



## Christmas Day Sunday Worship Seward United Methodist Church

December 25, 2022

### Gathering Music

### Welcome and Announcements

### Prelude

**Deb Snell**

### Introduction to the Service

**Rev. Mary Kay Totty**

Family of faith, Merry Christmas and welcome to worship here at *Seward United Methodist Church!* Just last night we gathered together to celebrate Christmas Eve. We lit candles. We told the story. We sang along with the angels. Many of you were here with us. And now, just a few hours later, we are back! Christ has been born. God is good, and our joy overflows.

Before we share logistics about today's service, I want to take a moment to acknowledge that some among us may be a little extra tired, or squirmy, or joyful. Some of us may be eager to return home to family, and some of us may be eager to be here with our church family. Know that however you feel today, whatever joy or weariness you bring into this space, God welcomes all of it, and we do too. We're so glad you're here.

Today's service is a little different from our normal flow, since this is such a unique and special day. In today's service we will sing, we will pray, we will listen.

A few things to note to help this service move smoothly: At the very end of the service, I am going to invite you, as you are able, to stand up and form one large circle around the edge of the sanctuary during the benediction. There may be a few moments of chaos while we transition, and that is totally okay. If you prefer to remain seated, we will adjust the circle to include you.

Now, may we all take a deep breath and center ourselves in this place. Christ is born. God has come. We are not alone. Let us celebrate that good news. Let us dwell with God!

Please stand in body or in spirit and join me in a responsive call to worship. With energy and joy, I invite you to repeat each phrase after me. We'll repeat these lines a few times, so please feel free to shout and fill our space with loud celebration. Repeat after me. . .

I have good news!

**I have good news!**

Christ is born!

**Christ is born!**

Joy is alive!

**Joy is alive!**

God is here.

**God is here.**

*(Repeat 3x)*

Thanks be to God.

**Thanks be to God.**

Amen.

**Amen.**

**Carol**

**Joy 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 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.

### **Call to Confession**

On a day like today we may want to skip the prayer of confession because today is a day for joy. Why should we pause to think and talk about the ways we as humans mess things up?

I get that argument. However, I also believe that the joy of this day is even more joyful when we are honest about who we are. We humans tend to be messy, scattered, and full of doubt at times. Knowing that Jesus was born in a manger for us, and that Jesus loves and forgives us, is even better news.

So let us confess together to God, knowing that the honest truth of our lives only makes this good news better. Let us pray:

### **Prayer of Confession + Words of Forgiveness**

*The prayer of confession will be centered around the already lit Advent wreath. One by one, the liturgist will extinguish the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love, only to relight them from the Christ candle at the end.*

Holy God, too often we feel as if change is hopeless. The problems of this world feel too big, the path forward is unclear, and we are not confident that we can truly make a difference. We give up hope.  
*Liturgist snuffs out the candle of hope.*

Together we pray:

**Forgive us for extinguishing hope.**

Holy God, too often we believe that peace is a thing of fairy tales. Our spirits are anxious. Our bodies are weary. Our world is fractured. Instead of praying for peace—both in ourselves and in our society—we assume that peace is no longer on the table. We give it up.

*Liturgist snuffs out the candle of peace.*

Together we pray:

**Forgive us for extinguishing peace.**

Holy God, too often we paint joy as naive—a luxury reserved for children and pets. We forget that you ate with friends, that you went to weddings, that you laughed and rested and hiked mountains. We forget that you knew joy, and that you want joy for us in this fractured world. Forgive us for turning away from your light.

*Liturgist snuffs out the candle of joy.*

Together we pray:

**Forgive us for extinguishing joy.**

Holy God, too often we treat love like a vending machine. We put some coins in and assume that we'll get something back. However, in our wiser moments, we know that love is not meant for keeping score. Love is meant to overflow, to spill out to our neighbors, to transform our world. Forgive us for holding love so tightly.

*Liturgist snuffs out the candle of love.*

Together we pray:

**Forgive us for extinguishing love.**

Family of faith, sin separates us from things like hope, peace, and joy. Sin wiggles its way between us and love, both love of neighbor and love of self.

Fortunately for us, God had something else in mind. God sent God's only son to this world so that we could see another way. So friends, hear and believe the good news of the gospel: no matter how many times we turn our back on hope, or extinguish peace, or snuff out joy—no matter how many times we let love burn out—God continues to light our way.

*Liturgist relights the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love from the Christ candle.*

We are forgiven. We are seen. We are loved.

The good news of this day—the hope, the peace, the joy, and the love of this day—exists for you.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

## **Passing of the Peace and Fellowship**

Friends, at this time we are going to pause for a few minutes of fellowship and celebration. Find the hand sanitizer. Stretch your legs. Introduce yourself to someone new. Say hello to someone you haven't seen in a while.

Grab some refreshments. Refill your coffee. Pass the peace!

If you prefer to remain seated, you can take a moment to pray quietly, or you can greet your neighbors with a wave or smile from a distance. When you hear the next carol begin, we will gather back together.

