

# Candlelight Worship

December 24, 2017  
9:00pm

“Music and sudden light  
have interrupted  
this routine  
tonight...”

W.H. Auden



The Congregational  
Church of Needham

# Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion

December 24, 2017

9:00PM

## MUSICAL PRELUDE

Still, Still, Still

*Austrian Carol arr. Norman Luboff (1917 - 1987)*

Deo Gracias (from Ceremony of Carols)

*Benjamin Britten (1913 - 1976)*

A Christmas Blessing

*Philip W.J. Stopford (b. 1977)*

O Holy Night

*Adolphe Adam (1803 - 1856)*

*Crosby Goshgarian Jr., bass*

**GATHERING SONG** (*see page 10*)

**Jesus, Jesus, Oh, What a Wonderful Child**

## OPENING PRAYER

Almighty and Ever-Loving God, Mother and Father of us all, you have poured forth upon us the new light of your incarnate Word: Grant that this light, enkindled in our hearts, may shine forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, in glory, everlasting. Amen.

## Welcome and Congregational Greeting

### **The Christmas Proclamation** (*from the Roman Martyrology*)

Many ages after God created the heavens and the earth,  
when human beings of every gender were formed  
in God's own image;  
long after the great flood, when God made the rainbow  
shine forth as a sign of the covenant;  
many centuries from the time of Abraham and Sarah and Hagar;  
many centuries after Moses led God's people out of Egypt  
and Miriam danced in freedom;  
eleven hundred years from the time of Ruth and the judges;  
a thousand years from the anointing of David as king;  
in fulfillment of the times and years and months and days  
discerned by the prophets;  
in the one hundred ninety-fourth Olympiad;  
the seven hundred fifty-second year  
from the founding of the city of Rome;  
in the forty-second year of the reign of Octavian Augustus;  
in the sixth age of the world,

in the fullness of time,  
Jesus Christ, Savior of the people, coming in mercy,  
was born of the woman Mary  
in Bethlehem of Judea.

**PROCESSIONAL HYMN #132** (*Red, Pilgrim*)

**O Come All Ye Faithful**

First Lesson

Luke 2:1-7

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.

**ANTHEM**

As it Fell Upon a Night

*Katherine K. Davis (1892 - 1980)*

*Chancel Choir*

Second Lesson:

Luke 2:8-14

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of God stood before them, and the glory of God 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 Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Sovereign One. 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 favours!’

**HYMN** (*seated*) (*see page 11*)

**How Great My Joy**

Third Lesson

Luke 2:15-20

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 God 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 to them.

**ANTHEM**

In the Bleak Midwinter

*Gustav Holst (1874 - 1934)*

*Laura Frye - soprano*

**CHRISTMAS MESSAGE**

Rev. Jim Mitulski

**The Offering of Tithes and Gifts**

**ANTHEM**

Tomorrow Shall be My Dancing Day

*John Gardner (1917-*

*2011)*

*Joseph Rondeau—hand drum*

**\*Doxology**

Pilgrim Hymnal #128 v. 4, adapted

Text: Christina Rossetti (1872) Tune Gustav Holst (1906)

*What shall I give thee, 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;  
What I can I give thee, give my heart.*

**COMMUNION LITURGY**

As we come to this table,  
I invite you to recall these words from an ancient Hebrew poet:  
    Arise, my love, my fair one,  
    And come away.  
    Let me see your face,  
    let me hear your voice;  
    for your voice is sweet,  
    and your face is lovely.

Our ancestors in faith heard those words as the voice of God.  
Let us hear them spoken to us and to the whole creation  
As we recall the night Jesus was betrayed with a kiss,  
The night Jesus yearned to share a final meal with dearest friends,  
The night Jesus tenderly washed their feet,  
A night of bodily offering of love,  
A night of divine vulnerability.

The Blessing of the Bread

The Blessing of the Cup

And so we pray:

Assure us, Creator God, made in your image  
That you welcome our whole selves to this table,  
    Not just the selves we show to others,  
    Not just the selves classified by imperial order,  
    Not just the selves regulated by regimes of propriety,  
    Not just the selves we wish we were.  
Welcome us, whole and cherished...assure us at this table, God.

Free us, Incarnate Word,  
Free us from the judgments we heap upon ourselves,  
    From the shame that isolates us from others,  
    From the despair that lashes out against others,  
    From the fear that we are never good enough,  
    From the lies that make us feel undesirable  
From all that keeps us from ourselves and others...free us at this table, God.

