



Rockville United Church

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)/United Church of Christ

3rd Sunday of Advent ~ Christmas Pageant

December 14, 2025 ~ Hybrid Worship

WORDS OF PREPARATION

In Lak'ech ~ Luis Valdez

Tú eres mi otro yo.	You are my other me.
Si te hago daño a ti,	If I do harm to you,
Me hago daño a mi mismo.	I do harm to myself.
Si te amo y respeto,	If I love and respect you,
Me amo y respeto yo.	I love and respect myself.

PRELUDE

CELEBRATING OUR LIFE TOGETHER

GATHERING MUSIC

When God is a Child (verse 3)

Chalice Hymnal, No. 132

Joy is a song that welcomes the dawn,
telling the world that the Savior is born.
When God is a child there's joy in our song.
The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong,
and none shall be afraid.

*CALL TO WORSHIP

The prophet Jeremiah said, "I am only a child."

Moses said, "Who am I to do this work?"

Mary said, "How can this be?"

We often say, "But God, I am afraid."

Even when we are afraid, God invites us closer and welcomes us in.

May we receive God's invitation and offer ourselves in return.

May we summon our courage and sing God's praise.

Let us worship God.

ADVENT SONG

Sing Out With Great Joy

Pattison/Poe/Reid

Sing out with great joy for Christmas now approaches.
Watch for his arrival, the little baby boy.
Your savior is coming; put out the advent wreath.
And light the advent candles three: He comes, He comes.

LIGHTING THE CANDLE OF JOY

Kelly and Jordan, and Ella Bernhardt

We have lit the first two candles, one for hope and one for peace. Today we light the third candle, the candle of joy. In a world full of fear, where do you see glimmers of joy? ***We see joy in loved ones together and shared accomplishments. We see joy in the laughter of children and the delight of grandparents. We see joy in meals around the table and in the singing of Christmas carols.***

You are right. Even in a fearful world, joy is all around us. Today we light the candle of joy as a reminder of this good news. May this flicker of light help us remember that even in a fearful world, there is joy here. Joy is real.

(The third candle is lit)

One: Let us pray:

All: *God of Joy, we open ourselves to you, trusting that you create us to live with joy-filled hearts. Help us to heal the places that are tender, hurting, or broken, and tend the flame of joy that dwells deep within and around us. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you, that we may walk in the light of Christ and bring joy to our world. Amen.*

SHARING THE JOY OF CHRIST

You are invited to greet your neighbors with these words.

The joy of Christ be with you, and also with you.

*HYMN

People, Look East
(verses 1 & 4)

Chalice Hymnal, No. 142

People, look east, the time is near of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able, trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east and sing today: Love, the Guest, is on the way.

Angels announce with shouts of mirth him who brings new life to earth.
Set every peak and valley humming with the word, the Lord is coming.
People, look east and sing today: Love, the Lord, is on the way.

PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION (unison)

Loving God, today we remember the journey that Mary and Joseph took as they searched for lodging—a warm, safe place where a holy child could be born. We know that today in our world, there are men, women, and children who are making exhausting, dangerous journeys and searching for lodging. We pray that welcoming, hospitable doors will be opened to them. We pray that we might recognize

the face of a holy child in each person we meet. May we find ways to offer comfort, welcome, hope and healing to all people so that new life and love might fill the world with hope and joy. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

A MOMENT OF SILENCE

ANTHEM

Break Forth Into Joy

Simper

SHARING OUR GIFTS

We come together in the name of the One who welcomed the stranger, filled the hungry, and lifted up the lowly. As we share our gifts, we remember that in serving one another, we serve the Christ among us.

Offertory

***Doxology**

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

Praise God, all creatures here below

Praise God above, ye heavenly host;

Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (unison)

Loving God, as we prepare to make room to welcome you in the world, we offer now these gifts of our hearts and hands. May they reflect our hope for a world filled with love, peace, and joy for all people. Come to us, abide with us, Emmanuel. Amen.

