

# 2023 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Caldwell United Methodist Church, 8 Academy Road, Caldwell, N. J. 07006

Rev. Kil Jae Park, Pastor

Jackie Han, Music Minister

## **OPENING**

PRELUDE "It Came Upon A Midnight Clear" Andrew Kim

### **CALL TO WORSHIP**

L: Rejoice, for God is with us — Emmanuel.

P: In the darkness of our world shines God's holy light.

L: Now there is reason to hope, to love, to laugh, and to live.

P: God is truly with us. We are not alone.

All: Thanks be to God!

# PRAYER (Together)

Gracious God, with joy and thanksgiving we gather as your people.

We have come to hear again the timeless story of Christ's birth.

Open our hearts as we hear the story anew. Help us to be guided by the Light of Jesus Christ, that we may truly feel the power of your love and bring that love, with joy, to all we meet. This we pray in the name of Jesus the Christ born to us. Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE Insert the D'Emilio Family

OPENING HYMN "O Come, All Ye Faithful" UMH # 234

SCRIPTURE Luke 2:1-20 Brandon Narine

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. <sup>2</sup> (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) <sup>3</sup> And everyone went to their own town to register. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, <sup>7</sup> 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. **8** And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. **9** An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. **10** But the

angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." 13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 14 "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." 15 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." 16 So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. 17 When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, 18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. 19 But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. 20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

The word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.** 

PRAISE "Joy to the World/Hallelujah" CUMC Choir

MESSAGE "The Wonder of Christmas" Pastor Park

## **CHRISTMAS OFFERINGS**

**Ushers** 

The Three Wisemen worshipped the new born King by offering their gifts. Let us also worship through the offering of our gifts.

OFFERTORY PRAISE

"A Child is Born"

Jill Land

**OFFERTORY PRAYER** 

**Pastor Karen Gazzillo** 

### LITURGY OF LIGHT

# READING 1: John 1:1-8

**Pastor Karen Gazzillo** 

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. 6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. 8 He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

**PRAISE** 

"Silent Night, Holy Night"

**CUMC Bell Choir** 

### **READING 2: John 1:9-14**

# Stephanie De Bruyne, Reader

9 The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God — 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. 14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

**SPECIAL MUSIC** 

"O, Holy Night"

Andrew Kim

READING 3 Erin Redd

Light is a central image for God's presence throughout Scripture. "A pillar of fire...to give them light." "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light." And now "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." Jesus will declare with his own lips, "I am the light of the world," and we celebrate tonight his birth — the one who is the light. We know that he comes precisely because the people are walking in darkness. We don't need a flashlight at noon on a sunny day, but once the sun goes down, we need streetlights, headlights and any other light we can muster. In Jesus, everyone and everything is illuminated. The "light of all mankind," comes to dispel all our darkness, and he shines everywhere because there is darkness everywhere and in each one of us. Jesus is the one who finally reveals the world and all its inhabitants for what they truly are. And with deep love and compassion, Jesus Christ, the light of the world, sees our every gift and every flaw, and chooses to wrap us all in his warm light. This is the very foundation of the good news.

#### \* HYMN

# "Silent Night, Holy Night"

ΑII

- 1. Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright round you 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!

(As we sing "Silent Night, Holy Night", lights will be dimmed and candles lit. Please do not extinguish the candles until after Benediction. Dispose the candles in the box in the back on your way out.)

- L: The light from even a single flame can cut through thick darkness.
- P: Christ's flame reminds us that God is with us.
- L: May we live as people strengthened by God's hope.
- P: May we live as people encouraged by God's peace.
- L: May we live as people abiding in God's joy.
- P: May we live as people sharing in God's love.
- \* HYMN "Jov to the World" UMH # 246
  - 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 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 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.

\* BENEDICTION Pastor Park

POSTLUDE "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" Jackie Kim

\*Stand as able

Welcome! We are glad you are able to celebrate the birth of Christ with us this evening. Peace be with you.

We thank Andrew Kim for sharing his musical talent with us tonight.