, 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.  
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, 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.  
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, Born is the King of Israel.*

**A PRAYER FOR CHRISTMAS & THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**...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 debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.**

**THE OFFERING**

***Variations on O Christmas Tree***

**Calpernia Bastien**

## \*PRESENTATION OF GIFTS

*\*Hymn – O Come, All Ye Faithful (verse 4)*

*Yea, Lord we greet thee, born this happy morning,*

*Jesus, to thee be all glory given;*

*Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing;*

*O come, let us adore him, O come let us adore him,*

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

## \*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Wondrous God, take us into your story tonight. Let us be filled with wonder like the shepherds, be as loving as Mary and Joseph, and sing with joy like the angels. Take us to Bethlehem and fill us with peace and surprise us with joy. Then, let us take your gospel of love, peace, hope and joy into the world. Bless us and the gifts we offer this night that may be signs of your work in our world. Amen.

## COMMUNION

All Christians are welcome at the Lord's table. The bread is gluten-free. The cup is alcohol-free. Those choosing not to commune may receive a blessing from the servers.

### *Invitation to the Supper*

L: In Christ, the hope of the prophets, the songs of the angels, the yearnings of all people for peace, come true. For in the Christ Child, the son of Mary, we come close to God, and God comes even closer to us.

### *The Great Thanksgiving*

L: The Lord be with you.

P: **And also with you.**

L: Lift up your hearts.

P: **We lift them up to the Lord.**

L: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

P: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

L: We offer you praise... so we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

### *Angels We Have Heard on High*

*Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,*

*And the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains.*

*Glo----ri-a in ex-cel-sis De-o,*

*Glo----ri-a in ex-cel-sis De-o.*

### ***The Words of Institution***

L: Therefore with all your witnesses in heaven and on earth, we rejoice in this holy meal as we remember the mystery of faith:

All: **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

### ***Prayer of Consecration***

#### ***Distribution of the Elements***

*Hymns during the distribution of the elements:*

#### **Hark! The Herald Angels Sing**

*Verses 1, 2 and 3*

**Blue #185**

***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 th' 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 us 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 we no more may die,  
Born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.***

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

#### **What Child Is This, Who, Laid to Rest**

**Blue #184**

***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?***

**Refrain: *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?***

***Good Christian, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading. Refrain***

***So bring him incense, gold and myrrh, come peasant, king to own him;  
The King of kings salvation brings, let loving hearts enthrone him. Refrain***

**Angels, from the Realms of Glory**

**Blue #189**

***Angels, from the realms of glory, wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
you who sang creation's story, now proclaim Messiah's birth:  
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn King.***

***Shepherds, in the fields abiding, watching o'er your flocks by night,  
God with us is now residing, yonder shines the infant light:  
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn King.***

***Sages, leave your contemplations brighter visions beam afar;  
Seek the great desire of nations, you have seen the natal star:  
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn King.***

***Saints before the altar bending, watching long in hope and fear,  
suddenly the Lord, descending, here among us shall appear:  
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn King.***

**In the Lord**

***In the Lord I'll be ever thankful, in the Lord I will rejoice! Look to God, do not be  
afraid; lift up your voices, the Lord is near; lift up your voices, the Lord is near.***

***Post-Communion Prayer***

**We give you thanks, most Gracious God, that you have given us your love in this holy  
gospel feast and have refreshed us by your Holy Spirit. Now strengthen us in joyful  
service to all the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**\*HYMN**

**Joy to the World**

**Blue #179**

***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.***

***Joy to the earth! The Savior reigns: Let all their songs employ;  
While field and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.***

***He rules the world with truth and grace, 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.***

Let us pray. The songs of joy ring out: He has come! Jesus is born! Long ago, Jesus came into our world, bringing together heaven and earth that we might know God and live in God's way. In faith let him be born in us anew. On this joyous night let us rejoice and sing:

**\*LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES**

**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.***

***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.***

**\*DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING**

May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the faith of Joseph, the joy of angels, the eagerness of shepherds, the determination of the Magi and the peace of the Christ child. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord your God. **Amen.**

**(Please extinguish your candles before you leave)**

**POSTLUDE**



**Assisting in tonight's worship service are:**

**Organist:** Marsha Pearson  
**Pastor:** Rev. Chris Myers  
**Special Music:** Calpernia Bastien

**December 24.....** Christmas Eve Services of Lessons and Carols  
4:00 pm ..... Family Service with Communion  
10:00 pm ..... Family Service with Choir and Communion

**December 29.....** 10:00 am ..... Worship Service  
..... No Sunday Morning Text Study  
..... No Sunday School  
11:00 am ..... Coffee Fellowship

**January 5.....** Epiphany Sunday  
10:00 am ..... Worship Service  
9:00 am ..... Sunday Morning Text Study  
10:30 am ..... Sunday School  
11:00 am ..... Coffee Fellowship

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**Treasurer's Report**

	<u>Dec 15, 2024</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
Budget Income	\$ 7,471	\$ 539,326
Budget Requirements	\$ 10,463	\$ 523,150



**Offering QR Code**

1. On your mobile device, open your Camera app or QR Code app
  2. Point your camera at the QR Code
  3. Click the tab 'Give Online'
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## DEDICATION OF POINSETTIAS

Susan, George, Murphy and Casey Beatty	In memory of George Beatty and Dan Filkins
Fred and Yvonne Benson	In memory of Neil and Phyllis Taylor In honor of Chuck and Ruth Anne White
Tim and Rene Bylander	In honor of Matthew and Sierra
Dyan Carrison	In memory of Dahn and Roseann Carrison
Cindy Gandrud	In memory of Liz Gandrud and Lorraine Scott
Gustafson Family	In memory of Bob Gustafson In honor of Ann Gustafson
Suzanne Hagen	In memory of Margaret and Norris Johnson
Stuart Henning	In memory of Judie Henning
Jeff and Deb Hoffman	In memory of our fathers, Donald Neu and Charles Hoffman
Arlene Johnson	In memory of Bill Johnson
Skip Koosmann	In memory of Susan Koosmann In honor of Eva Branson, Anna Koosmann
Andy and Christina Krueger	In memory of Dr. William Krueger
Tanya Larsen	In memory of Gloria Johnson, Kara Andersen In honor of Sidney Johnson
Tim and Linnaea Lawrence	In memory of Betty and Ron Lawrence, Audrey Johnson, and Lori Lei Eoriatti
Barbara Mahoney	In memory of Terry and Mark Mahoney

Chris and Stacy Myers	In memory of Vernon and Hattie Myers and William and Elizabeth Sortor
Scott and Ann Nelson	In memory of our parents, Janie and Jack Swanson and Sylvia and Orv Nelson
Marsha Pearson	In memory of Marshall and Vonita Ward, Bob and Sadie Pearson, Patti Haigh, Maynard Pearson
David Reilly	In memory of Ruth Reilly
Jean Smith	In memory of Marlyn and Bernice Mohr and Lois Smith
Stephens Family	In memory of Logan and Evan Tjader
Lillian Tan	In memory of James Tandias, MD and Lily Tan Wong
Jane Truesdill	In memory of Ron Truesdill
Randy and Diane Welsh	In memory of our parents
Charles and Mary Wolfe	In memory of Wayne and Marian Wolfe

Thank you to all who donated poinsettias. Please take them home any time after the 10:00 pm Christmas Eve service. Any not taken by Wednesday will be donated.

A Merry Christmas and peaceful New Year to you all!

Thank you to our church children for sharing their Christmas Program last Sunday with the community.