THE CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

Once in Royal David's City

Once in royal David's city stood a lowly cattle shed,
where a mother laid her baby in a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ her little child.

Christ came down to earth from heaven, love incarnate for us all,
and his shelter was a stable, and his cradle was a stall:
with the poor, the scorned, the lowly, lived on earth our Savior holy.

Narrator: Long, long ago, messengers of God foretold that someone special was coming into the world to build up God's home on earth. The prophet Isaiah said: "A voice of one calling in the wilderness: prepare the way for the Holy One of God. Make straight in the

desert a highway for our God. Every valley will be raised up and every mountain and hill made low; the uneven ground will become level and the rough places made smooth. Then the glory of God will be revealed and everyone will come together to see the saving love of God.” The people waited and waited for that special person to come. After so much waiting, they sometimes wondered if God had forgotten. But God did not forget! God was waiting for just the right time. In the fullness of time, a baby was born. The baby’s name was Jesus.

Narrator: Las Posadas is a longstanding Advent tradition in Mexico and Central America that was first celebrated over 400 years ago. The festivities usually begin on the evening of December 16th and continue every day through Christmas Eve. The nine nights are meant to symbolize and honor the nine months that Mary was pregnant with the Christ child. Las Posadas, which means “the inns” in Spanish, is a memorable way to tell the nativity story by reenacting the holy family’s search for a place to stay. Each day two people are chosen to lead the parade as Mary and Joseph and everyone else portrays angels, shepherds, animals and the three magi. The procession visits a designated house where they sing a traditional song in which the holy family asks for shelter but are turned away. They parade to a second and third house, again and again, repeating the song until finally they are given refuge. At the final home where they are welcomed, everyone goes inside for a party, which often includes a piñata.

Narrator: The story of Mary and Joseph seeking room at the inn is a story repeated by refugees, immigrants and exiles in many times and places throughout the world, including today. It is the story of the sojourner, the pilgrim, and the asylum seeker searching for a safe place to live. This year for our Christmas pageant we invite you to join us in a version of Las Posadas as we tell again the story of how Jesus came to be born among us.

***CAROL**

Come, O Long-Expected Jesus

Come, O long expected Jesus, born to set your people free.
From our fears and sins release us; Christ, in whom our rest shall be.
You, our strength and consolation, come salvation to impart;
dear desire of many a nation, joy of many a longing heart.

Born your people to deliver, born a child, and yet a king,
born to reign in us forever, born your gracious realm to bring.
By your own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
by your all-sufficient merit raise us to your glorious throne.

Narrator: Mary was a young woman who lived in the small peasant town of Nazareth in Galilee. Mary was engaged to a man named Joseph, who was a carpenter. One day something surprising happened. An angel —Gabriel—appeared to her! When the angel appeared, Mary was confused and a little afraid. But the angel tried to be comforting and said:

Angel: Do not be afraid, Mary! God has found favor with you. You will give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and his love will reign forever.

Mary: How can this be? Why did God choose me?

Angel: The Holy Spirit will come upon you; your child will be holy. And your relative Elizabeth is also expecting a baby. Even in her old age when everyone thought she could not have any children, she is now in her sixth month. Because nothing will be impossible with God.

Narrator: Even though Mary was nervous, she wanted to do what God asked of her. So she told the angel,

Mary: Let it be as you have said. I will be glad to serve God.

***CAROL**

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King:
peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled! ”
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies;
with the angelic hosts proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem! ”

Refrain:

Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King”

Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come, offspring of the Virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail the incarnate Deity,
pleased in flesh with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel. [Refrain]

Narrator: Joseph also had a dream. In the dream an angel appeared to him and told him about the baby Mary was expecting.

Angel: Joseph, Mary is going to have a special baby!

Joseph: I must be dreaming! I just heard an angel saying that Mary is going to have a baby.

Angel: Yes, she is going to have a baby, and he will be a holy child of God. And you will name him Jesus.

Joseph: So I was dreaming! And, Mary is really going to have a baby?

Angel: Yes, and he will become great and will be known as Emmanuel, which means “God with us.” But do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife.

