



December 31, 2023

“It Is So  
Beautiful!  
Do You See It?”

New Year's Eve

### **Welcome!**

Name tags are in Narthex, welcome forms in pews  
Feel free to bring coffee and tea into worship

Restrooms: main level (exit front left),  
lower level (at foot of stair/lift, off Narthex)

Optional nursery care for infant - age 3 (downstairs, starts at 9:25)

### **The Love of God Gathers Us**

#### **Gathering Music**

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

#### **Ring of the Bell**

#### **Prelude and Candle Lighting**

“What Child is This?”

*W.C. Dix*

*Acknowledging the light of Christ among us*

#### **Words of Welcome**

\* = Sitting or standing

NCH = *New Century Hymnal*

**\*Call to Worship** (*responsive*)

God calls us now in this Christmas season to become new – to make room for the gifts of Christ’s nativity.

**When we are lost—hope.**

When we are busy—peace.

**When we are sad—joy.**

When we are bitter—love.

**May this hour be a time to welcome all these gifts of God. Amen.**

**\*Opening Carol**

**“Do You See What I See?”**

Said the night wind to the little lamb:

"Do you see what I see?

Way up in the sky, little lamb

Do you see what I see?

A star, a star, dancing in the night

With a tail as big as a kite

With a tail as big as a kite"

Said the little lamb to the shepherd boy:

"Do you hear what I hear?

Ringing through the sky, shepherd boy

Do you hear what I hear?

A song, a song, high above the trees

With a voice as big as the sea

With a voice as big as the sea"

Said the shepherd boy to the mighty king:

"Do you know what I know?

In your palace warm, mighty king

Do you know what I know?

A Child, a Child shivers in the cold

Let us bring Him silver and gold

Let us bring Him silver and gold"

Said the king to the people everywhere:

"Listen to what I say!

Pray for peace, people everywhere!

Listen to what I say!  
The Child, the Child, sleeping in the night  
He will bring us goodness and light  
He will bring us goodness and light"

### Acknowledging Our Need for God's Grace

#### **\*Prayer of Confession and Longing** (*unison*)

Faithful God, we rejoice that you have sent your promised Christ. And yet we confess that we are not fully ready for Christ's coming; we are reluctant to live as if the whole Earth were your domain. We know the story—the shepherds, the angels, the magi—but we don't fully understand what it means. Awaken us by your Spirit so that Christ's birth makes a difference in our lives. Grant us your peace, through the grace of Jesus Christ. Amen.

*...welcoming us into a moment of 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.  
Then to those around us: smiles, hands at heart center or in peace signs  
We might also offer a handshake.*

### A Time With Children and Youth

#### **Sung Invitation**

*...as our young people come forward*

**This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine...  
...let it shine, let it shine, oh let it shine.**

#### **Singing "Happy Birthday"**

**Gina Buberl (29th), Marcell Hernandez (29th), Jessica Buck (30th), Eddy Hintze-Graf (31st - 6 yrs), Diane Legato (5th), Cindy Siegel (5th)**

**Wondering Together**

“God Gave Me a Body House”

**Blessing One Another**

*...with our arms wide open*

Children: God be with you

**All: And also with you**

**Sung Affirmation**

*...as young people depart or return to families*

**Ev'rywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine...  
...let it shine, let it shine, oh let it shine.**

*infant - age 3 | nursery care available (9:25-10:30) downstairs  
Older children and youth remain in worship today  
(Sunday School & Youth Group resume Jan. 7)*

*We welcome sounds and movements of children in worship  
("busy bags" available in Narthex)*

### **Proclaiming God's Love**

**A Reading from Hebrew Scriptures** | *Common English Bible*

Genesis 1:1-5

**A Reading from Hebrew Scriptures** | *CEB*

Proverbs 8:22-32

**A Reading from the Gospels** | *CEB*

John 1: 1-5; 9-14

**A Reading from the Gospels** | *CEB*

John 5:1-15

**Morning Message**

“It is so Beautiful! Do you see it?”

Rev. Naomi Kirstein

### **Responding To God's Love**

**Prayer Hymn (NCH #28)**

“For the Beauty of the Earth”

**all verses**

**Prayers of the People**

*(a cacophony of prayers be heard as we enter the new year)*

One: We rejoice with the family of Jaime and Jack Lenczewski for the birth of Leo Richard Joseph, Dec. 19, 2023. We celebrate the birth of all those children we know who have been born into our world this past year and the joy that they bring to us. We name them in our hearts and we name them in community.

**Cacophony: *Speak names silently or aloud, surrounded by community***

One: For those recovering from COVID infections, we pray for swift recovery.... We name them in our hearts and we name them in community.

**Cacophony: *Speak names silently or aloud, surrounded by community***

One: For those who struggle with serious illness, we pray for courage, strength, and healing.... We name them in our hearts and we name them in community.

**Cacophony: *Speak names silently or aloud, surrounded by community***

One: For those grieving devastating losses, we pray for peace and love to surround them... We name them in our hearts and we name them in community.

**Cacophony: *Speak names silently or aloud, surrounded by community***

One: For those we know who are moving in liminal space or in transition... Crossing over to a new beginning... We name them in our hearts and we name them in community.

