



Evangelical
United Church of Christ
December 24, 2007
Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship
11:00pm

Travail, June M. Schulte
Women's Uncommon Prayers

Out of the depth and quiet
of this chill, stark night,
a gnawing ache, a yearning
deepens, rising
like a threatening wave.

The young woman trembles.
Every inmost part of her is
shaken, all comfort broken.
Her hand gropes for something firm to
grasp,
but all that was certain has become
obscure, all encompassing,
racked with pain.
Scarcely able to catch her breath,
she feels each wave larger, more
frightening than the last.
And the great wave breaks over her,
she is broken,
momentarily forgetting what she ac-
cepted,
what love she bears,
yet choosing to believe when all seems
lost.

Suddenly and completely
she, still bathed in sweat,
enfolds love in her arms,
knows joy as one victorious,
sees clearly as one who has been
stretched and changed,
that peace is always
born of travail.

OUR GATHERING

PRELUDE **ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH** Trad. French Carol
Instrumental Ensemble arr. Curnow

INVOCATION The Light Has Come, Melanie Frew
Shine On, Star of Bethlehem

One: Lord of the dawn,
where your people live in darkness

Many: **let your light sweep in.**

One: Lord of the noon,
where your people are dazzled by evil

Many: **let your light sweep in.**

One: Lord of the evening,
where your people fear the night,

Many: **let your light sweep in.**

One: Lord of the night,
where your people pray for morning

Many: **let your light sweep in.**

One: Lord of our lives,
as we grow into a new year of hopes and possibilities

Many: **let your light sweep in.**

HYMN O Come, O Come, Emmanuel arr. Rutter

**O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.**

Refrain

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

**O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free
Thine own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell Thy people save,
And give them victory over the grave.**

Refrain

(Choir)
O come, Thou Day-spring, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Refrain

O come, O come, great Lord of might,
Who to Thy tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient times once gave the law
In cloud and majesty and awe.
Refrain

O come, Thou Key of David, come,
And open wide our heavenly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.
Refrain

CALL TO WORSHIP

Travail, June M. Schulte
Women's Uncommon Prayers

HYMN

Angels from the Realms of Glory arr. Rutter

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.

Shepherds, in the field abiding,
Watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing;
Yonder shines the infant light:
Refrain

Though an Infant now we view him,
He shall fill his Father's throne,
Gather all the nations to him;
Every knee shall then bow down:
Refrain

READING

Matthew 1:18-23

CAROL

Angels We have Heard on High arr. Rutter
Chancel Choir

A word about our Christmas hymns...

While we treasure the language and imagery of the New Century Hymnal, we know that the words we learned as children are precious to us as well. We invite you to sing the Christmas hymns with whatever words are most familiar and beloved for you.

Matthew 1:18-23

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel', which means, 'God is with us.' When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

First Coming
Madelaine L'Engle

God did not wait
till the world was ready,
till...nations were at peace.
God came when the Heavens
were unsteady
and prisoners cried out for release.

God did not wait for the perfect time.
God came when the need
was deep and great.
God dined with sinners
in all their grime,
turned water into wine.
God did not wait
till hearts were pure. In joy God came
to a tarnished world of sin and doubt.

To a world like ours,
of anguished shame,
God came and God's Light
would not go out.

God came to a world
which did not mesh;
to heal its tangles, shield its scorn.
In the mystery of the Word made Flesh,
the maker of the stars was born.

We cannot wait till the world is sane
to raise our songs with joyful voice,
or to share our grief, to touch our pain,
God came with Love:
Rejoice! Rejoice!

OUR STORY

READING Luke 2:1-7

CAROL Ding Dong! Merrily on High arr. Rutter
Chancel Choir

READING First Coming
Madelaine L'Engle

HYMN The First Nowell arr. Rutter

**The first Noel the angel did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay tending their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.**

Refrain:

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

**They lookèd 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.**

Refrain:

**Then entered in the Wise Men three,
Full reverently upon the knee,
And offered there, in His presence,
Their gold and myrrh and frankincense.**

Refrain:

**Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heavenly Lord;
That hath made earth and heaven above
And shows to us Incarnate love.**

Refrain:

READING On the Mystery of the Incarnation
Denise Levertov

CAROL Away in a Manger arr. Rutter
Chancel Choir

READING Luke 2:8-16

**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 fields 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, and wonders of his love.**

COMMUNION PRAYER

Gregory C. Jenks
Faith Futures

We praise you, Emmanuel, God among us
as we celebrate Jesus' birth, Mary's son, child of promise,
sign of your constant presence.

