# **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 <u>iucc.org/visitor</u> 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

Dr. Chris Peterson

**Response in Song:** sung to "Away in a Manger"

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 <u>iucc.org/giving</u> 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

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 Messiah, 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 he favors!"

Congregation

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,

And the mountains in reply, echo back their joyous strains.

Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Carol

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?

Say what may the tidings be, which inspire your heavenly song? (refrain)

Angels We Have Heard on High Hymnal #125

See the babe in manger laid whom the choirs of angels praise; Mary, Joseph, lend your aid, while our hearts in love we raise. (refrain)

Scripture Luke 2:15-20 Pastor Craig

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 the Lord 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 them.

Anthem	The First Noel arr. Dan Forest	Chancel Choir
Homily		Pastor Sarah
Scripture	Isaiah 9:2-7	Pastor Craig

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. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. 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. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Anthem Love's Pure Light Chancel Choir

by Elaine Hagenberg

Benediction Pastor Sarah

Carol Silent Night, Holy Night Congregation

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

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 Brian Noel, harp

by Pietro Yon

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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) <a href="mailto:PastorSarah@iucc.org">PastorSarah@iucc.org</a>
Administrative Pastor (he/him) <a href="mailto:iucc@iucc.org">iucc@iucc.org</a>
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)
Early Childhood Director Irma Rosales (she/her) <a href="mailto:irma@iucc.org">irma@iucc.org</a>
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