

For unto  
us a  
 Child  
is born

Orchard Ridge United Church of Christ  
*Spiritually Alive, Joyfully Inclusive, Committed to Justice*

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*Our church is Open and Affirming of all people  
regardless of age, race, culture, sexual orientation,*

**The People of Orchard Ridge UCC**

Ministers: The Congregation

Laura Crow – Interim Senior Pastor

Tammy Martens – Associate Pastor

Ken Pennings – Associate Pastor

Vicki Nonn – Pianist/Organist

Bruce Gladstone – Orchard Ridge Choir Director

Rob Martens – TRUFunction Director

Julie Mazer – Children’s Music Director

Bethany Schultz – Handbell Choir Director

Angie Schoeneck – Moderator

Kathy Borkowski – Moderator Elect

Julie Wombacher – Office Manager

December 24 – 7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve

**\*\*Please stand as you are comfortably able**

**We GATHER ... *in the Presence of God***

**Prelude Carols**

Dave & Nick Allen, piano & bass

*A Child Is Born* (Thad Jones)  
*Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming* (Traditional)  
*In the Bleak Midwinter* (Traditional)  
*A Cradle in Bethlehem* (Nat King Cole)

**\*\*Opening Carol**

*O Come, All Ye Faithful*

TUNE: ADESTE FIDELIS

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!  
[Refrain] O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him  
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation;  
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above!  
Glory to God, all glory in the highest! [Refrain]

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning;  
Jesus, to Thee be all glory giv'n!  
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing! [Refrain]

**Welcome**

Laura Crow

**Introit**

*O Holy Night*

John Stevens, melodica

**Lighting of the Christ Candle**

Valerie Showalter

*Rejoice, for God is with us. We are not alone.*

**We gather as the beloved community of God to hear the timeless story of Christ's birth.**

*There is reason for our hope and joy. God's son has come for all people.*

**Emmanuel, God with us, whose holy light shines for all nations.**

*Let us embrace this holy child and the good news he brings.*

**Let us rejoice! We are Christmas people!**

**\*\* Offering the Peace of Christ**

Laura Crow

*"Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ as welcomed you." Romans 15:7*

**We LISTEN ... *for God's Word***

**Christmas Carol**

*It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*

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.

ORUCC Choir

TUNE: NOEL

**For lo! the days are hastening on, by prophet seen of old,  
when with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold**

**Congregation**

TUNE: CAROL

**when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,  
and the whole world send back the song which now the angels sing.**

**First Reading**

"In the Beginning"

Ken Psyck

John 1:1-5

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.*

John's gospel has no Christmas story – no sheep or shepherds, no stars or magi, no infant lying in a manger. Instead, John draws us into the swirling chaos of Creation and to the Word, the Logos, that set all things into motion. John's narrative embraces all of history – the beautiful and the horrific – with one sweeping promise of a restored future. This Christmas text weaves from the stories of Genesis a body which is the Christ, a light for all the world.

**Christmas Carol**

*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

**Congregation**

**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 th' angelic hosts proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"**

TUNE: MENDELSSOHN

Refrain: **Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King"**

**Christ, by highest heav'n adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
late in time behold him come, offspring of the Virgin's womb:  
veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail th' incarnate Deity,  
pleased with us in flesh to dwell, Jesus, our Immanuel. [Refrain]**

**Hail the heav'n-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. [Refrain]**

**Second Reading**

"The Promise of a Savior"

J. Denny Weaver

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

*The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them a light has shined. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.*

In the 8th century BCE, the actions of Israel's King Ahaz brought the nation to the brink political disaster. The prophet Isaiah spoke these surprising words of promise into this time of darkness and despair – salvation will come, not from a warrior or commander, but from a child whose authority will grow in endless peace, established and upheld with justice and with righteousness. Over the centuries, empires have come and gone (Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome), but their oppressive practices have remained the same, up to and including empires of today. As Christians, we read this text on Christmas in defiance of the decrees of Emperors, past, present, and future, who seek to count, categorize, control, through terror, violence, and oppression. We read this text in the hope that true peace, justice, and righteousness are possible because one has been born who showed us the way.