Joseph: I will do as you have said and take Mary to be my wife.

Narrator: So, Mary and Joseph were married and they lived in the town of Nazareth.

***CAROL**

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

(verses 1 & 4)

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

Refrain:

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

O come, desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;
bid envy, strife and quarrels cease: fill the whole world with heaven’s peace. (refrain)

Narrator: In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.

Emperor Augustus: I, Caesar Augustus, Emperor of Rome, officially decree that a census of the entire Roman Empire be taken. It will be an official count of every person living in the Empire. Every person must return to the town of their ancestors’ birth to be registered and counted.

Narrator: Mary and Joseph, were not expecting to have to travel at that time. But like everyone else, they had to follow the orders of Emperor Caesar Augustus and return to their hometown to be counted. Joseph's family was from Bethlehem. It would be a difficult journey especially since Mary was pregnant with her baby. It was a long way from home and they didn't know anyone in Bethlehem they could stay with. Hoping they would find shelter and a safe place to stay, Mary and Joseph and a donkey set out on their long journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem.

Narrator: Just as it was then, it is the same now. Like Mary and Joseph, who lived in a land occupied by a foreign power, many people leave their homes to escape political oppression and war. They make dangerous journeys far from home, and they do not know where they will find safe sanctuary or welcome.

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,
Your voices raise to God in praise; and peace to all on earth.

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

FIRST POSADA

Narrator: As they neared Bethlehem, Mary was feeling very tired. Joseph, too, was worn out and worried about Mary and her baby. He knew they needed to find a safe place for them to stop and rest. They came to a posada, an inn, where they hoped they might be able to stay. Joseph, Mary and the donkey approached

Innkeeper: Who's there?

Joseph: My name is Joseph and this is Mary. We have been traveling all the way from Nazareth. Mary is expecting a baby and we are very tired from walking so far.

Mary: Please take us in.

Innkeeper: Why did you come here? This is not a place of shelter for you. You can't come in here, you might be a thief. We cannot help you, go find someone else who can.

Posada Song (verse 1)
Congregation Sings with Guitar

Pilgrims: (Pulpit side)
In the name of heaven, can you give us lodging?
We are so exhausted after hours of walking.

Innkeepers: (Lecturn side)
This is not an inn. I don't take in strangers.
You might be a robber. I can't risk that danger

Narrator: In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of God stood before them, and the glory of God shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them,

Angel: Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, who is the Messiah. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.

Narrator: And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

Angel: Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom God favors!

Narrator: When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us."

Narrator: Just as it was then, it is the same now. All around the world, and in our region, there are people who working hard in order to survive. Some leave their homes lands to search for better work and a better future for themselves and their families. They, too, are searching for welcome and safety.

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!

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heav'nly song? [Refrain]

Come to Bethlehem and see Christ, who comes in lowly birth.
Come, adore on bended knee Jesus, joy of heav'n and earth. [Refrain]

SECOND POSADA

Innkeeper: Who's there?

Joseph: Please have pity on us poor travelers. I am Joseph and this is Mary. We have been traveling for a long time. And we need a place to stay. My wife is expecting a baby, and she needs to rest.

Mary: Will you please let us in. God will reward your kindness.

Innkeeper: You don't look familiar. I don't even think you are from around here. Go away — we have no room for you. You are trespassing on this property; I'll send the dogs after you.

Posada Song (verse 2)

Congregation sings with guitar

Pilgrims: (Pulpit side)

Do not be so heartless! Help us, we implore you.
God, who sees from heaven, surely will reward you.

Innkeepers: (lecturn side)

I cannot assist you. Find someone who can.
Leave now, or I warn you, you will wish you had.

Narrator: In distant lands, there were people who travelled long distances from place to place. They were wise about the ways of the world. They studied the stars and they learned from the earth. They gained the respect of rulers and political leaders sought their

council. These wise ones paid attention to the signs around them, and noticed the changes that took place on the earth and in the sky. One night a strange thing happened.

