



**Ames United Church of Christ
Monday, December 24, 2018**

Welcome to Ames UCC! In keeping with the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, we joyfully and unconditionally welcome all people of any age, gender, race, culture, ability, sexual orientation, or gender identity into our community of faith and affirm the worth of all people as unique individuals made in God's image. We are open to the special gifts that each person brings and invite each one to participate in the life of our church.

ABOUT WORSHIP AT AMES UCC

Our church is the inheritor of many powerful worship traditions and the adopter of new, moving innovations. But whichever element serves the needs of the day (in terms of scripture, season, or society), each service is developed by members of the church and staff to function as a journey. Our journey takes the individual toward God, into the body of Christ, and then back out to the world with the strength of the Holy Spirit. Along the way we may laugh, we may cry, we may experience deep silence. In each, we embody and come to know more deeply what it means to be a Christian in such a time as this: a servant of the power that calls us together and sends us out to be the eyes, hands, and feet of justice in the world. We hope that you leave today feeling connected, renewed, and in relationship with the holy.

Our deacon, ushers, and greeters for today are Barbara Faidley, Andrea Klocke, Chris Klocke, Nora Klocke, Stella Klocke, Anna Watts, Jean Watts, Justin Watts, and Oliver Watts.

PRELUDE

PROCLAMATION AND LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE Isaiah 9:2,6

The Christ candle in the middle of our wreath has been unlit since the first Sunday in Advent, four weeks ago. It will now be lit every Sunday until the next Advent season (with the exception of Good Friday).

One: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them 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.

CALL TO CELEBRATION

One: Have you not heard? Something new has happened upon our earth!

**Many: Yes, we have heard!
Rumors say a child is born, a Savior found!**

One: People of God, these are not rumors. For unto us is born this day in Bethlehem, Jesus, the infant Christ!

Many: This is good news of great joy which has come to all people!

HYMN “The First Noel”

Singing is one way to connect to God through our bodies. We stand up, breathe deep, and let loose. And as Augustine wrote, “(S)he who sings, prays twice.”

During our weekly worship services we strive to use language that is inclusive and reflective of our understanding of God, so only rarely do we describe God as “he” and take care with the words “king” and “salvation,” for example, because they comes with so much baggage. However, at Christmas time, we always go back to the old fashioned language and hymns. There is still wisdom to be found within each.

**The first Noel the angels did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay:
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.**
refrain: **Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel
Born is the King of Israel.**

**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

**And by the light of that same star,
Three Wise Men 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 north-west;
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest;
And there it did both stop and stay
Right over the place where Jesus lay:**
refrain

GOSPEL Luke 2:1-14 (New Revised Standard Version)

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.

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 Anointed One, 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 God favors!”

HOMILY

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION WITH OFFERINGS OF FOOD

Our Communion table is open to all: young and old, faithful and dubious. No one will be turned away. We serve the bread and the juice through “intinction,” which means dipping the bread into the juice. Your server will offer each to you with the phrases “the Bread of Life” and “the Cup of Blessing.” If you are unable to come forward but would like to participate in the meal, simply wait for your row to be empty, then raise your hand. A server will come to you. The bread is free of gluten, soy, and dairy. If you have brought canned goods for the Food at First pantry, please set them at the Communion table before being served.

Invitation

One: God is with you.

Many: And also with you.

One: Let us open our hearts to the Spirit of Christ, born a long time ago,
and born again this night in our lives.

**Many: We open our hearts to God,
the Christ birthing now in our lives,
and to one another—
precious embodiments of Your creation.**

One: We give thanks.

Many: We thank God with joy.

Thanksgiving

One: God of humble births and the stars in the heavens, we thank You for
Your persistent love for all creation. We thank You for those who can
see You and make connections that lead toward meaning. We thank
You for those who are wise—who will journey out to strange lands
and unknown territories in search for truth or to bring justice. We
thank You for Your way of breathing life into us, and of helping us to
take deep breaths when we need them.

**Many: God of love, creativity, novelty, joy,
meaning, peace and hope,
in spite of all the challenges on earth
and in our personal lives,
we give thanks for Your persistence throughout the universe.**

One: We rejoice in Your Word through Jesus the Christ, who was born
humbly, who communed with those others called outcast, who lived a
complex life that sought justice, who died unfairly, and whose Spirit
lives among us still.

Sharing the Meal

“Away in a Manger”

**Away in a manger
No crib for His 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 poor Baby wakes
But little Lord Jesus
No crying He makes.
I love Thee, Lord Jesus
Look down from the sky
And stay by my side,
'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 take us to heaven
To live with Thee there.**

“It Came upon the 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, goodwill to men
From heavens all gracious King!"
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.**

**O ye beneath life's crushing load,
Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way
With painful steps and slow;
Look now, for glad and golden hours
Come swiftly on the wing;
Oh rest beside the weary road
And hear the angels sing.**

“Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming”

**Lo, how a Rose e’er blooming
From tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse’s lineage coming,
As men of old have sung.
It came, a flow’ret bright,
Amid the cold of winter,
When half spent was the night.**

**Isaiah ’twas foretold it,
The Rose I have in mind;
With Mary we behold it,
The virgin mother kind.
To show God’s love aright,
She bore to men a Savior,
When half spent was the night.**

“What Child Is This”

**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 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 own him.
The King of kings salvation brings,
Let loving hearts enthrone him.
Raise, raise a song on high,
The virgin sings her lullaby.
Joy, joy for Christ is born,
The babe, the Son of Mary.**

“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.**

**O holy Child of Bethlehem
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in,
Be born to us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell.
O come to us, abide with us
Our Lord Emmanuel.**

Prayer of Thanksgiving

**All: Holy Creator, Bread of Life, Everlasting Salvation,
a light shines in the night
and the night will not overcome it.
In this meal we have been replenished and strengthened,
the light of your love rekindled within.
We will be bold to carry this light into the world. Amen.**

OFFERING “Communion Carol” Lee Dengler
Chancel Choir

Our offering this evening will go, in its entirety, to the Emergency Residence Project so that there will always be room at the inn.

THE SHARING OF LIGHT

The ushers receive their light from the Christ Candle in the center of the Advent Wreath. Then we pass the light on to one another in silence as the Light of the World dispels the darkness.

HYMN “Silent Night, Holy Night”

On Christmas Eve in 1818, the church organ in the small Austrian town of Oberndorf broke. Needing music for that night’s service, Pastor Joseph Mohn and musician Franz Gruber created the words and music for “Silent Night,” the world’s most beloved Christmas song, which Franz Gruber played on the guitar. Tonight marks the 200th anniversary of this event. To commemorate this, as the light spreads from the Christ candle outward, Tom Meyer will play “Silent Night” on guitar. When the light has fully spread, we will rise to sing together.

**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.**

CHANGING THE LIGHT

HYMN OF SENDING “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 angelic host proclaim,
“Christ is born in Bethlehem!”

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 a virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
Hail incarnate Deity,
Pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus our Emmanuel.

refrain

Hail the heav’nly Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
Ris’n with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by,
Born that man no more may die;
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.

refrain

BENEDICTION

SEE YOU IN THE MORNING!

Please join us for worship tomorrow morning at 9:30 a.m. We will gather for song, scripture, and continued celebration. Feel free to come just as you are, rumpled and receptive, to this glorious morn.

OFFICE CLOSED FOR HOLIDAYS

The church office will continue to be closed through Tuesday, January 1. Normal business hours resume on Wednesday, January 2: 9a-1p, 2p-5p Monday through Thursday.

Be In Touch with Ames UCC Staff

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Mon-Thurs 9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.
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