Inspire us, Spirit of Life and Abundance,  
Always to give thanks for everything,  
    For our bodies and our desires,  
    For our heartaches and our infatuations,  
    For our poignant loneliness and passionate embraces,  
    For every stumbling, joyous step toward the Beloved Community...inspire us at  
this table, God.

As we remember the cost of love in a world of violence,  
We hope for that banquet you have prepared from the foundation of the world.

Assure us, save us, inspire us  
That your love may become incarnate in us  
    Our bodies,  
    Our relationships,  
    Our work and our play,  
    The service we offer for the world you have made.

*As we prepare for communion and as a sign of our unity we pray the prayer of Jesus, in  
whatever version is familiar to us.*

*Our God ...Our Mother/Father.... Our Father.... Our Mother... Our Creator...*

*Who art in heaven....*

*And forgive us our debts... or and forgive us our trespasses...*

*For thine is the kingdom.... For the kingdom. The power...*

Open Communion: The United Church of Christ practices an Open Communion. This means everyone is welcome to receive the bread and the grape juice at communion. You do not need to be a member of this or any church to receive communion. You do not need to be baptized or confirmed. You are welcome to receive communion if you are divorced or remarried or single, or if you are gay or transgender, if you are believing or seeking, if you are atheist or agnostic or orthodox in your beliefs. Everyone is welcome, no exceptions.

Parents may bring their children to communion. Children may receive, or simply receive a blessing. There is gluten-free bread available.

**HYMN** (*seated, during communion*)

**Away in a Manger #137** (*Red, Pilgrim*)

**Angels We Have Heard on High #116** (*Red, Pilgrim*)

**A Hallelujah Christmas** (*originally by Leonard Cohen*)

**I've heard about this baby boy**

**Who's come to earth to bring us joy**

**And I just want to sing this song to you**

**It goes like this, the fourth, the fifth**

**The minor fall, the major lift**

**With every breath I'm singing Hallelujah**

**Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah**

**A couple came to Bethlehem**

**Expecting child, they searched the inn**

**To find a place for You were coming soon**

**There was no room for them to stay**

**So in a manger filled with hay**

**God's only Son was born, oh Hallelujah**

**Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah**

**The shepherds left their flocks by night**

**To see this baby wrapped in light**

**A host of angels led them all to You**

**It was just as the angels said**

**You'll find Him in a manger bed**

**Immanuel and Savior, Hallelujah**

**Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah**

**A star shown bright up in the east**

**To Bethlehem, the wise men three  
Came many miles and journeyed long for You  
And to the place at which You were  
Their frankincense and gold and myrrh  
They gave to You and cried out Hallelujah  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah**

### **LIGHTING THE CANDLES**

*Pass the light to your neighbor. Tilt the unlit candle.*

**HYMN** (*seated, during candle lighting*)

**Silent 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 Saviour, is born!  
Christ, the Saviour, 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!**

### **Closing Prayer**

- Howard Thurman  
I will light Candles this Christmas;  
Candles of joy despite all sadness,  
Candles of hope where despair keeps watch,  
Candles of courage for fears ever present,  
Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days,  
Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens,  
Candles of love to inspire all my living,

Candles that will burn all the year long.

*(after some moments of silence, you may extinguish your candles)*

**CLOSING HYMN #120** (*Red, Pilgrim*)

**Hark! The Herald Angels Sing**

**POSTLUDE**

Choral Prelude "Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme" BWV 645

*Johann Sebastian Bach*

*\* You are invited to stand for the opening and closing hymns.*

*Please remain seated for the singing of the carols.*

***On behalf of the Church, the Board of Directors and the Deacons we extend to you our very best wishes for a blessed Christmas to you, your family, and friends.***

*Liturgy Notes:* The cover quote is from a quatrain taken from W.H. Auden's book length poem "For The Time Being: A Christmas Oratorio." The entire quote is "Music and sudden light have interrupted the routine tonight, and swept the filth of habit from our hearts. O here and now our endless journey starts." The Oratorio was to be set to music by Benjamin Britten. Auden wrote it at the beginning of WW2, expressing his anxiety in a tumultuous time and also his grief over the loss of his mother and his relationship with Chester Kallman, and his rekindled interest in Christianity. The Christmas Proclamation is from the Roman Martyrology, a supposedly ancient Christian document that situates the birth of Jesus as a significant event in salvation history, and is typically sung at the beginning of Midnight Mass. This text has been refashioned by Wisdom UCC in Lancaster PA. The Eucharistic Prayer was written by the Rev. Dr. Jay Johnson, Episcopal priest and professor of theology at the Pacific School of Religion on the theme of Incarnation. The Candlelight Prayer was written by Dr. Howard Thurman, who was the Dean of Marsh Chapel at Boston University School of Theology, and one of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's professors when he was a doctoral student there.

