

Welcome to St. Vincent UCC
Christmas Eve Worship Service 2025

Includes communion and Candle Lighting

Pastor – Rev. Susan Hanson

Church Musician – Deb Rick



Musical Interlude
A Christmas Welcome
Prelude Music

*** Call To Worship:**

Pastor: Welcome everyone on this holiest of nights. As Mary readied herself to give birth to Jesus, let us prepare ourselves to welcome the new birth he brings with him into our lives.

People: **As a child prepares to open a special gift at this special time of the year, let us prepare our hearts to receive the greatest gift of all – the wonder of God’s love for us.**

Pastor: As heaven and earth sing of great joy, let us bring our joyous praises to this time of worship as we say together our Affirmation of Faith ...

Affirmation of Faith:

I believe in God - whose light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never smother it. I believe that on a night like this night in Bethlehem there was born a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. I believe in the Word who has become incarnate in flesh yet is divinely full of grace and truth.

I believe in his name - Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, everlasting Father, Prince of peace. I believe in his love, his acts of kindness and compassion, his sacrifice on my behalf, and his place in my heart which will never fade. He is my Hope, my Peace, my joy, my love. This I surely believe!

Now, let us sing together our first hymn.

*** Hymn: # 112 “O Come, All Ye Faithful” (red hymnal)**

Please be Seated for the Lighting of the Christ Candle.

Lighting of the Christmas Wreath: The Christ Candle

Led By Suzi Clark and Bill Helmig

It’s Christmas Eve and we are gathered as God’s people to celebrate the Good News that Jesus is born again into our hearts. Our wreath helps us remember the gifts that Jesus brings with him – hope, peace, joy, and love. With it’s Advent Candles lit, it shines brightly and now our hearts rejoice as we prepare to light the middle candle that represents Jesus the Christ. It is at the center of our wreath, just as Jesus is meant to be at the center of our lives. (Light the white candle)

Tonight, we light the Christ candle to remind us that Christ is the greatest gift we receive at this time of the year and every day of our lives. It is the one gift that makes all other gifts and our very sense of happiness possible for us.

Let us, then, pray together:

We thank you, God, for your gift of Jesus to the entire world. We thank you that now hope, peace, joy, and love are possible for each one of us. On this holiest of nights, encourage us to do our part to bring your good news and your good will to others everywhere you lead us for this whole year through. Amen.

Now, let us sing our response: (Tune # 109, Away in a Manger)

“Come, listen, the sounds of God-with-us ring clear, and signs of a cross in the distance appear. The Word once made flesh, yet the Word ever near, One candle is lit for Christ’s birthday is here.”

Children’s Message – “We All Need a Little Jesus”

Let us Pause for a Time of Prayer

Pastor: It’s Christmas Eve – the perfect time to talk with God about his greatest gift ever given to us. Let us pray together ...

All: Holy God, on this special night – this silent, holy night we are inspired by your gifts of hope and peace and joy and love to give you thanks for Jesus. Our hearts long to be filled with your grace and keep it alive in them for more than this one night – but our whole lives long. May the angelic message of “peace on earth and good will to all” come true through what we say and do because of the beauty of this one night. Amen.

Pastor: May the blessing of this Christmas last in our hearts the whole year through. In gratitude, let us sing our response ...

Response: “Emmanuel” (from the Methodist Hymnal)

**Emmanuel, Emmanuel. His name is called Emmanuel.
God with us, revealed in us. His name is called Emmanuel.**

Scripture Reading: Liturgist: Suzi Clark

Liturgist: We pause in the midst of our service this evening to hear again the story of the birth of a Savior who has come to earth to enter into every heart. Our scripture reading can be found in the Gospel according to Luke, chapter 2. We are reading verses 1-20 where we find this beloved Nativity Story.

Let us pray: Bless us on this special night, O God, as we once again tell the story of your son’s birth and celebrate the re-birth of your spirit into our hearts. Amen.

Luke 2: 1-20 (found on page 58 of the NT in Pew Bible)

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered for the purpose of taxation. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.

All the people were required to go to their hometowns to be registered. So, Joseph had to travel from Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David.

Mary, of course, went with him, for they were engaged to be married, and her special child from God would soon be born.

But, when they arrived in Bethlehem, the city was crowded with people, and they could find no room to stay at any of the Inns. Due to the kindness of one Innkeeper, though, they found a warm place with the animals in a nearby shelter outside.

And then, while they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. She gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Now, at that same time, in that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then, suddenly, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all people. To you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in swaddling cloth and lying in a manger."