**Christmas 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.

ORUCC Choir  
 by Alford Davies

**How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is giv'n! Congregation**  
**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.**

TUNE: ST LOUIS

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.

ORUCC Choir  
 by Alford Davies

**Third Reading****"A Child Is Born"**

David Moyer

Luke 2:1-14

*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. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.*

Luke's Christmas story is one we know by heart – we can recite the verses (even with the hard to pronounce names), picture all the characters, and know what they should be wearing and doing and saying. We can smell the pungent air and feel the warm breath of the stable animals gathered close around the manger. But at its core, the Christmas story is a birth story. And, as every parent knows, no matter how much you've planned (or didn't) and how prepared (or not) you think you are, the birth of a child always is different from what you had imagined. If we can loosen our grip of what we know just enough, this birth story can still surprise us as well. Lean in and listen to these words again, with the innocent wonder of children.

**Christmas Carol***Away in a Manger*

**Congregation**

TUNE: 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 sky looked down where He lay, the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**

TUNE: CRADLE SONG

**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.**

**Fourth Reading****"Go, See, Tell"**

Valerie Showalter

Luke 2:8-20

*In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then 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 the 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 bands of 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 this, they made known 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. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.*

It is tempting to say too much – to over-explain or over-mythologize this story that we know so well. Tonight we let the story simply speak for itself, painting a picture in our hearts of the love of God for humanity. Many details leap from the text: the “Exalted One” coming in the form of a vulnerable child (not a powerful emperor), shepherds and angels meeting in a field (not in the temple), those same unwashed and unclean shepherds risking coming into town and being welcomed as neighbors, and a new mother (and father) exhausted and exhilarated watching this night unfold, wondering what the future might hold.

## **We RESPOND ... *with FAITH***

### **Offertory Carol**

*What Child Is This*

TUNE: GREENSLEEVES

**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**

**So bring him incense, gold and myrrh come peasant king to love him;**

**The king of kings salvation brings let loving hearts enthrone him [Refrain]**

### **Offering Invitation**

Laura Crow

Lord, your offering of love was not gift-wrapped and not what anyone expected. Our offering comes wrapped in faith and given with the expectation and trust that you will bless it, use it, and use us to further your work of restoration begun again on this earth tonight.

Our offering tonight will be split between two charitable organizations: Clean Water for Gaza and the United Church of Christ Christmas Fund, providing financial support to active and retired clergy, lay employees, and their surviving spouses in need. Let us gather our gifts together and bring them to God as an offering of gratitude and praise!

### **Offertory**

*No Small Wonder*

ORUCC Choir  
by Paul Edwards

Small wonder the star, small wonder the light,  
The angels in chorus, the shepherds in fright;  
But stable and manger for God — no small wonder!

Small wonder the kings, small wonder they bore the gold  
And the incense, the myrrh, to adore; but God gives his life on a cross —  
No small wonder!

Small wonder the love, small wonder the grace, the power, the glory,  
The light of his face; but all to redeem my poor heart — no small wonder!

## **We FEAST ... *at Christ's Table***

### **Communion Carol**

*What Child Is This*

TUNE: GREENSLEEVES

**What feast of love is offered here, what banquet come from heaven?**

**What food of everlasting life, what gracious gift is given?**

**This, this is Christ the King, the bread come down from heaven.**

**O, taste and see and sing! How sweet the manna given!**

## Service of Communion

Ken Pennings

### Invitation to the Table

This is the night God's heart bursts open with Joy, the evening that Grace pours down from heaven, and the night when heaven reaches down to caress creation with healing. We join with the angel choirs who sing of God's glory, caroling the Good News that Jesus, the Christ, is born anew for the wholeness of our world.

Because it is Jesus who invites each of us to this table, know that everyone is welcome. Young and old, member and guest, frequent visitor and new friend, let nothing stand between you and Jesus' invitation to join the feast.

