



December 24, 2023
10pm

“Will We Carry
Forward the
Christmas Story?”

Christmas Eve

Welcome!

Name tags are in the Narthex. Welcome forms in the pews
For the main level restroom, exit front left. More restrooms downstairs.
We welcome the sounds and movements of children in worship.

The Love of God Gathers Us

Gathering Music

We greet those around us or sit quietly, settling into sacred time and space

Ringling of the Bell

Prelude and Candle Lighting

“Still, Still, Still”

Austrian Melody

Acknowledging the light of Christ among us

Words of Welcome

Choral Anthem

“Dona Nobis Pacem”

Unknown German composer

* = Sitting or standing

NCH = *New Century Hymnal*

Advent Candle Liturgy *(responsive)*

We come to this season of Advent and gather around...
We light the candle of HOPE...
We light the candle of PEACE...
We light the candle of JOY...
We light the candle of LOVE... Let us pray:

Emmanuel, we celebrate your Advent in Jesus with precious words and traditions. And we light an Advent of new hope in this time and place. Amen.

***Sung Response**

“O Come, O Come Emmanuel”

traditional carol, chorus by Maren Tirabassi

**O come, Desire of Nations, bind
all peoples in one heart and mind;
Make envy, strife, and quarrels cease;
fill the whole world with heaven’s peace.
Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel
is come to birth where all God’s children dwell.**

***Prayer of Longing** *(responsive)*

Holy Center of this holy season — Jesus, child and ruler: all our stars point to your birth, all our wanderings come home to you, all our griefs and delights find a place in the stable where you choose to transform poverty and pain and loneliness and rejection.

Your light shines in our lives; your peace embraces our struggle; your life opens us to new awareness of our most intimate selves and of our neighbors, however we may encounter them. In your humble birth we discover your everlasting majesty and grace. We welcome you and offer you our thanks and praise. Amen.

...the singing bowl welcomes us into silent prayer

***Assurance of Grace** *(responsive)*

One: The peace of Christ be with you! **All:** And also with you!

***Passing the Peace**

*We first wave toward the Narthex –to those worshiping with us online
To those around us: we offer a smile, peace sign, or handshake*

Lessons and Carols

The First Reading Carol (NCH #126)	“Angels, from the Realms of Glory” vs. 1 & 4	Isaiah 9: 2-7
The Second Reading Carol (NCH #133)	“O Little Town of Bethlehem” vs. 1-2	Luke 2: 1-7
The Third Reading Carol (NCH #132)	“Joy to the World” vs. 1-2	Luke 2: 8-12
The Fourth Reading Carol (NCH #125)	“Angels We Have Heard High” vs. 1-2	Luke 2: 13-14
The Fifth Reading Carol (NCH #148)	“What Child is This?” vs. 1 & 3	Luke 2: 15-20
The Sixth Reading		John 1: 1-14
Lighting The Christ Candle		
Carol (NCH #144)	“Hark the Herald Angels Sing” vs. 1 & 3	

Responding To God's Love

Message "Will We Carry Forward the Christmas Story?"

Carol (NCH #139) "The First Nowell"
vs. 1-2

A Prayer for Christmastide

Invitation to the Offering

Greeters pass offering plates.

We give by cash, check or electronically (scanning the QR code).

Pledged gifts marked for a predecessor church are tracked accordingly.

Loose offerings go to St. Croix United Church.



Offertory "Snow on Snow" (In the Bleak Midwinter)
by Gustav Holst, arranged by Ruth Elaine Schram

***Offertory Response** "In the Bleak Midwinter"

**What can I offer, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.
If I were a wise one, I would do my part;
but what can I offer: all my heart.**

***Prayer of Dedication** (*unison*)

God of all, in Jesus you have come to us to speak your Word of love and life. Touch us with unearthly joy like the singing of angels. Fill us with wonder like the eyes of children. Teach us to humble ourselves before you like the worshiping magi. May our journey to the manger be only the beginning of a lifetime of serving you. In gratitude and hope, we dedicate our gifts of love, money, and prayer to the work of your love. Amen.

The Lighting of the Candles

***Benediction**

***Preparing To Share The Christ Light**

***Carol (NCH #134)**

“Silent Night, Holy 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, 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.**

Please extinguish your candle as the lights come up

We carry the light of Christ with us in all times and spaces

***Postlude**

Peace on earth and good tidings to all!

As we quietly depart, candles can be placed in baskets at either exit

We thank our poinsettia donors...

Pastor Clare Gromoll

In celebration of our new beginnings as St. Croix United Church

Mary and Milan Horak

In memory of Mila and Milo Horak

Mindy Peters

In thanks for longtime friendships

Paula and Walt Richey

Dedicated to a new beginning for St. Croix United Church and to great memories of St. Peter's and People's

Cindy and John Siegel

A wish for peace and good health for everyone in our church and/or whoever enters it

Fritz West

In memory of Cynthia Evone West and William and Jean West

Kathleen Dennison

Sue Favilla

Jill Greenhalgh



We encourage donors to take flowers home following the service tonight.

PRAYER CORNER

Please hold these joys and concerns in your prayers:

For persons known to us...

- *For **Jamie and Jack Lenczewski**, and their daughters, as they welcomed a new baby!
- *For **Pastor Daniel Harrell** as he grieves the recent death of his father.
- *With the Gromoll family's Lowe Syndrome community, grieving the death of a young man named **Daniel** just before his 31st birthday.
- *With Jill Greenhalgh and Rolf Dittmann, prayers for peace and comfort for former neighbor, **Jane**, as she enters hospice care.
- *With Mary Maren Bjork, we pray for those grieving the sudden death of her friend, **Carol**.
- *With Jennifer Halvorsen-Albright, we pray for **Victoria**, whose son had struggled with mental health and died recently.
- *With Mary Ann Litfin, we pray for fiance John's daughter, **Claire**, as she faced into an unexpected pregnancy.

And in the wider community...

- *With NormaRae, prayers for those on the move - seeking refuge, safe passage, and resources to sustain life.
- *For **all who struggle with mental health challenges** as well as with **grief** during the holidays. May empathy and other vital resources surround all of us.





All are welcome to join us Sunday mornings

Weekly Sunday Worship Service

Choir Rehearsal | 8:30 am (*newcomers welcome!*)

Coffee | 9:00 am

Worship | 9:30 am

Optional nursery care (for infants & tots) | 9:15-10:30 am


Sunday School & Youth Group (age 4 - gr 12) | 9:45-10:15 am

Fellowship | 10:30 am

Adult Faith Conversations | 11:00 am (*childcare provided*)

Thank you to today's partners: Sharon Neuenfeldt (Worship Accompanist), Michael Bjork (Choir Director), SCUC Choir, Mary Binger & Carol Dusbabek (greeters), Rolf Dittmann & Cheri Schwartz (liturgists), Paul Spilseth, Bob Dickie & Mark Stephan (tech team), Jackie Savage (sanctuary organizer, outdoor sign), Andi Favilla & Jenni Shaller (decorations)



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