



# Centenary

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

**December 24, 2023 ~ 8:30 p.m.**

**Christmas Eve**

*As the Prelude begins, you are invited to enter a time of prayer and meditation as we prepare to worship God together.*

**Prelude**

*Away in a Manger*  
*In the Bleak Midwinter*  
Todd Minnich, soloist  
*The Angel Gabriel*

Charles Ore  
Eric Thiman

**Choral Introit**

*Once in Royal David's City*  
Kate Hundley, soloist

**Call to Worship**

Leader: Christ is born, give him glory!

**People: Christ has come down from heaven; receive him!**  
**Christ is now on earth; exalt him!**

Leader: O earth, sing to the Lord!

**People: O you nations, praise him in joy,**  
**for he has been glorified!**

**Hymn No. 246**

*Joy to the World*

ANTIOCH

1. 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.
2. Joy to the world, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ;  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
3. No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground;  
he comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found,  
far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.
4. 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.

**Greetings and Concerns of the Parish**

**Bidding Prayer**

**Blessing**

**Lighting of the Christ Candle**

Leader: We light this candle as a symbol of the Prince of Peace.  
May the visitation of your Holy Spirit, O God,  
make us ready for the coming of Jesus, our hope and joy.

**All: O come, O come, Emmanuel.**

**First Lesson**

Genesis 3:8-15, 17-19

*God announces in the Garden of Eden Adam and Eve's punishment for their rebellion  
and that the seed of woman shall bruise the serpent's head.*

**Choral Anthem***Jesus Christ the Apple Tree*

Elizabeth Poston

The tree of life my soul hath seen, laden with fruit and always green;  
the trees of nature fruitless be, compared with Christ the apple tree.

His beauty doth all things excel, by faith I know but ne'er can tell  
the glory which I now can see, in Jesus Christ the apple tree.

For happiness I long have sought, and pleasure dearly I have bought;  
I missed of all but now I see 'Tis found in Christ the apple tree.

I'm weary with my former toil - here I will sit and rest awhile,  
under the shadow I will be, Of Jesus Christ the apple tree.

This fruit doth make my soul to thrive, it keeps my dying faith alive;  
which makes my soul in haste to be with Jesus Christ the apple tree.

**Second Lesson**

Genesis 22:15-18

*God promises to Abraham that by his descendants all the nations of the earth shall obtain blessing.*

**Carol No. 220***Angels from the Realms of Glory*

REGENT SQUARE

1. Angels from the realms of glory, wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
ye who sang creation's story now proclaim Messiah's birth:

**Refrain:**

- Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn king.
2. Shepherds, in the field abiding, watching o'er your flocks by night,  
God with us is now residing; yonder shines the infant light: **Refrain**
  3. Sages, leave your contemplations, brighter visions beam afar;  
seek the great Desire of nations; ye have seen his natal star: **Refrain**
  4. Saints, before the altar bending, watching long in hope and fear;  
suddenly the Lord, descending, in his temple shall appear: **Refrain**

**Third Lesson**

*The prophet announces the birth of a king to a people in darkness.*

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

**Carol No. 218***It Came upon the Midnight Clear*

CAROL

1. It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,  
from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold:  
"Peace on the earth, good will to men, from heaven's all-gracious King."  
The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.
2. Still through the cloven skies they come with peaceful wings unfurled,  
and still their heavenly music floats o'er all the weary world;  
above its sad and lowly plains, they bend on hovering wing,  
and ever o'er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.
3. And ye, beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low,  
who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow,  
look now! for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing.  
O rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing!
4. For lo! the days are hastening on, by prophet seen of old,  
when with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold  
when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,  
and the whole world send back the song which now the angels sing.

**Fourth Lesson**

Isaiah 11:1-4a

*The king is coming and will usher in a reign of justice for the poor and peace for all of God's creation.*

1. 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.
2. For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above,  
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.  
O morning stars together, proclaim the holy birth,  
and praises sing to God the King, and peace to all on earth!
3. How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given;  
so God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven.  
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,  
where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.
4. 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!

**Fifth Lesson**

Luke 1:26-35, 38

*The angel Gabriel announces to the virgin Mary that she will give birth to God's promised Son  
whose kingdom shall never end.*

**Choral Anthem**

*Angelus ad Virginem*  
Emily Downey, soloist

arr. David Willcocks

Gabriel to Mary came,  
And entered at her dwelling,  
With his salutation glad,  
Her maiden fears dispelling  
'All hail, thou queen of virgins bright!  
God, Lord of earth and heaven's height,  
Thy very Son Shall soon be born in pureness,  
The Saviour of mankind.  
Thou art the gate of heaven bright,  
The sinners' healer kind.'