Wise One: In the night sky, we noticed a very bright star. We wondered why it shown so brightly. We knew that the prophets had foretold of a time when a new ruler would be born. We saw the star rising and took it as a sign of the promised one.

Wise One: So we set out to find where this newborn ruler might be born. We traveled by camel and wore our best robes of the finest silk.

Wise One: We brought gifts with us to give to this new child. Our gifts were gold and frankincense and myrrh.

Narrator: Just as it was then, it is the same in our time. The earth gives us signs, and wise people take notice and pay attention. Sometimes the forces of nature compel people to move because of natural disasters—floods or fires or earthquakes or drought. People move from place to place, bringing their treasured belongings and hoping to find a new life.

CAROL

We Three Kings

We three kings of Orient are; bearing gifts we traverse afar,
field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star.

Refrain:

*O star of wonder, star of light, star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.*

Born a King on Bethlehem's plain, gold I bring to crown him again,
King forever, ceasing never, over us all to reign.

Frankincense to offer have I; incense owns a Deity nigh;
prayer and praising, voices raising, worshiping God on high.

Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume breathes a life of gathering gloom;
sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying, sealed in the stone-cold tomb. [Refrain]

THIRD POSADA

Innkeeper: Whose there?

Joseph: My name is Joseph, a carpenter from Nazareth. My wife is Mary and she is to have a baby. We need a warm place to stay. Do you have any room. We will not trouble you for anything more.

Innkeeper: I don't care who you are. Can't you see that it is late, and everyone is asleep. You have some nerve coming to bother us in this way. You will wake the whole place.

Mary: We do not need much. Just a place to rest. We have been traveling for such a long time.

Innkeeper: Be on your way; leave us alone. We have problems of our own. Go away and trouble someone else. I don't have time for this; it is getting late, and I need to get my rest.

Posada Song (verse 3)
Congregation sings with guitar

Pilgrims: (pulpit side)
We have come from Nazareth, walking all the way.
I am a poor woodworker. Joseph is my name.

Innkeepers: (lecturn side)
Knowing what your name is does not change my answer.
Go, and let me sleep. Stop this useless banter.

Narrator: They had been traveling for such along time. The journey had led them to Bethlehem, but everywhere they looked to stay seemed not to be the right place. The night sky began to darken and they wondered what to do and where to go? Everyone was exhausted.

Narrator: As they lay down to rest, they looked into the deep darkness of the night sky. In the darkness they saw a light. A bright star shining brighter than all the other stars. Even though they were tired, they decided to journey on. The star lit the way and gave hope to the weary group of travelers. They set out and ahead of them went the star they had seen at its rising.

Narrator: Just as it was then, it is the same in our time. Sometimes people travel in the dark of night, not knowing where they are going or where they will find shelter. Throughout history the stars have helped to guide weary travelers toward safe haven and help.

CAROL

The First Noel

They looked up and saw a star shining in the east, beyond them far,
and to the earth it gave great light, and so it continued both day and night.

Refrain:

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel. Born is the King of Israel.

And by the light of that same star three wise ones came from country far;
to seek for a king was their intent, and to follow the star wherever it went. [Refrain]

This star drew nigh to the northwest, o'er Bethlehem it took its rest,
and there it did both stop and stay, right over the place where Jesus lay. [Refrain]

FOURTH POSADA

Innkeeper: Whose there?

Joseph: Please listen to me, I am Joseph. This is Mary. She is to be the mother of Jesus, the child of God most high. Please will you make room for this child to be born in your house?

Innkeeper: Yes, yes, please come in out of the cold. You look very tired; of course, you can rest here, all our rooms are filled, but we do have a stable in back. The cows and the donkeys are there, but they will not bother you. You will be warm and dry among the hay and the animals. You and your baby will be safe here.

Mary: God bless you! And bless this house and all who live in it. Thank you for welcoming us!

Posada Song (Refrain)

Congregation sings with guitar

All: (Refrain)

Enter, enter, holy pilgrims, holy pilgrims.

Welcome to my humble home.