**Cacophony: *Speak names silently or aloud, surrounded by community***

**Prayer of Jesus (unison)**

**Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,  
Source of all that is and that shall be, Father and Mother of us all,  
Loving God, in whom is heaven:**

**the hallowing of your name echo through the universe!**

**The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!**

**Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!**

**Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on Earth.**

**With the bread we need for today, feed us.**

**In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.**

**In times of temptation and testing, strengthen us.**

**From trials too great to endure, spare us.**

**From the grip of all that is evil, free us.**

**For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever.**

**Amen.**

## 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

“What Can I Give?”

Rossetti

### \*Offertory Response

“Praise God” by John Mueller  
**sung twice**

**Praise, God, for these gifts;  
we lift them up for heaven’s blessing.  
Praise God, for these gifts;  
we lift them up to serve you, Lord.**

### \*Prayer of Dedication (*unison*)

**Creator God, thank you for your promises of hope, possibility and renewal that can be found in each of us. Thank you for this wonderful, changing world that is relentlessly alive with your Word and your love. Inspire us to find wisdom and courage in your creation, sensing the deep roots of the love that strengthens and sustains us, dedicating ourselves every more fully to your work of love, now and forever. Amen.**

### Going Forth to Share God’s Love

### \*Closing Carol (NCH #154)

“Go Tell It on the Mountain”  
**all verses**

### \*Benediction

### \*Sending Song

*We form a circle around the perimeter of the Sanctuary.  
Some may choose to offer an elbow to link or a hand to hold.*

Irish Blessing  
**sung twice**

**May the road rise to meet you  
May the wind be at your back  
May the sun shine warm upon your face  
The rain fall soft upon your fields  
And until we meet again  
Till we meet again  
May God hold you in the palm of God's hand**

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

**\*Postlude**

“Put Peace into Each Other's Hands”

*Kaan*

***After-Worship Fellowship***

*All are welcome to join us in the Fellowship Hall  
for treats, beverages, and good company!*

**PRAYER CORNER**

*Please hold these joys and concerns in your prayers:*

***For persons known to us...***

\*We rejoice with **Jaime and Jack Lenczewksi** and daughters **Addie and Ellie** at the birth of **Leo Richard Joseph Lenczewski** (named after Jack's grandpa, Jaime's dad, and Jack's dad). Leo was born on December 19th. All are healthy and settling in at home.

\*For those recovering from COVID infections, we pray for swift recovery.

\*For those who struggle with serious illness, we pray for courage, strength, and healing.

\*For those grieving devastating losses, we pray for peace and love to surround them.

***And in the wider community...***

\*For all **caregivers**, we pray strength, resilience, and support as they care for loved ones.

\*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.

WE WISH YOU AND  
YOUR FAMILY A


*Happy New Year*

FILLED WITH BLESSINGS  
OF LOVE AND LIGHT



Thank you to today's partners: Rev. Naomi Kirstein (Guest Preacher), Sharon Neuenfeldt (Worship Accompanist), Michael Bjork (Choir Director), Mary Ann Litfin & Cheri Schwartz (cantors), Bob Dickie & Cindy Parsons (greeters), Sharri Kinkead (liturgist), Kathy & Bob Iverson (fellowship), Paul Spilseth, Bob Dickie & Mark Stephan (tech team), Lisa Culbertson (Childcare Provider), Jackie Savage (sanctuary organizer, outdoor sign), Andi Favilla & Jenni Shaller (decorations)



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## For the Beauty of the Earth

St. 1-3, Follitt S. Pierpoint, 1864; alt.

St. 4, Miriam Therese Winter, 1993

1 For the beau-ty of the earth, for the splen-dor of the skies,  
 2 For the won-der of each hour of the day and of the night,  
 3 For the joy of hu-man love, broth-er, sis-ter, par-ent, child,  
 4 For the good that love in-spires, for a world where none ex-clude,

For the love which from our birth o-ver and a-round us lies,  
 Hill and vale, and tree and flower, sun and moon, and stars of light,  
 Friends on earth, and friends a-bove, for all gen-tle thoughts and mild,  
 For a faith that nev-er tires, and for ev-ery heart re-newed,

*Refrain*

God of all, to you we raise this our hymn of grate-ful praise.

*Follitt S. Pierpoint, author of numerous hymns, penned these verses near his native city of Bath, England, on a late spring day when flowers were in full bloom and all the earth seemed to rejoice.*

Tune: DIX 7.7.7.7. with refrain  
 Conrad Kocher, 1838  
 Adapt. William H. Monk, 1861

# Closing Carol (NCH #154)

# “Go Tell It on the Mountain”

*Refrain*  
G D7 G

Go tell it on the moun - tain, o - ver the hill and ev - ery - where.

G Em C G/D D7 *Last time, end*  
G

Go tell it on the moun - tain, that Je - sus Christ is born!

G D7 G

1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,  
2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when lo! a - bove the earth  
3 Down in a low - ly man - ger the hum - ble Christ was born,

G A7 D7 *to Refrain*

Be - hold through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.  
Rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.  
And God sent us sal - va - tion that bless - ed Christ-mas morn.