

January 2, 2022
Order of Worship
Grinnell United Church of Christ

As a safety precaution during COVID, please remain masked and socially distanced by household. Thank you for helping to keep each other safe!

PRELUDE *The First Noel*, Traditional English carol
What Child Is This? 16th century English melody

INVOCATION

Come and see!
The light of God has come into our world to proclaim God's justice and love;
It has overcome the shadows and brought new life.

Come and follow!
Christ our companion has redeemed our world.
He draws us into a loving family from every nation and family and culture.

Go and tell!
The Spirit has equipped us for service
To love our neighbors as we do ourselves
To bring God's salvation to the ends of the earth.

Come and see, come and follow, go and tell!
In God's Love the nations of the earth will put their hope.

WELCOME and PASSING OF THE PEACE

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!
The Peace of Christ be with you.... **And also with you.**

SCRIPTURE *Psalm 147:12-20; John 1:1-18*

SPECIAL MUSIC *Good Christian Friends, Rejoice*

Mark Laver, Saxophone

MISSION REFLECTION

BOOK BLESSING

Creator God swirling, formless one, hovering over creation and bringing new things to life you speak new worlds into being with language that creates and liberates
Eternal God living, limitless one inhabiting the vast universe with the rich complexity of your being you reveal yourself to your creatures and invite us to know you

Friendly God nurturing, welcoming one opening yourself wide to the joy and pain of loving your people, you place us in communities and families that echo your true nature.

We pray especially today for the Hansens, for the communities in which they serve, and for the abundant life you intend for all of the ones who will read these books and have their lives changed by literacy and a love of learning.

Holy God

We thank you for the ways in which we have known and understood you;
We thank you for the metaphors that have opened our eyes to more of who you are;
We thank you for the language that has brought the transcendent, timeless,
mysterious God within our grasp.

Holy God

We are hungry for more of you.
We ask you to reveal more of yourself to us,
to take us beyond the confines of familiar habits,
to free us from the restrictions and distortions of our language,
to expand our understanding of you,
so that we can love you whole heartedly,
we can communicate you faithfully,
and we can reflect your full image to a world that needs you. Amen.

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

We pray for health and strength for Molly Campe, George Drake, Betty Anne Francis, Gene McCaw, Verlene Mitchell, Emily Pfitsch, and Gayle Strickler.

LORD'S PRAYER *(Inclusive Version)*

Blessed One, our Father and our Mother

Holy is your name.

May your love be enacted in the world.

May your will be done

On earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread

And forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us in the time of trial

and deliver us from evil.

For all that we do in your love,

and all that your love brings to birth,

and the fullness of love that will be

are yours, now and forever. Amen.

GRATITUDE FOR OFFERING / DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow

Praise God all creatures here below

Praise God above ye heavenly hosts

Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Confession

Everlasting God, we know how easy it is to forget your presence and power in our lives. Focused on our daily planners, we do not pay attention to the night sky and the stars that glitter. Surrounded by the sounds of anger, violence, and hate, we have trouble listening to your whispers of hope and grace. Thinking that Scripture is filled only with stories, we cannot understand your truth which can change lives.

Forgive us. There is no one who can hold a candle to you when it comes to mercy and hope. Lift us to our feet so we may walk with you; fill us with your strength so we may serve your people; touch us with your healing so we may proclaim to everyone the Good News that has come in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Words of Assurance

Have we been listening? The Good News is this: God never tires out, God is always with us, God heals us with mercy, God strengthens us for service.

The One who numbers the stars knows each of us by name.

Thanks be to God, we are forgiven. Amen.

Blessing of the Elements

Prayer of Thanksgiving

We give thanks, gracious God, that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Jesus Christ. Strengthen our faith; increase our love for one another; and send us forth into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit, in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

HYMN NCH 133 *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

Words: Phillips Brooks, 1868, alt.; Music: Lewis H. Redner, 1868

1) O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see you lie!
Above your deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
Yet in your dark streets shines forth the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in you 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 and voices ring with peace to all the earth.

3) How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the glorious love of heaven.
No one discerns God's coming, but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls long to be made whole, 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 Immanuel!

BENEDICTION

May this holy season be for each of us a time of moving beyond what is “reasonable”
and toward the star of wonder;
 moving beyond grasping tight to what we have
 to unclenching our hands and letting go, following the Light where it leads;
 moving beyond competition toward cooperation, seeing that all humans are siblings;
 moving beyond the anxiety of small concerns towards the joys of justice and peace.

May the transforming acceptance of Mary and Joseph,
 the imagination of the shepherds,
 and the persistence of the wise men
guide us as we seek the Truth,
 always moving toward the Divine promise,
 always aware God can be hidden in the frailest among us,
 always open to the unexpected flash of Grace,
 to the showing forth of that Love that embraces us all.

POSTLUDE *Now Sing We All, Rejoice*, 14th century German/arr. J. S. Bach

Liturgist: Nancy E. Brown

Musician: Mark Laver

Organist: Kenneth Davis

Pastor: Rev. Jessica Margrave Schirm

We give thanks to these helping hands who take turns throughout the month...

Mayflower Drivers: Rick Ramsey, George Britton, Denny Conway, Shane Estes, John Noer

Chancel & Paraments: Sue Ramsey, Glenyce Conway, Karen Edwards, Sarah White, Oliva Wright

Worship Resources:

Invocation ~ adapted from a prayer by Christine Sine on Godspace. <http://godspace-msa.com/>

Book Blessing ~ posted on the Fresh Worship website of Grace Church, an alternative congregation in London, England.
<http://www.freshworship.org/>

Lord's Prayer ~ Copyright © 2003 Richard D. McCall, posted on the Worship Well website.

Confession & Words of Assurance ~ written by Thom Shuman, and posted on his excellent Lectionary Liturgies blog.

Benediction ~ from Education for Justice - www.educationforjustice.org. Adapted by J.M. Deren from "Blessings and Benedictions," by W.L. Wallace in Shine On, Star of Bethlehem, CAFOD, 2004. Posted on Marianist Social Justice Collaborative website. <http://www.msjc.net/>