

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
Sunday, December 15, 2019

Prelude J. S. Bach
Nun komm der Heiden Heiland, BWV 659

Welcome

Introit T. M. Scott
Prepare the Way of the Lord
Chancel Choir

Call to Worship Jane Penny, *Council Clerk*

Leader: So let us light candles.

People: Candles of joy, despite all sadness.

Leader: Candles of hope where despair keeps watch.

People: Candles of courage for fears ever present.

Leader: Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days.

People: Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens.

Leader: Candles of love to inspire all our living.

People: Candles that will burn all the year long.

Hymn 114 VENI EMMANUEL
O Come, O Come Emmanuel (*verses 1, 2, and 3*)

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here; disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, thou Wisdom from on high, and order all things, far and nigh; to us the path of knowledge

show, and cause us in her ways to go. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

Prayer of Confession (*unison*)

It is never easy for us to confess our sins, Waiting God. There are the hurts we have caused to our families and friends, which we would like to forget. There are those we believe are impossible to love, and so we don't try. There are people who live on the edge of our society, and we ignore their cries for help. Forgive us, Holy One. When we have lost our way, show us yours. Teach us your truth, so we might be able to keep your Word, revealed to us in Jesus. Hear us pray ...

(*moments for silent reflections*)

Words of Assurance

Anthem H. Simeon, K. Davis, H. Onerati
The Little Drummer Boy

Children's Message and Lord's Prayer Dee Buchanan
Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Hymn 153 GREENSLEEVES
What Child Is This, Who, Laid to Rest

What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping? Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping? This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels

sing; Haste, haste to bring him praise, the babe, the son of Mary.

Why lies the child in manger bare where ox and ass are feeding? Give heed, draw near, for sinners here the silent Word is pleading. This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing; Haste, haste to bring him praise, the babe, the son of Mary.

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh, come, rich and poor, to own him; the King of kings salvation brings, let loving hearts enthrone him. This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing; Haste, haste to bring him praise, the babe, the son of Mary.

Pastoral Prayer

Offertory G. F. Handel
And the Glory of the Lord
from Messiah

Doxology OLD HUNDREDTH
Praise God from whom all blessings flow.
Praise Him all creatures here below.
Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts.
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer of Dedication

Scripture Lesson Luke 1:26-38

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now,

you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He 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. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵The 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." ³⁶And 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. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸Then 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.

Sermon **Peter Wiley**

Hymn 116 **BESANÇON**
People, Look East

People, look east. The time is near of the crowning of the year. Make your house fair as you are able, trim the hearth and set the table. People, look east and sing today—Love, the Guest, is on the way.

Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is planted there. Give up your strength the seed to nourish, that in course the flower may flourish. People, look east and sing today— Love, the Rose, is on the way.

Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim, one more light the bowl shall brim, shining beyond the frosty weather, bright as sun and moon together. People, look east and sing today— Love, the Star, is on the way.

Angels announce with shouts of mirth him who brings new life to earth. Set ev'ry peak and valley

humming with the word, the Lord is coming. People, look east and sing today— Love, the Lord, is on the way.

Benediction

Passing of the Peace

Postlude **A. Carter**

Toccata on Veni Emmanuel

Service Notes:

Call to Worship written by the Rev. Jocelyn Gardner Spencer, adapted from

The Mood of Christmas, the Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman. © 1973 Harper & Row.

Prayer of Confession adapted from *Lectionary Liturgies*, the Rev. Thom M. Shuman.

What Child Is This, Who Laid to Rest. St. 2 word alterations © 1993 The Pilgrim Press. From *The New Century Hymnal*. Reproduced with permission under One License A-708573.

People Look East. Words © 1957 Harold Ober Associates, Inc., 425 Madison Avenue, New York NY 10017-1110. Reproduced with permission under One License A-708573.