### Communion Prayer (Unison)

**Dearest Jesus, You remain a sacred mystery to us. You have brought Good News for all the people and we will not be afraid, for you are here. We are hungry for your love which surpasses all our understanding; we are thirsty for your Spirit that never runs dry. Through this meal nourish our souls, feed our minds, quench our deepest longings, and forgive our transgressions, that we may glorify you every day of our lives. Amen.**

### Remembering the Last Supper

As we gather on this holy night, we remember the night when Jesus gathered for a Passover meal with his disciples and friends. He took bread; he gave thanks to God; and then he broke the bread, saying, "This is my body, which is broken for you. Whenever you do this, remember me."

After supper, Jesus took the cup, again giving thanks, and said, "This cup is the new covenant which has been poured out for all. As often as you drink of it, remember me."

### Communion Blessing

God of love, Spirit of compassion, bless this bread and cup. May this meal be food and drink for our journey—renewing us, sustaining us, and making us whole for Your glory and the healing of the world.

### Sharing the Bread & Cup

The bread that we break is the bread of life for all who hunger.

The cup that we bless is the cup of compassion for a broken world.

These are the gifts of God for the people of God. Come and eat. All is ready.

*The Communion Table at Orchard Ridge United Church of Christ is OPEN TO ALL without exception.  
Please take a piece of bread, and then dip it into the chalice, consuming both elements together.  
If you do not wish to join the meal, you may come forward with your arms crossed and receive a blessing.  
If you are not able to come forward, we will bring communion to you.  
Wine = light colored, Juice = dark colored. Gluten free crackers are offered at all stations.*

### Carols during Communion

*While Shepherds Watched Their Sheep*

**While shepherds watched their flocks by night, all seated on the ground,  
The angel of the Lord came down, and glory shone around.**

**Congregation**

TUNE: ESTE'S PSALTER  
(back page)

**Fear not said he (for mighty dread had seized their troubled mind);  
Glad tidings of great joy I bring to you and all mankind.**

**All glory be to God on high, and to the earth be peace;  
good will hence-forth from heaven to all begin and never cease!**

*Angels We Have Heard on High*

**Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
And the mountain in reply, echoing their joyous strains,**

**Congregation**

TUNE: GLORIA

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 heavenly song? [Refrain]

Come to Bethlehem and see Him Whose birth the angels sing;  
Come, adore on bended knee, Christ the Lord, the newborn King. [Refrain]

**Prayer after Communion (Unison)**

Almighty God, we give you thanks for the gift of our Savior's presence in the simplicity and splendor of this holy meal. 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. Amen.

**We GO OUT ... to Love and Serve in Christ's Name**

**\*\*Sharing of the Light**

Laura Crow

Tonight is the night for which we have all been waiting. "For unto us a child is given, unto us a Savior is born." With the birth of Jesus, our lives will be forever changed. Christ, the light of the world, gives each one of us a light, so that we too may shine with gratitude, hope, and love.

Receive the light that comes to you. It comes from the Christ candle, but it reaches you only through the actions of your neighbors; and it reaches your neighbor only through your act of passing it to them. Receive the light of Christ. Offer the light of Christ. Hold the light, enjoy the light, and give thanks that the gift of Christ's light has come into the world.

**\*\*Christmas Carol**

*Silent Night*

TUNE: STILLE NACHT  
Jim McNamara, guitar

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! Shepherds quake at the sight!  
Glories stream from heaven afar, heav'nly hosts sing alleluia;  
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!

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.

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!

**\*\*Christmas Blessing**

Laura Crow

Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, is here! The shepherds heard it and came. The angels sang it to all who would listen. God's people are born anew – glory be to God! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!  
Let us go from this place bearing the light of Christ in our hearts so that our joy shines visibly in all we do, in all we say, and in all the places we may find ourselves.