## **Sharing the Peace of Christ in American Sign Language**

The peace of Christ be with you.  
**And also with you!**

### **Carol**

### **Go Tell It on the Mountain**

**UMH 251**

Refrain:

Go, tell it on the mountain,  
over the hills and everywhere;  
go, tell it on the mountain,  
that Jesus Christ is born.

<sup>1</sup> While shepherds kept their watching  
o'er silent flocks by night,  
behold throughout the heavens  
there shown a holy light. (Refrain)

<sup>2</sup> The shepherds feared and trembled,  
when lo! above the earth,  
rang out the angel chorus  
that hailed the Savior's birth. (Refrain)

<sup>3</sup> Down in a lowly manger  
the humble Christ was born,  
and God sent us salvation  
that blessed Christmas morn. (Refrain)

## **Children's Message**

### **Carol Refrain**

### **Go Tell It on the Mountain**

**UMF 251**

Go, tell it on the mountain,  
over the hills and everywhere;  
go, tell it on the mountain,  
that Jesus Christ is born.

## **Prayer of Illumination**

God of manger straw and swaddle cloth,  
God of silent nights and joyfully-chaotic mornings,  
we long to know you.  
The hustle and bustle of this time of year can be more than distracting,  
so for a moment, we pray, still our busy hearts.  
Quiet our minds.

Help us to sink deeply into this day.  
Help us to pause here,  
to linger here  
as we hear your good news spoken over us.

God, we long to know you,  
so speak to us now.  
With grateful hearts, we pray.  
With grateful hearts, we listen.  
Amen.

## **POETIC READING OF JOHN 1:1-5**

(For 2 voices)

### **Hymn**

### **Christmas Carol Mashup**

#### **O Come All Ye Faithful**

<sup>1</sup> 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;

#### **Good Christian Friends Rejoice**

<sup>2</sup> Good Christian friends, rejoice,  
with heart and soul and voice;  
now ye hear of endless bliss:  
News, news!  
Jesus Christ was born for this!  
He hath opened heaven's door,  
and ye are blest forevermore.  
Christ was born for this,  
Christ was born for this!

<sup>3</sup> Good Christian friends, rejoice  
with heart and soul and voice;  
now ye need not fear the grave:  
News, news!  
Jesus Christ was born to save!  
Calls you one and calls you all  
to gain his everlasting hall  
Christ was born to save,  
Christ was born to save! (Refrain)

#### **Angels We Have Heard on High**

<sup>1</sup> Angels we have heard on high  
sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
and the mountains in reply  
echoing their joyous strains.  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

<sup>4</sup> See him in a manger laid,  
whom the choirs of angels praise;  
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid,  
while our hearts in love we raise. (Refrain)  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

#### **Hark! The Herald Angels Sing**

<sup>3</sup> 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!"

## **AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

Like Mary,  
**we believe in cherishing good news.**

Like the angels,  
**we believe in singing God's praise.**

Like the shepherds,  
**we believe that God's presence in our life is something worth talking about.**

Like generations before,  
**we believe that God is with us.**

Like the generations to come,  
**we believe that God is with us.**

God is here. God is love.  
**We believe. Thanks be to God!**

## **Time of Prayer**

### **Prayer Carol**

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.

### **Infant Holy, Infant Lowly**

**UMH 229**

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.

Praying our Joys and Concerns  
Pastoral Prayer  
Lord's Prayer

### **Offering**

Offertory  
Doxology

### **Prayer of Dedication**

God of Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow having blessed us with time, talent, and treasure, we in turn are to bless others in our stewardship of all you entrust to us. Receive the financial offerings we make and put them to good use. Amen.

### **Carol**

### **Sing We Now of Christmas**

**UMH 237**

<sup>1</sup> Sing we now of Christmas, Noel, sing we here!  
Hear our grateful praises to the babe so dear.

Refrain:

Sing we Noel, the King is born, Noel!  
Sing we now of Christmas, sing we now Noel!

<sup>2</sup> Angels called to shepherds, "Leave your flocks at rest,  
journey forth to Bethlehem, find the child so blest." (Refrain)

<sup>3</sup> In Bethlehem they found him; Joseph and Mary mild,  
seated by the manger, watching the holy child. (Refrain)

### **Benediction**

Create a circle around the sanctuary — be sure to include those still seated. It does not need to be a perfect geometric circle, just make sure everyone is a part.

Now that we have our circle, join hands. In just a moment, I will start passing a squeeze of energy around the circle to the right — I will squeeze & release the hand to my right, they will then squeeze & release the hand to their right and we will pass this all the way around the circle.

This circle provides both a visual and physical reminder of the way God's love, grace, and good news not only passes from moment to moment, but from generation to generation, encompassing all of us. Friends, for generations, God has been drawing near to us. Over and over, year after year, Christmas has filled people with hope and with joy. So may we lean into that joy with the physical reminder of our connection—passed from person to person.

Now, receive this benediction:

From generation to generation,  
God keeps drawing near.

From generation to generation,  
a light has shone in the darkness.

From generation to generation,  
God's love has moved through the world like our connection moved through this room. So may we celebrate that.

May we rest in the joy of this day,  
and may we allow it to change us.

Merry Christmas!

Go in peace. God is with you every step of the way.

### **Postlude**

**Deb Snell**