

# Christmas Eve 11:00pm

## 24 December 2011

*Light looked down and saw darkness.  
"I will go there," said Light.*

*Peace looked down and saw war.  
"I will go there," said Peace.*

*Love looked down and saw hatred.  
"I will go there," said Love.*

*So the Lord of Light  
the Prince of Peace  
the King of Love  
came down and crept in beside us.*

Cloth for the Cradle,  
Iona Community

### PRELUDE MUSIC

#### CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS MIRACLES

Instrumental Ensemble  
source: <http://www.christ-community.net/bulletins.htm>

**One:** Just when you think nothing new can be found in you,  
that all things are known,  
that all things have moved as far as they can go,  
*God in new beginnings is born again.*

Just as you think nothing can ever change,  
all things are established, embedded in old powers:  
*God as transforming love is born again.*

Just when deathly cycles drag you down into despair,  
*God arises in vivid miracle beyond our loss and fears.*

#### \*HYMN 135

"O Come, All You Faithful"

tune: *Adeste Fideles*

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 heaven above!  
Glory to God, In the highest;

*Refrain:*

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, Born this happy morning;  
Jesus, to thee be glory given;  
Word of the Father, Now in flesh appearing.

*Refrain:*

#### \*CELEBRATING THE MAGIC OF CHRISTMAS

source: <http://www.christ-community.net/bulletins.htm>

**One:** Now is the moment of magic when the whole earth  
turns again toward the sun, and here's a blessing:  
the days will be longer and brighter, even before the winter settles in to chill us.

**Many:** **The moment of magic is upon us.**

**One:** Now is the moment of magic, when people beaten down and broken,  
with nothing left but misery and candles and their own clear voices,  
kindle tiny lights and whisper secret music, and here's a blessing:  
the dark universe is suddenly illuminated by the lights of the menorah,  
suddenly ablaze with the lights of the kinara,  
and the whole world is glad and loud with winter singing.

**Many:** **The moment of magic is upon us.**

**One:** Now is the moment of magic, when an eastern star  
beckons the ignorant toward an unknown goal, and here's a blessing:  
they find nothing in the end but an ordinary baby, born at midnight,  
born in poverty, and the baby's cry, like bells ringing,  
makes people wonder as they wander through their lives,  
what human love might really look like, sound like, feel like.

**Many:** **The moment of magic is upon us.**

**One:** Now is the moment of magic, and here's a blessing: you already possess  
all the gifts you need; ears to hear music, eyes to behold lights,  
hands to build true peace on earth and to hold each other tight in love.

**Many:** **Watching for signs and prepared for movement,  
the moment of magic is upon us.**

## We welcome you...

*We are pleased that you have chosen to be with us this evening as we celebrate the joy of Christmas.*

## Our Christmas hymns...

*While we treasure the language and imagery of the New Century Hymnal, we know that the words we learned as children are precious to us as well. We invite you to sing the Christmas hymns with whatever words are most familiar and beloved for you.*

## Special Thanks...

*The wonder of this evening is made possible with our incredible musicians. Special thanks to our Chancel Choir, our Instrumentalists, and our music staff: Donita Bauer, Darcy Swanson and Twila Loy.*

## Communion Note...

*The words you hear as we share communion may be different than you've heard before. Like all of our life together, our prayers and practices at table are always evolving. Our Worship Team has been involved in reading and reflection on our shared table practices, exploring the meanings we share with bread and cup. Inspired by the stories of Jesus' table practices, we are aware that traditional communion imagery conveys beliefs that many of us do not share. Our prayerful hope is to offer language and metaphor that inspire us to greater compassion while allowing us to encounter wonder as we gather together at table. In our effort to make sure that everyone feels welcome at God's table, we now serve both bread and gluten-free wafers which can be dipped in the grape juice when received.*

\*RESPONSE 125

"Angels We Have Heard on High"

tune: Gloria

Angels we have heard on high,  
sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
And the mountains in reply,  
echo back their joyous strains.

Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.

### OUR STORY

READING	"When the World was Dark"	Cloth for the Cradle, Iona
ANTHEM	"For Unto Us A Child is Born" <i>Chancel Choir and Instrumentalists</i>	source: Handel
READING		Isaiah 9:2-6 and Luke 2:1-14
ANTHEM	"All is Well" <i>Chancel Choir and Instrumentalists</i>	Michael W. Smith
READING	"They Have Heard it on the Hills"	Cloth for the Cradle, Iona

RESPONSE 131

"It Came Upon a Midnight Clear"

tune: Carol

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.

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.

### TABLE FELLOWSHIP

#### INVITATION AND COMMUNION PRAYER (sung response)

One: Gathering around the table as we celebrate new life borning,  
we remember so many stories shared around tables;  
tables where bread is broken and cup is poured out,  
where families gather and generations share,  
where stories are remembered, refined, reshaped.

Many: *Congregational Refrain 756:* source: Berthier  
**Gloria, gloria, in excelsis deo!**  
**Gloria, gloria, alleluia, alleluia!**

One: Gathering around the table on this Holy night,  
we remember the story of the Sacred daring to share our life,  
the story of the holy donning human flesh and dwelling among us,  
a story that is at once both ethereal and earthly.

