FIRST CHURCH IS A COMMUNITY THAT IS GROWING IN GRACE AND REACHING OUT WITH LOVE.

CHRISTMAS EVE

THE COMMUNITY GATHERS

With joy we welcome your presence today, wherever you are.
Please join us as we prepare our hearts and minds for worship together.

Words of Inspiration

“Christmas renews our youth by stirring our wonder. The capacity for wonder has been called our most pregnant human faculty, for in it are born our art, our science, our religion.”
~Ralph Sockman

Prelude ......................................................... Dr. Jaebon Hwang

Christmas in Sicily
Pietro Yon (1886-1943)

In Dulci Jubilo

Berceuse Paraphrase
George Baker (b. 1951)

Register Your Attendance

Welcome In-Person and Online Community .............................. Rev. Trudy D. Robinson
Call to Worship ......................................................... Kenton Reaves Hundley

The Child is born
God has taken on flesh.
The One for whom we have waited is here.
The One who teaches us to sing and dream,
who showers us with love and grace,
who prepares us for hope and peace.
The One for whom we have waited is here.

Procesional Hymn #234: O Come, All Ye Faithful (vs. 1-3, 5-6)

1. 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:
2. True God of true God, Light from Light Eternal,
   lo, he shuns not the Virgin's womb;
   Son of the Father, begotten, not created;
3. Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation;
   O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
   Glory to God, all glory in the highest;
4. Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation;
   O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
   Glory to God, all glory in the highest;
5. Child for us sinners poor and in the manger,
   we would embrace thee with love and awe.
   Who would not love thee, loving us so dearly?
6. Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,
   Jesus, to thee be all glory given.
   Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:

   O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Lighting of the Christ Candle ......................... Khaled Alsabbagh, Rev. Brittany Juliette Hanlin

This is the night in which God comes to us.
This is a night for us to embrace Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.
We light the Christ candle as we usher Christ in to our world.
We greet You, O God, this night of nights, with wonder.
Enter into our lives as hope.
Enter into our world through us. Amen.

Anthem ............................................................. Chancel Choir

The Holly and the Ivy
French traditional carol; arr. June Nixon (b. 1942)

The holly and the ivy when they are both full grown, of all
the trees that are in the wood the holly bears the crown.
O the rising of the sun, the running of the deer, the playing
of the organ sweet singing in the choir.

Pastoral Prayer ............................................ Rev. Brittany Juliette Hanlin

Lord’s Prayer .............................................. Rev. Brittany Juliette Hanlin

Our Father, who are 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.
And 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, forever. Amen.
Hymn #230: O Little Town of Bethlehem

1. 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.

2. 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!

3. How silently, how silently,
   the wondrous gift is given;
so God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming,
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him,
still the dear Christ enters in.

4. O holy Child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin, and enter in,
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Emmanuel!

Prayer for Illumination ............................................................. Pat Brown

Holy God,
In the reading of the scriptures, may Your Word be heard.
In the meditations of our hearts, may Your Word be known.
In the faithfulness of our lives, may Your Word be shown.
Amen.


Hymn #218: It Came Upon a Midnight Clear (vs. 1-2, 4)

1. 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 men,
from heaven's all-gracious King."
The world in solemn stillness lay,
to hear the angels sing.

2. Still through the cloven skies they come
   with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heavenly music floats
o'er all the weary world;
above its sad and lowly plains,
they bend on hovering wing,
and ever o'er its Babel sounds
the blessed angels sing.

4. For lo! the days are hastening on,
   by prophet seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years
shall come the time foretold
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendors fling,
and the whole world send back
the song which now the angels sing.

Second Lesson: Matthew 1:18-25 ................................................ Rev. Tamara Walker

Hymn #211: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (vs. 1-2)

1. O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive
   Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here until the
Son of God appear.

2. O come, thou Wisdom from on high, and order all
   things far and nigh; to us the path of knowledge
show and cause us in her ways to go.

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

Anthem

Dormi, Jesu!
Jaebon Hwang (b. 1982)

Dormi, Jesu! Mater ridet
quae tam dulcem somnum videt,
Dormi, Jesu! blandule!