## **Covenant**

We strive to be a joyful, welcoming Christian Community.

We seek to be faithful in a world torn by suffering, injustice, oppression, and war.

We are inspired by God, Christ's Ministry, and the examples of other faithful people.

We join together in worship and song, fellowship, study, and mission to embrace the risks and challenges of continuing Christ's ministry

We struggle to live out our faith in the world by furthering justice and peace, witnessing to the truth, and proclaiming God's love and mercy for all people.

## **Open and Affirming Statement**

As a covenant community we are committed to the belief that all people are created equal before God.

In affirmation of the inclusive love of Christ Jesus, we welcome persons of any race, gender, age, sexual orientation, ability and economic circumstance to full participation in our community life and ministry.

We strive to reflect these beliefs in the language and content of our worship and in our lives together.

*(This statement adopted in 2000, reflects the welcome of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender people and their friends and families.)*

CHRISTMAS

108 Jesus, Jesus, Oh, What a Wonderful Child

The musical score is written in G major and 12/8 time. It consists of five systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are: "Je-sus, Je-sus, oh, what a won-der-ful child. Je-sus, Je-sus, so ho-ly, meek, and mild; new life, new hope the child will bring. Lis-ten to the an-gels sing, 'Glo-ry, glo-ry, glo-ry,' let the heav-ens ring!"

Chord progressions for the first system: G C G/D G C G/D G C C7 G C G/D D7

Chord progressions for the second system: G C G/D G B7 Em A A7 D7 Am7 G/B D7

Chord progressions for the third system: G C/G G C/G Gm Am7/G G

Chord progressions for the fourth system: C C7 C#dim7 A C#dim7

Chord progressions for the fifth system: G/D D7 G Am7/G E7/G# Am A7/E D7 G

Text: from Doc Bagby  
 Music: Margaret Allison (b. 1920); harm. Jeffrey Radford (b. 1953)  
 Harm. © 1992, Pilgrim Press

WONDERFUL CHILD

# How Great Our Joy!

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1. While by the sheep we watched at night, lo, there ap- peared an  
 2. Born is the Child, in man- ger small, whom God has sent to  
 3. Go you this night, and you shall find the Sav- ior born for  
 4. Je - sus, the gift from heav'n a - bove fills all our hearts with

an - gel bright:  
 save us all. How great our joy! Great our joy!  
 hu - man - kind. joy and love.

*f* *echo p*

Joy, joy, joy! Joy, joy, joy! Glo - ry to God who

*f* *echo p* *f*

reigns on high! Glo - ry to God who reigns on high!

*echo p*

WORDS: Traditional German carol, alt.  
 MUSIC: Traditional German melody; arr. Hugo Jüngst, c. 1890

JUNGST  
 Irr.

Welcome to all who are new or here for the first time! If you are interested in learning more about our church, please email Rev. Jim at [revjim@needhamucc.org](mailto:revjim@needhamucc.org), Rev Heike at [revheike@needhamucc.org](mailto:revheike@needhamucc.org) or call the office at 781-444-2510 to set up a conversation.

For updates on church life, our family ministries, Christian Education and Youth Ministries follow us at: **@NeedhamUCC on Instagram**

**Congregational Church of Needham UCC on Facebook**

**@needhamucc on Twitter [www.needhamucc.org](http://www.needhamucc.org)**

Please silence your cell phone before attending the service. You can Check In on Facebook and let people know you are here. Feel free to Tweet, Snapchat, or Instagram during the service. If you would like or need a hearing device an usher will be able to assist you. Children's Childcare is offered for infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers in the Nursery located downstairs during the service.

#### **Rev. Jim Mitulski's Office Hours**

Please contact the church office to schedule an appointment during his office hours of Tuesday & Wednesday 2-6pm; Thursday 2-5pm Evening hours are also available by appointment.

\*If these times do not work for you please contact the office for alternate availability.

#### **Staff**

Interim Senior Minister—The Rev. Jim Mitulski  
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*The Rev. Dr. Paul Clayton, Pastor Emeritus*