

iucc Irvine United Congregational Church

*An Open & Affirming, Just Peace, Global Mission, Creation
Justice Congregation of the United Church of Christ*

December 24, 2023 – 7:00 PM
Christmas Eve

Prelude *Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas* **Brian Noel, harp**
by Hugh Martin and Ralph Blaine

Welcome iucc.org/visitor **Rev. Dr. Sarah Halverson-Cano**

Introit *Noel Sing Noel!* **Chancel Choir**
by Victor C. Johnson

Call to Worship **August Lobato**

One: From the darkness of Creation, God brought forth Light!

Many: That Light flooded over the waters of creation, sparkling, dancing!

One: From the fear and alienation, God sent forth a leading Pillar of Light!

Many: That Light directed people who were on the path of freedom.

One: From the cries of the people, God offered the lights of Hope.

Many: Those lights beckoned people to God's presence.

One: From the yearning of the spirit, God's light was born again in a child.

Many: That Light shall never be diminished.

All: Thank you God for the holy light of your Incarnate Love. Christmas has come again! Amen.

—Nancy C. Townley/edited Halverson-Cano
Carol—*Joy to the World*

Prayer **Pastor Sarah**

Lighting the Advent Candles **The Nataraj/Strasma Family**

Reader 1: To a people longing for hope and yearning for deliverance, the prophet Isaiah declared,

“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.” (Isaiah 9:2,6)

Reader 2: Tonight, we come seeking hope, peace, joy, and love, and we find these things in a child. God made flesh as a baby in a manger. A baby who is both the beginning and the end of our salvation, who dwells with us even now, our Emmanuel, God with us.

Congregation: We live as people in the in-between who celebrate the arrival of the Light that shines in lost and broken places as we wait for the day when we will live in the fullness of God's kin-dom.

Reader 1: We light these candles as signs of our shocking hope, our just peace, our fierce joy, the love that transforms us, and Jesus Christ, our wondrous Light. May the Light burning in our hearts guide us, comfort us, protect us, and tend us in all seasons and circumstances, reminding us that day and night, in the light and in the darkness, God is with us. Our salvation has come! Amen.

–Dr. Lisa Hancock

Response in Song:

sung to “Away in a Manger”

Dr. Chris Peterson

**We honor Messiah with the Christ Candle's flame;
Our Christmas Eve candles glad tidings proclaim.
O come, all you faithful, rejoice on this night,
As God comes among us, the Christian's true Light.**

Offertory Invitation

iucc.org/giving

Pastor Craig

Anthem

Sing Noel, Noel

Chancel Choir

by Sally K. Albrecht & Jay Althouse

Scripture

Luke 1:26-38

Pastor Sarah

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.” But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.” Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

Scripture

Matthew 1:18, 21-23

Pastor Craig

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit... “She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

“Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,”

which means, “God is with us.”

Solo

Breath of Heaven

Joy Dorko

by Amy Grant and Chris Eaton

Scripture

Luke 2:1-5

Pastor Sarah

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.

Carol

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Brian Noel, harp

by Lewis H. Redner

Scripture

Luke 2:6-7

Pastor Craig

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.

Carol

Away in a Manger Hymnal #124

Congregation

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little Love Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay,
the little Love Jesus, asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the poor baby wakes,
but little Love Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love you, dear Jesus; protect me, I pray,
and stay by my side until night turns to day.

Be near me, Love Jesus; I ask you to stay
close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,
and fit us for heaven to live with you there.

Scripture

Luke 2:8-14

Pastor Sarah

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

Anthem

Love's Pure Light

by Elaine Hagenberg

Chancel Choir

Benediction

Pastor Sarah

Carol

Silent Night, Holy Night

New Century Hymnal (#134 v. 1,2,3)

Congregation

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
Child of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from your holy face
Bring the dawn of redeeming grace
Jesus Christ at your birth
Jesus Lord, at your birth.

Postlude

Gesu Bambino

by Pietro Yon

Brian Noel, harp

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*We are grateful for the talents of **Brian Noel**,
who shares his harp music with us each Christmas Eve.*

The Church Office will be closed 12/26/22-1/2/23

Administrative Pastor, Craig Tyrl will begin on 1/1/23

Heidi and Craig are in the church office M-Th (949-733-0220);

Pastor Sarah is off through 01/04/2024 and can be reached by email or text to 714-293-0241.

Our Staff

Senior Pastor the Rev. Dr. Sarah Halverson-Cano (she/her) PastorSarah@iucc.org

Administrative Pastor (he/him) iucc@iucc.org

Director of Music Dr. Chris Peterson (he/him)

Accompanist Yuyoung Jeong (she/her)

Choral Interns:

Joy Dorko, alto (she/her), Jaime Reza, tenor (he/him), Jenna Hansen, soprano (she/her)

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