'How could I a mother be  
That am to man a stranger?  
How should I my strong resolve,  
My solemn vows endanger?'  
'Pow'r from the Holy Ghost on high  
Shall bring to pass this mystery.  
Then have no fear: Be of good cheer, Believing  
That still thy chastity  
In God's Almighty keeping  
Shall all unsullied be.'

Then to him the maid replied,  
With noble mien supernal  
'Lo! the humble handmaid I  
Of God the Lord eternal  
With thee, bright messenger of heav'n,  
By whom this wondrous news is giv'n,  
I well agree And long to see Fulfilled  
Thy gracious prophecy.  
As God my Lord doth will it,  
So be it unto me!'

Hail! thou Mother of the Lord,  
Who bring'st of gifts the rarest,

Peace to angels and to men  
When Christ the Lord thou barest!  
Do thou, we pray, entreat thy Son  
For us our long'd redemption  
Himself to win And from our sin Release us;  
His succor for to give  
That, when we hence are taken  
We too in heav'n may live.

**Sixth Lesson**                      *Against a backdrop of emperors and taxes, Jesus is born.*                      Luke 2:1-7

**Carol**                                      *God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen*                      GOD REST YOU MERRY

1. God rest you merry, gentlemen, let nothing you dismay,  
remember Christ our Savior was born on Christmas Day  
to save us all from Satan's pow'r when we were gone astray.

**Refrain:**

- O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy;  
O tidings of comfort and joy.
2. From God our heav'nly Father a blessed angel came  
and unto certain shepherds brought tidings of the same;  
how that in Bethlehem was born the Son of God by name. **Refrain**
3. The shepherds at those tidings rejoiced much in mind,  
and left their flocks afeeding, in tempest, storm, and wind,  
and went to Bethlehem straightway, this blessed Babe to find. **Refrain.**
4. Now to the Lord sing praises all you within this place,  
and with true love and brotherhood each other new embrace;  
this holy tide of Christmas all other doth deface. **Refrain**

**Seventh Lesson**                                      *The shepherds go to see the Savior of the world, lying in a manger.*                      Luke 2:8-16

**Carol No. 229**                                      *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly*                      W ZLOBIE LEZY

1. Infant holy, infant lowly, for his bed a cattle stall;  
oxen lowing, little knowing, Christ the babe is Lord of all.  
Swift are winging angels singing, noels ringing, tidings bringing:  
Christ the babe is Lord of all.
2. Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping vigil till the morning new  
saw the glory, heard the story, tidings of a gospel true.  
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow, praises voicing, greet the morrow:  
Christ the babe was born for you.

**Eighth Lesson**                                      *The wise men follow a star to find the child Jesus, the King of the Jews.*                      Matthew 2:1-11

**Carol No. 254**                                      *We Three Kings*                      KINGS OF ORIENT

1. We three kings of Orient are; bearing gifts we traverse afar,  
field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star.
- Refrain:**
- O star of wonder, star of light, star with royal beauty bright,  
westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.
  2. Born a King on Bethlehem's plain, gold I bring to crown him again,  
King forever, ceasing never, over us all to reign. **Refrain**

3. Frankincense to offer have I; incense owns a Deity nigh;  
prayer and praising, voices raising, worshiping God on high. **Refrain**
4. Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume breathes a life of gathering gloom;  
sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying, sealed in the stone-cold tomb. **Refrain**
5. Glorious now behold him arise; King and God and sacrifice:  
Alleluia, Alleluia, sounds through the earth and skies. **Refrain**

### Ninth Lesson

John 1:1-14

*John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.*

### Carol No. 234

*O Come, All Ye Faithful ~ vs. 1, 2, 3, & 6*

ADESTE FIDELES

1. 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;
- Refrain:**  
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.
2. True God of true God, Light from Light Eternal,  
lo, he shuns not the Virgin's womb;  
Son of the Father, begotten, not created; **Refrain**
  3. Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation;  
O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God, all glory in the highest; **Refrain**
  6. Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,  
Jesus, to thee be all glory given.  
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing: **Refrain**

### Invitation

Christ our Lord invites to his table all who love him,  
who earnestly repent of their sin  
and seek to live in peace with one another.  
Therefore, let us confess our sin before God and one another.