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

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."

So, they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw the holy family, their hearts were touched so that they had to make known to everyone they met what had been told them about this child. And all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them.

But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Liturgist: Here ends the reading of God's Holy Scripture. May God bless us with understanding and may we show our understanding in the way we live our lives. Amen.

Now, let's sing hymn # 118, "The First Nowell", verses 1 & 6.

Hymn: # 118, "The First Nowell" (vs. 1 & 6) (red hymnal)

Pastor's Message: "Holy Night of Wonder"

Hymn: # 102, "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" (red hymnal)

Christmas Eve Communion Service

All Christians, including children and visitors are welcome to participate whenever we celebrate God's love for us in this way. We will receive at the Altar.

Please note that the bread is not gluten free, but we have GF wafers available from the pastor. An elder holds the tray of cups (red for wine, white for grape juice) there is a basket nearby for your empty cup.



Pastor: On this holiest of nights, we pause in wonder and awe, for the birth of our Savior is upon us once again. Every year, we re-tell the story because no matter how many times we tell it, it still has meaning for us ...

... Let us, then, pray together as we prepare our hearts and minds to partake in this sacred meal on this special night.

All: O Holy One, we are filled with love because you have taken upon yourself, our humanity. We are filled with hope because you have offered us your Spirit, your life, and your light. We are filled with peace because all that is meek and lowly and humble within us becomes holy this night. Our lives are full of the signs of your presence with us and we are filled with joy. Amen.

Pastor: In response, O God, we spread your table with these gifts of the earth: the bread and drink – and we present to you, as well, our very lives so that we might be loving servants as Jesus so lived and taught us to be ...

... Please join me once again in prayer.

Prayer: Holy One, be present with us now as we share this meal. Stay close to us always, so that we might become more like your son Jesus, whose birth we celebrate once again this night. We pray this in his name, saying the words he taught us ...

... Our Father 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 and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Pastor: In the breaking of the bread and in the blessing of the drink, we remember and we rejoice! For these are the gifts of God for the people of God. Let us receive them now with joy.

Come forward to receive, beginning with the by people on the piano side of the church - starting at the front to back. Then the people on the window side of the church, front to back. Approach one at a time to receive the bread and eat; then go to the trays and drink; then put your empty cup in the basket provided nearby. Return to your seat using the window side aisle of the church and then take the center aisle to your pew. During this time, please maintain a quiet, peaceful mood for the sake of those among us who are in the midst of prayer. Thank you.

Pastor offers the Living Bread from the Plate

Person Responds: “Amen”. Then eat.

Elders offer Trays of Wine and Grape Juice

Person Responds: “Amen”. Then drink and drop empty cup into the basket provided.

When everyone has returned to their seats -

Pastor: Let us say our prayer of thanksgiving together ...

All: God of Hope and Peace and Joy and Love, we give you thanks that you have refreshed us with your Spirit in the midst of this bread and drink, in our singing, and in our being together. We have been blessed by this time of sacrament.

We ask that you continue to be with us in all things in the days ahead, so that these days of Christmas might be a new beginning of a fuller life in your spirit for all our days yet to come. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Sung Response # 117 O Thou Joyful (vs. 2) (Red Hymnal)

Offering Invitation:

Let us present our offerings to God with joy so that the blessings we receive will spread because of us.

Offertory

*** Response: # 551 “Old Hundredth”** (red hymnal)

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below; Praise God above,
ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

*** Prayer of Dedication:**

**O God, tonight we are filled with the Spirit of Christmas – so bless the offerings we have brought to
the good of your church in the name of Jesus. Amen.**

Special Music

Candle Lighting Ceremony with Singing Silent Night

**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! Darkness flies, all is light; Shepherds hear the angels sing;
Alleluia! Hail the King!
Christ the savior is born, Christ the savior is born!**

**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:

Long ago and far away, on a silent, holy night - much like this one, a special child was born. And the
angels sang “Glory to God in the highest” and the shepherds spread the news to all the people. Now, let
us go forth to share the news and the gifts that Jesus has brought to us once again - of hope, of peace, of
light and love and joy for all the world! Amen.

*** Response: # 120, “Joy To The World”** (vs. 1 & 2 red hymnal)

**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 earth! The Savior reigns. Let men their songs employ. While fields and floods, rocks,
hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**

*** Postlude Music**

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**Please return your extinguished candles to the back table.
Remember to take home your Christmas Cards and Ornaments.
We're Wishing You and Yours a Very Merry Christmas!**