Translation:
Sleep, Jesus! Mother smiles who sees such sweet sleep, sleep, Jesus, gentling!
Sleep, sweet babe! my cares beguiling:

Si non dormis, Mater plorat,
inter fila cantans orat,
blande, veni, somnule. (origin unknown)

Translation:
If you sleep not, Mother weeps, while she spins, in song she prays, come, gently little sleep.

Fourth Lesson: Luke 2:8-16  

Anthem

Ding! Dong! Merrily on High
arr. Mack Wilberg (b. 1955)

Ding! dong! merrily on high in heaven the bells are ringing!
Ding! dong! verily the sky is riven with angels singing!
Gloria! Hosanna in excelsis!

Refrain:
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,born is the King of Israel.

Fifth Lesson: Matthew 2:1-11  

Hymn #245: The First Noel

Refrain:
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,born is the King of Israel.

Homily: “Reprioritizing the Gift”  

Rev. Trudy D. Robinson
Hymn #219: *What Child Is This*

1. 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.*

2. Why lies he in such mean estate 
   where ox and ass are feeding? 
   Good Christians, fear, for sinners here 
   the silent Word is pleading. 
   (Refrain)

3. So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh, 
   come, peasant, king, to own him; 
   the King of kings salvation brings, 
   let loving hearts enthrone him. 
   (Refrain)

Worship Through Gifts & Offerings

**Offertory Anthem**  ............................................. Chancel Choir; Lauren Zinke, *soprano*

*Have You Seen the baby Jesus?*
Rosephanye Powell (b. 1962)

Have you seen the baby Jesus, the King of kings?  
He was born of a virgin in Bethlehem.

Did you find Him in a stable, the King of kings?  
Was He laid in a manger, wrapped in swaddling clothing, born of a virgin in Bethlehem?

It was foretold by the prophets of old that a virgin would conceive God’s son. And as the angels rejoiced that night, the shepherds saw a holy light. Yes!

They will call Him “Emmanuel,” Lo, God is with us, “Jesus,” “Messiah,” the King of kings, who was laid in a manger, wrapped in swaddling clothing, born of a virgin in Bethlehem.  
Let us worship baby Jesus, the King of kings. Let us bow down before Him, praise and adore Him, worship the baby, the King of kings, We will call Him “Emmanuel,” Lo, God is with us, “Jesus,” “Messiah,” the King of kings.  
He’s the King, “Emmanuel!” (Rosephanye Powell)

**The Light Comes Into the World**

Distribution of the Light

Hymn #239: *Silent Night, Holy Night*

1. 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.*

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!*

**Benediction**  .......................................................... Rev. Trudy D. Robinson
FIRST CHURCH WELCOMES YOU IF...

You are single, married, divorced, gay, transgender, filthy rich, dirt poor, no habla inglés,
You can sing like Aretha Franklin or cannot carry a tune in a bucket,
You're “just browsing”, just woke up, or you just got out of jail,
You've been a Methodist your whole life or haven't been in church except for your little niece's baptism years ago,
You've got an AARP card but have yet to grow up, or you're a teenager growing up, too fast.
We welcome soccer moms, NASCAR dads, tree huggers, latte-sippers, vegans, junk-food eaters,
We welcome those who are in recovery or struggling with addiction,
We welcome you if you’re having problems or if you’re down in the dumps or if you don’t like “organized religion,” this church is for you,
If you blew all your money in Vegas, you're welcome here,
We offer a special welcome to those who think the earth is flat, those who work too hard, those who don’t work,
can’t spell or found us because Grandma wants you to go to church,
We welcome all those who are inked, pierced or both,
We welcome you if your ancestors arrived in chains, below the decks, captained those ships, or have been on this land since the beginning of time,
We offer a special welcome to those who could use a prayer right now (all of us could use a prayer right now),
We'd also like to welcome you if you had religion shoved down your throat, or you got lost on YouTube somehow and ended up here by mistake.
We welcome tourists, seekers, doubters, bleeding hearts...and you!
May the Peace of Christ, which passes all understanding be with you this day, and all the days going forward.

(Please place your candle in the box at the door as you leave the Sanctuary.)

• Recessional Hymn #246: Joy to the World

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.

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.

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.

4. He rules the world with truth and grace,  
and makes the nations prove  
the glories of his righteousness,  
and wonders of his love.

(Please place your candle in the box at the door as you leave the Sanctuary.)