Many: *Congregational Refrain 756:* source: Berthier

One: Gathering around the table on this Christmas night,  
we break the bread and touch the mystery  
that in our brokenness we become whole;  
we fill the cup and remember the abundance  
discovered in each new sharing of our sacred stories.

Many: *Congregational Refrain 756:* source: Berthier

One: Together, around the table, we pray:  
Many: Come, holy Spirit, come.  
Bless this bread and bless this fruit of the vine.  
Bless all of us in our eating and drinking  
that our eyes might be opened,  
that we might recognize the Spirit rising in our midst  
indeed, in one another. Come, holy Spirit, come.

SHARING THE BREAD AND THE CUP

*The congregation is invited to come forward by the center aisle,  
taking a piece of bread and dipping it in the cup,  
placing an offering in the plates beside the table,  
and returning to the pews by the side aisles.*

*While we process, we will share a selection of carols:*

116: Veni Emmanuel  
O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
and with all children now do dwell,  
Give comfort to all exiles here,  
and to the aching heart give cheer.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel—shall come within as love to dwell.

O come, thou Wisdom from on high,  
who orders all things far and nigh;  
to us the path of knowledge show,  
and teach us in your ways to go.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel—shall come within as love to dwell.

148: 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?  
This, this, the angels sing, is Christ, God's holy offering;  
Haste, haste your praise to bring the babe, the child of Mary!

"I Wonder as I Wander", Appalacian  
I wonder as I wander out under the sky  
How Jesus the Savior did come from on high  
For poor on'ry people like you and like I  
I wonder as I wander out under the sky

When Mary birthed Jesus, 'twas in a cow's stall  
With wise men and farmers and shepherds and all  
But high from God's heaven, a star's light did fall  
And the promise of ages it then did recall

132: Antioch  
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 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.

*Will you come into our lives,  
if we open them to you and  
do something different?  
When the world was dark and the city  
was quiet you came.  
You crept in beside us.  
Do the same this Christmas, Lord.  
Do the same this Christmas.  
Amen.*

*Cloth for the Cradle,  
Iona Community, Wild Goose Publishing*

*They have heard it on the hills,  
They have heard it in the streets;  
The rumor prevails,  
And none can contradict it.*

*Some are looking up the prophets,  
Some are studying the skies,  
Others speculate or calculate,  
But none deny the facts.*

*Some are dancing back to sheepfolds,  
Some are traveling foreign roads,  
Some await more information,  
Others celebrate the news.*

*In a foreign place,  
A ruler has imposed a new tax,  
In a hilly place,  
An old woman nourishes her new son,  
In a royal place,  
An old ruler senses a new threat,  
In a busy place,  
A young couple cope  
with their new child.*

*At what seems the wrong time,  
In what seems the wrong place,  
Among those who seem  
the wrong people  
God has decided to bless,  
disturb,  
and visit us.  
Amen.*

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### Joining us for the first time?

#### In a word: *Welcome*

Whoever you are, wherever you are on the journey, you are truly welcome here. We are human and fallible, but utterly committed to God's extravagant welcome!

#### Worship Rules: *Enjoy*

Some people clap, some don't. Some babies make noise, some don't. Some people read music, some people look at pictures. We stand and either speak or sing together occasionally, but do what feels right for you. Likewise with clothes; some people wear suits with sneakers, some wear hockey uniforms with ruby slippers. Whatever style is yours, it's safe here. *Enjoy your time with us!*

#### Coffee: *Your choice*

Bring your own or fill up with the pot in the Fireside Room. Bring it in to worship, or not; decaf or regular. *It's your choice!*

#### Difference: *Bring it on!*

We don't simply tolerate our difference, we celebrate the wonder of the sacred in our differences... not only age, race, gender, ability, and orientation, but politics and theology too!

### Please join us again...

- Tomorrow @ 11am: Family-friendly worship.
- New Year's Day @ 8<sup>30</sup>am & 11am
- Church School begins again on Jan 8 @ 9<sup>45</sup>am.

#### PRAYER OF DEDICATION

source: <http://www.christ-community.net/bulletins.htm>

One: The joy of brightening other lives, bearing each others burdens, easing other's loads and supplanting empty hearts and lives with generous gifts becomes for us the magic of Christmas.

W. C. Jones

Many: May we leave this celebration enlivened to do the work of Christmas.  
May we offer Christmas blessings to family and friend and stranger alike.  
May the birth of hope in the midst of despair all those years ago be the spark which births hope in our lives and our world. Amen.

#### SHARING THE LIGHT

*(The light of the Christ candle will be passed from the center aisle. The lighted candles should always be held upright while the unlit candles are dipped to the flame.)*

#### HYMN 132

"Silent Night, Holy Night"

Stille Nacht

*(The congregation will sing the first verse in German followed by three verses in English)*

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht! Alles schläft, einsam wacht  
Nur das traute, hochheilige Paar.  
Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar,  
Schlaf' in himmlischer Ruh', Schlaf' in himmlischer Ruh'!

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,  
Heavenly 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.

#### BENEDICTION

John 1 (selected verses)

*(Please extinguish all candles at this time)*

#### \*POSTLUDE