Though it's little I can offer, I can offer

all I have, please call your own.

All: (Refrain)

*Mary, Joseph, and our savior, and our savior,
what a joy to have you here!
We are honored to receive you, to receive you.
May you stay through all the year!*

Narrator: On the night Jesus was born, everyone gathered together. All those people — Mary and Joseph, the innkeepers, the angels, the shepherds, the wise ones, the animals — they all witnessed the birth of Jesus, the Holy Child of God.

Narrator: And we can, too. We can remember these things and tell the story of Jesus. We can remember how he was welcomed into the world, in an unlikely place and welcomed by strangers who cared to make room for him where there was none before. We can remember the way Jesus grew to be a wise leader, and how he welcomed the outsiders, showed love for the earth, worked for justice for all people, and brought peace and joy to the world.

CAROL

Away in a Manger

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay

The cattle are lowing the baby awakes
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle, 'til morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask thee to stay
Close by me forever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
And fit us for heaven to live with thee there

PRAYER

***CAROL**

Joy to the World (please stand)

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.

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, wonder of his love.

***BENEDICTION**

Let us go into the world with the simplicity of the manger in our hearts,
with the peace of the baby in our minds,
and the promise of the angels on our lips.
Let us make room and welcome the Christ in our midst.
Go into the world to tell the story.
Joy to the world! Amen.

PAGEANT RECESSIONAL HYMN *Go Tell it On the Mountain*

*Pageant participants recess to the lower level, take off their costumes,
and return to the Kaseman Hall.*

Refrain:

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

While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,
behold throughout the heavens there shone a holy light. [Refrain]

The shepherds feared and trembled when lo! above the earth,
rang out the angel chorus that hailed the Savior's birth. [Refrain]

Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born,
and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn. [Refrain]

POSTLUDE

*Please join us in Kaseman Hall following the service for refreshments and
a Posadas piñata.*

PARTICIPANTS

Grady Atwood, Shepherd
Wes Atwood, Donkey
Kelly Bernhardt, Mary
Jordan Bernhardt, Joseph
Ella Bernhardt, Baby Jesus
Alice Christenson, Mary
Hannah Christenson,
Angel/Narrator
Olivia Clausen, Angel
Wyatt Clausen, Innkeeper

Theo Claery, Star
Theo Ellestad, Joseph
Jane Guest, Star
Jack Hagy, Wise One/Narrator
Jamie Hagy, Shepherd
Nicole Knutsen, Sheep
Simon Legg, Big Star
Corey Livingston, Sheep
Ezra Peck-McClain, Innkeeper
Zoe Peck-McClain, Caesar/
Narrator

Phoebe Peck-McClain,
Wise One/Narrator
Kally Strey, Wise One/Narrator
Anja Sugg, Shepherd/Narrator
Emmitt Sugg, Innkeeper/
Narrator
Ty Sugg, Camel
Eric Zeigler, Shepherd
Isabel Zeigler, Angel
Cecilia Zimmerman, Angel

THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR HELPERS

Chris Frentrup, Teddy Vossler, *guitars*
Carol Bossert, Nancy Hawkins, Denise Rozell, *costumes*
Betsy Christenson, Stacey Hagy, Grace Manno, Christine Hammell,
Johnathan Guest, Shaunda Legg, Stanley Zimmerman, *pageant helpers*
NOISY Youth Group and leaders Frank Samuelson and Stephen Sugg, *piñata makers*

WORSHIP LEADERS

Liturgist: Patty Vossler ~ Digital Host: John Junod
Welcome Table: Mary Wallace ~ Greeter: Stephanie Wright

Our complimentary Wi-Fi network is **RUC Mesh**. The password is **heavenly**.



Please Scan Me To Give To RUC.

Rockville United Church



Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)/United Church of Christ
355 Linthicum Street, Rockville, Maryland 20851
301-424-6733 ~ www.RockvilleUnitedChurch.org
(Office Hours: Wed, Fri—10am to 3pm or by appointment)

Ecumenical † Just Peace † Open & Affirming † More Light