### Confession and Pardon (in unison)

**Merciful God,**  
**we confess that we have not loved you with**  
**our whole heart.**  
**We have failed to be an obedient church.**  
**We have not done your will,**  
**we have broken your law,**  
**we have rebelled against your love,**  
**we have not loved our neighbors,**  
**and we have not heard the cry of the needy.**  
**Forgive us, we pray.**  
**Free us for joyful obedience,**  
**through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.**

*All pray in silence.*

Leader: Hear the good news:  
Christ died for us while we were yet sinners;  
that proves God's love towards us.  
In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

**People: In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.**

**All: Glory to God. Amen.**

### Passing of the Peace

### Offertory Prayer

### Offertory Anthem

*Gesu Bambino*  
Taylor Jarrell, soloist

Pietro Yon

### Great Thanksgiving

Leader: The Lord be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Leader: Lift up your hearts,

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

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

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

*The pastor gives thanks appropriate to the occasion, remembering God's acts of salvation, and concludes:*

And so,

with your people on earth  
and with all the company of heaven

we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, god of power and might,  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

*(The congregation may be seated.)*

*The pastor continues the thanksgiving. The institution of the Lord's Supper is recalled.*

*The pastor concludes:*

And so,

in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,

we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving

as a holy and living sacrifice,

in union with Christ's offering for us,

as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

**Christ had died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.**

*The pastor invokes the present work of the Holy Spirit and then praises the Trinity, concluding:*

All honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and for ever.

**Amen.**

### Lord's Prayer No. 895

**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 trespasses,**

**as we forgive those that trespass 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.**

## Giving and Receiving of Communion

### Communion Music Hymn No. 239

*Night of Silence  
Silent Night*

David Kantor  
STILLE NACHT

1. 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.
2. 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!
3. 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.
4. 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!

### Hymn No. 240

*Hark! the Herald Angels Sing*

MENDELSSOHN

1. Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born 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 new born King!"
2. Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord;  
late in time behold him come, offspring of a virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail th' incarnate Deity,  
pleased with us in flesh to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.  
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King!"
3. 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 new born King!"

## Benediction

### Postlude

*Postlude on Hark! the Herald Angel Sing*

David Willcocks

*Thank you to all the volunteers who helped us this evening and throughout the week  
to make this worship possible.*

## Welcome!

Centenary United Methodist Church is a Reconciling Congregation, extending hospitality and encouraging full participation of all, regardless of age, race, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, education, economic background, and physical or mental ability.

We are glad that you have joined us today! If you are a new guest, we hope that you experience a warm welcome! Please return soon and consider us for your church home. If you are interested in church membership, please speak with a pastor.

# *Poinsettias 2023*

## ***In Loving Memory of:***

John Ochs by Rochelle & John Adams  
Stuart & Ellis Mylum by Dennis Allen  
Alma Garrett & Betty Heifert by Dennis Allen  
Merle Brown by Florence Clay Bishop  
Our parents by Bob Blinn & Kathy Talley  
John Dillehay by Bette Dillehay  
Michael Dobbs by Mary & Les Dobbs  
Our fathers, Edwin Golod and H. B. Rhame, Jr. by Mitzi Golod  
My brother, H. B. Rhame III, "Tripp" by Mitzi Golod  
Our parents by Vic & Nancy Grand  
My parents, John & Dorothy McNaught by Gwynn M. Henderson  
John & Janice Keller and Robert Hundley by Nancy & Bob Hundley  
Herman Daly by the Junker family  
Harry W. Lee by Nancy Lee  
Our parents by Troy & Jan Nelson  
William G. Ray on his December birthday by Suzanne Ray  
Al Thrower by Mary Sue Sanderlin  
My parents, Jim & Jennie Nobles by Charlene Seitz  
Nancy Penman by Wendy Smith  
Melva "Bette" Fitting by Wendy Smith  
Our parents, Percy & Nonie Lee and Randall & Emma Speidel  
by Penny & Joe Speidel  
My husband, Richard by Sharon Steele  
Our parents and brother – John & Earlene Pippin, Oscar & Kathryn  
Thomsen and John T. Pippin by Glenn & Peggy Thomsen  
Al Thrower by Meredith, John, and George

## ***In Honor of:***

Matt & Amy Bates by Florence Clay Bishop  
The Administrative Council by Florence Clay Bishop  
Carina, T. J. and Norah Brackin by Florence Clay Bishop  
Our dear friends at Centenary United Methodist Church  
by Rex & Mary Anne Dazey  
Stephanie Petty and family by Mary & Les Dobbs  
Our mothers, Monique Golod and Libby Rhame by Mitzi Golod  
Centenary's church family by Nancy Hill  
Leah Hundley by Nancy & Bob Hundley  
My great-grandsons, Ozzy, Zeke, and Dax by Leah Hundley  
Marcia Daly by the Junker family  
The young people of Change the World RVA by Natalie May  
Our grandchildren by Troy & Jan Nelson  
My family by Mary Sue Sanderlin  
My grandchildren, Sloane, Desmond, Elodie, Emmie, and Olivia  
by Sharon Steele  
Mary Sue Sanderlin by John, George, Teddy, Henry, and Reid  
Our sons, Eric & Kyle by Glenn & Peggy Thomsen  
Our families back in Colorado by Ben & Carri Toro