Candlelight Lessons & Carols
December 24, 2021
8:00 p.m.
Welcome to Rock Spring Congregational
United Church of Christ

Welcome!
Although this is not how we had hoped to be celebrating Christmas Eve, we remain grateful for the many ways this community continues to “come home” to one another. Tonight we will celebrate the Good News of the birth of Jesus, “God-With-Us,” knowing that we remain connected to one another even as we are physically apart.

Near the end of the service, we will sing Silent Night by candlelight. We invite you to have a candle ready to light at that time.

With the hope, peace, joy, and love of the season, we send Christmas blessings to each of you.

- Kathy, Laura, Ashley, Elizabeth, and Ed

Rock Spring is a progressive Christian community – welcoming, compassionate, and joyful. We love and care for one another. We strive to discern God’s still-speaking voice through worship, study, fellowship, and service. We work for peace and social, economic, and ecological justice. We seek a greater understanding of others, and thus ourselves, recognizing that all persons are members of our one human family. Our community prepares and sustains us as we work together to bring about the world that we believe God intends.

Join Us In Virtual Worship On:
- Our website: https://www.rockspringucc.org/worship-livestream/
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/rockspringucc
- Amazon Fire TV (search for “Rock Spring UCC” on the Apps menu)
- Roku (search for “Rock Spring UCC” on the Apps menu)
Order of Worship

*An asterisk (*) indicates an invitation to stand.*

**PRELUDE**

Cambria Van de Vaarst, harp

**WELCOME**

Kathy Dwyer

**CALL TO WORSHIP (UNISON)**

An unmarried teenage girl was invited —

to carry Christ into this world.

An ordinary carpenter was invited —

to be a father to a child unlike any other.

The shepherds were invited —

outcast and isolated, included at the manger.

The Magi were invited —

foreigners and seekers, included at the manger.

And if she was invited, and he was invited, and they were invited —

then we can trust that we too are invited.

This story is for us.

This love is for us.

Family of faith, this is our invitation. Welcome home.

Amen.
**CAROL: 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;

**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, all glory in the Highest; **Refrain**

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born for our salvation,  
Jesus, to thee be all glory given;  
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing; **Refrain**

**THE FIRST LESSON:** Isaiah 9:2-7

**MUSICAL OFFERING** ---------------------------------- G.F. Handel  
*The People that Walked in Darkness* from *The Messiah*  
Eduardo Castro, bass

**THE SECOND LESSON:** Micah 5:2-4

**A POEM FOR CHRISTMAS EVE** ---------------------------------- Laura Martin
**CAROL: 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.

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.

**THE THIRD LESSON:** Luke 1:26-33, 38

**MUSICAL OFFERING**

*Child of Christmas*

Emily Collins
The Choristers

**THE FOURTH LESSON:** Matthew 1:18-25

*CAROL: 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.

*Refrain: Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!*

See within a manger laid, Christ, whom choirs of angels praise; Mary, Joseph, lend your aid, while our hearts in love we raise. *Refrain*

**THE FIFTH LESSON:** Luke 2:1-7
*CAROL: What Child is This

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.

THE SIXTH LESSON: Luke 2:8-14

MUSICAL OFFERING ---------------------------------- arr. H.J. Gauntlett

Once in Royal David’s City
The Sanctuary Choir

THE SEVENTH LESSON: Luke 2:15-20

CAROL: It Came upon the Midnight Clear

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 all, from heaven’s all gracious King” The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.

And you, 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!

EIGHTH LESSON: John 1:1-5, 10-14
*CAROL: *Joy to the World

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 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.

THE PRAYERS FOR CHRISTMAS EVE AND THE LORD’S PRAYER

Holy One*, 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. Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who 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 for ever. Amen.

*May use Creator, Father, Parent, Abba

MUSICAL OFFERING

O Holy Night
Elizabeth Kluegel Niblock
THE LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

In God’s house, there is hope —
For God loves us too much to leave us just as we are.
In God’s house, there is peace —
For all that separates us from God falls away.
In God’s house, there is joy —
Because God created music, and coffee, and dance floors, and laughter that is contagious, and endless rounds of peek-a-boos with babies; and if those things have God’s fingerprints, then God’s house surely exudes joy.
In God’s house, there is love —
Because God is love, from start to finish, and that love exists for us all.
And in the center of our hope,
In the center of our peace,
In the center of our joy,
In the center of our love, is God — who came to this earth to dwell among us.
So tonight we light the Christ candle, for God’s love just could not stay away.
Welcome home. Amen.
**CAROL:** Silent Night, Holy Night

*As the hymn begins, we invite you to light a candle.*

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.

**THE BLESSING**

Ashley Martinage

**SERVICE CREDITS:** The Call to Worship and the Christ Candle liturgy are from A Sanctified Art.
Please Give to The Christmas Fund
The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas “Thank You” checks each December to our lower-income retirees. You can contribute to the Fund online via our website any time in December, via check mailed to the church (5010 Little Falls Rd Arlington, VA 22207) with “Christmas Fund” noted in the memo line, or scan the QR code below.

Join us for Sunday worship ONLINE ONLY on December 26 & January 2 at 10:00 a.m.

View Our Full Calendar of Events and Activities Online Here.
The Congregation,  The Ministers

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Learning  Justice-Seeking  Caring  Faith-Filled  Joyful  Generous  Inclusive

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