



FOR THE BEGINNING
— LOVE KNOWS YOUR NAME —

~ Welcome Visitors! ~

Guide to the bulletin: An asterisk (*) indicates an invitation to rise in body and/or spirit. Text printed in **BOLD** indicates everyone says them together. **NCH** is the New Century Hymnal next to your pew chair.

Children: Children are always welcome here. We know youth grow – in the love of God and the love of others – when they have opportunities to worship in community. There are a variety of quiet activities and fidgets the youth (and adults!) can do available by the sanctuary doors. You and/or your children are welcome to get up during the service to select something to do. There is also a [Prayer Ground](#) set up at the front of the sanctuary. There are several quiet activities prepared for children. We know many of us need to wiggle a bit to be comfortable. Kids do too!!! Adults are welcome to sit in this area as well! #ChildofGod. If you want to have your younger children (ages 0-4) taken care of during the service, we have a nursery available.

Gathering

Prelude

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

Donna Robertson

Greeting

*** Call to Worship**

L: In those days, in the beginning,

Joseph and Mary traveled to Bethlehem.

He was to be registered, and she was expecting a child.

The time came for Mary to give birth, so she delivered her child,
wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger.

P: And the angels sang,

**“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth, peace to all whom God favors.”**

L: Let us worship our with-us God.

P: Let us sing songs of praise!

*** Opening Prayer**

**Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace—**

We are leaning forward.

We are craning our necks,

**straining to hear a murmur of the angels' song,
or an echo of a gloria.**

We always long for you,

but on this night,

on this holy Christmas Eve,

we long for you to feel as close as possible.

**So as we prepare to hear this ancient story once again,
we ask that you would awaken something new in us.**

Awaken in us a fire for your Word.

Awaken in us proof of your proximity.

**Awaken in us your love, which is bigger than the sky,
and as close as our very breath.**

We are listening.

We give thanks.

Amen.

* Carol *O Come, All You Faithful* NCH 135 verses 1b, 3 & 4

Candle Lighting | The Christ Candle

Message for All

First Lesson Isaiah 9:2, 6-7 (Read Responsively)
Christ's birth and kingdom are foretold by Isaiah.

L: The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;

P: on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.

L: For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.

And he will be called

P: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

L: Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end.

P: He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom,

L: establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.

P: The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

Carol *Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus* NCH 122

Second Lesson Isaiah 11:1-9
The peace that Christ will bring us is foreshown.

Carol *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming* NCH 127 vss 2 & 3

Third Lesson Luke 1:26-35, 38
The Angel Gabriel salutes the blessed Virgin Mary.

Carol *O Little Town of Bethlehem* NCH 133

Fourth Lesson Luke 2:1-7
Jesus is born.

Carol *Hark the Herald Angels Sing* NCH 144

Fifth Lesson

Luke 2:8-20

The angels announce the good news of great joy.

Carol

Angels We Have Heard on High

NCH 125

Reflection

Pastoral Prayer

Choral Anthem

Love Came Down at Christmas

Sixth Lesson

Matthew 2:1-11

The magi are led by the star to Jesus.

Affirmation of Faith

**We believe that on a night like this one,
a baby was born and placed in a manger.**

**We believe that baby was God's love in the flesh,
who grew up to love the outcast and change the world.**

**We believe that Jesus' love was so big and so personal
that the world will never be the same.**

**So despite the mystery of this holy night,
we believe that a star shone,**

**that the shepherds ran,
that the angels sang,
and that love was born.**

**Yes, we believe it when the prophets say
that unto you,
unto us, a savior is born.**

Glory to God in the highest heaven!

We believe.

Carol

Joy to the World

NCH 132

Seventh Lesson

John 1:1-14

John unfolds the great mystery of the incarnation.

*** Carol**

Silent Night

NCH 134

* **Benediction**

* **Postlude**

As Lately We Watched

Franklin Ritter

Worship Leaders: Jonathan Schroerlucke (Dir. of Music), Jeff Darwin (Pianist), Pastor Peter, and Pastor Kris

Readers: John Rosch and Sonjia Short

Ushers: Jeanne Prueher and Lily Shapiro

Media Room: Jordan Baumgart

Youth Programming Leader: Mo Foster

Memorial UCC uses photographs and video for social media communication with our members and friends. If someone does not wish to be photographed or in a video, ushers will help them find a seat out of camera view.

Memorial UCC's ONE LICENSE for streaming: #A-711042



Hearing Loop and Listening Devices: For those who have hearing aids, Memorial UCC has a t-coil compatible hearing loop. Listening devices are also available for people who are hard of hearing. See an usher if you need assistance.

Bathrooms: There are two bathrooms near the main entrance of the church. A third Gender Neutral and Accessible bathroom is in the hallway by the nursery. If you need assistance finding the restrooms, an usher will gladly help you



Giving Options—Ever-Widening Opportunities: Checks can be mailed directly to the church or dropped off during office hours. Please indicate any special designation in the memo line. You can give securely via PayPal with your credit card, debit card, or direct withdrawals. Giving online through PayPal is fast and secure, and you do not need a PayPal account to make

one-time or recurring donations. Visit memorialucc.org and click the "giving" link in the upper right-hand corner or scan the QR code here. If you are interested in monthly automatic withdrawals, please email Cathy Halpin at halpincjo@gmail.com, and she will get you signed up.

Want to Know More About Us? Co-pastors Kris and Peter would be happy to set up a time to chat further. Feel free to contact either of them at pastorkris@memorialucc.org or pastorpeter@memorialucc.org. You don't need to be a formal member to get involved here. There is a lot of information on our website at www.memorialucc.org. You can also follow us on Facebook (@FitchburgMemorialUCC), Twitter (@MemUCC), or join our Facebook group Memorial UCC: Ever-Widening Circles.