Held safe in his mother's arms,
one of the weak in a land taken by those who were strong.
Welcomed by fabled visitors from afar, and awe-struck locals.
Fleeing danger at home, and finding refuge in a strange land.

One of the poor, he taught us to share what we have with others.
With nowhere to call home,
he taught us to welcome others at our table.

Without ears to hear or eyes to see,
those with much to lose tried to destroy him.
But your constant love broke death's hold on him
and he became our way into your divine life.

And so with all who love and serve you,
in the way that Jesus walked,
we join our voices in the angels' song:
(sung)

**Gloria in excelsis deo.
Gloria in excelsis deo.**

SHARING THE BREAD AND THE CUP

*The congregation is invited to come forward
taking a piece of bread and dipping it in the cup,
placing an offering in the plates beside the table,
and returning to the pews by the side aisles.*

It's when we face for a moment
the worst our kind can do,
and shudder to know
the taint in our own selves,
that awe
cracks the mind's shell and enters
the heart:
not to a flower, not to a dolphin,
to no innocent form
but to this creature vainly sure
it and no other is god-like, God
(out of compassion for our ugly
failure to evolve) entrusts,
as guest, as brother,
the Word.

Luke 2:8-16

In that region there were shepherds
living in the fields, keeping watch
over their flock by night. Then an an-
gel of the Lord stood before them,
and the glory of the Lord shone
around them, and they were terri-
fied. But the angel said to them, 'Do
not be afraid; for see—I am bringing
you good news of great joy for all the
people: ¹¹to you is born this day in
the city of David a Saviour, who is the
Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign
for you: you will find a child wrapped
in bands of cloth and lying in a man-
ger.' And suddenly there was with
the angel a multitude of the heav-
enly host, praising God and saying,
'Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those
whom he favours!'

Thanks to our Musicians:

Eve Panhorst, violin
Katie Stookesberry, violin
Ruth Panhorst, viola
Loretta Haggard, flute
Amy Engelsdorfer, flute
Jessica Short, oboe
John Panhorst, clarinet
Jeff Panhorst, bassoon
Casey Geisz, trumpet
...and the Chancel Choir

A Nativity
Derek Webster

Now
In stillness
His sun burns off stars,
Smears a rainbow,
Wears the veil of dark.

Now
In quietness
Each creature imprisons
lost dreams,
Hides from the years,
Remembers a bidding.

Now
A hush
An awesome night
beyond night.
Visible form kisses infinite light:
Meaning and splendor
cry in straw.

COMMUNION CAROL

"O Come, All You Faithful" Adeste Fideles

**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.**

**Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation;
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, In the highest;**

Refrain:

**Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, Born this happy morning;
Jesus, to Thee be glory given;
Word of the Father, Now in flesh appearing.**

Refrain:

"O Little Town of Bethlehem" St. Louis

**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.**

**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 and voices ring,
and peace to all on earth!**

SHARING OUR STORY

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (*lighting candles*)

*The light of the Christ candle will be passed from the center aisle.
The lighted candles should always be held upright
while the unlit candles are dipped to the flame.*

HYMN

Silent Night

Stille Nacht

*(The congregation will sing the first verse in German
followed by three verses in English)*

**Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht!
Alles schläft, einsam wacht
Nur das traute, hochheilige Paar.
Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar,
Schlaf' in himmlischer Ruh',
Schlaf' in himmlischer Ruh'!**

**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.**

BLESSING

John 1:1-4

HYMN

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

arr. Rutter

**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!"**

Refrain

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

**Christ, by highest Heav'n 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.**

Refrain

**Hail the heav'nly Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
Ris'n with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by,
Born that man no more may die.
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.**

Refrain

John 1:1-4

In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God, and
the Word was God.

He was in the beginning with
God. All things came into being
through him, and without him not
one thing came into being.

What has come into being in him
was life, and the life was the light
of all people.

The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness did not over-
come it.

Music Note:

The music for the carols this eve-
ning comes from

the John Rutter Carols

O Holy Night

which was edited and arranged
by John Rutter in 1981. Copyright
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**Evangelical United Church of Christ
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**Join us for worship each Sunday
morning
8:30am and 11:00am**

December 30th is Pajama Sunday!