*Merry Christmas*

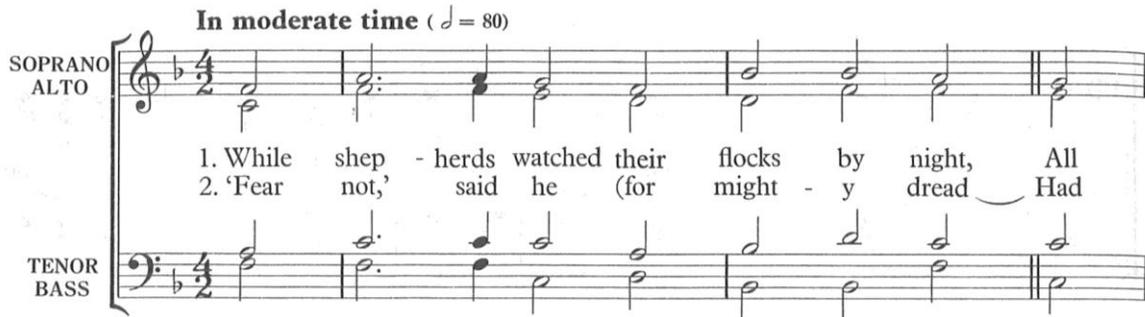
# 99. While shepherds watched their flocks

Words by  
NAHUM TATE  
(1652-1715)

*Este's Psalter* (1592)  
V. 6 arranged by DAVID WILLCOCKS

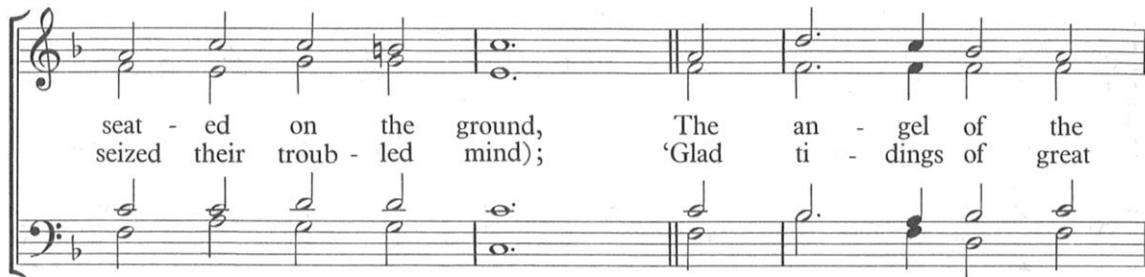
**In moderate time** (♩ = 80)

SOPRANO  
ALTO

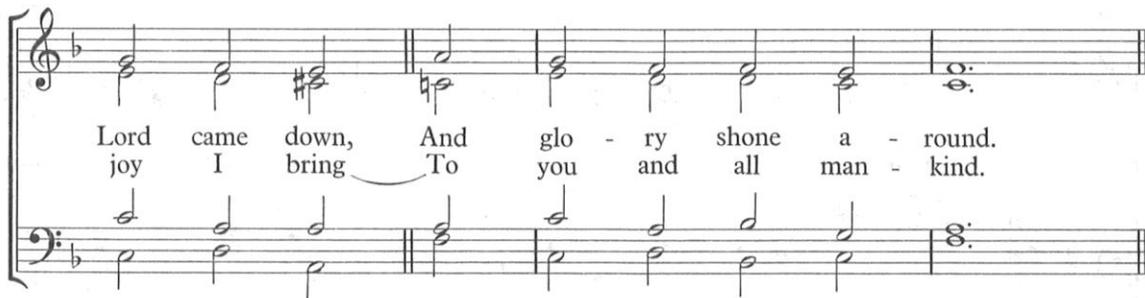


1. While shep - herds watched their flocks by night, All  
2. 'Fear not,' said he (for might - y dread Had

TENOR  
BASS



seat - ed on the ground, The an - gel of the  
seized their troub - led mind; 'Glad ti - dings of great



Lord came down, And glo - ry shone a - round.  
joy I bring To you and all man - kind.

3. All glory be to God on high, and to the earth be peace;  
good will hence-forth from heaven to all begin and never cease!