

The United Church of Mapleton
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Christmas Eve, December 24, 2017

Our Mission:

The United Church of Mapleton is a Christian fellowship of mission, worship, and faith formation dedicated to the Maple River community.

The * symbolizes an invitation to rise in body or spirit.

If you are a visitor today, please fill out the welcome card in the pew rack and place it in the offering plate later in the service so that we can get to know each other!

Order of Worship

Prelude

The Christmas Story from Down Under

Welcome

Gathering Prayer

One: O Holy God, we hear the story of shepherds and magi, of maiden and carpenter, of prophets and angels,

All: and we too come to Bethlehem for a blessing.

One: You are born in our hearts because you have chosen the weakness of our bodies for your birth.

All: We are filled with love because you have taken upon yourself our humanity; we are filled with hope because you have offered us your Spirit, your life and your light; we are filled with faith because all that is meek and lowly and humble in us and in creation becomes holy this night.

One: Our salvation has come into this holy time and we say, together,

All: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace and goodwill to all." Amen.

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Christmas Eve Special Offering

The devastation created in the wake of multiple natural disasters has sparked a flurry of human need in our country. In an attempt to respond as followers of Jesus Christ we invite you give generously to this evening's special offering. Please place your gift in the manila envelopes found in the pew racks. **All other gifts will be shared with the United Church of Mapleton.**

Your support will help meet the needs of our neighbors whose lives have been upended by Hurricanes Harvey, Maria and Irma or the Wild Fires in Montana and California

BE THE CHURCH
Protect the environment. Care for the poor.
Forgive often. Reject racism.
Fight for the powerless.
Share earthly and spiritual resources.
Embrace diversity. Love God. Enjoy this life.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

I want to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

It has been a wonderful year serving as your Intentional Interim Pastor. It is my prayer that we will remain open to the continuing guidance of God's Holy Spirit as we venture into a new year.

Blessing be upon you and yours during this season of hope, peace, joy and love.

Pastor Cindy Mueller



Following Tonight's Worship Service

Pastor Cindy will be taking 2 weeks of vacation.

In the case of a Pastoral Emergency or Need during that time please contact the Rev. Dana Mann; Pastor of First Congregational UCC in Mankato.

FOR UNTO US
a child is born,
unto us a son is given:
and the government shall be upon his shoulder:
and his name shall be called
WONDERFUL,
COUNSELLOR,
THE MIGHTY GOD,
The everlasting Father,
THE PRINCE OF PEACE.

Isaiah 9:6

***Carol**

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 Savior, is born!
 Christ, the Savior is born!

Silent night! Holy night! Children 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.

***Blessing**

***Postude**

Tonight's Worship Leaders

Intentional Interim Minister: *Rev. Cindy Mueller*
Lay Reader: *Louise Webb*
Hospitality Team: *Shubert Family*
Organist: *Kathy Byram*
Sound System: *Dick Dietz*
Power Point: *Chad Kunkel*

Join Us For Worship Each Sunday at 9:30 am

Sunday (12/31) Worship Leaders

Guest Preacher: *Rev. Jan Wiersma*
Intentional Interim : *Rev. Cindy Mueller*
Lay Reader: *Darlene Fezler*
Organist: *Jola Walker*
Sound System: *Dick Dietz*
Local Mission Jar: *Heifer International*

***Carol**

O Come All Ye Faithful

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
 O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
 Come and behold him, born the King of angels;
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord

***Call to Worship**

One: Through lush farmland and bleak alleys
All: sweeps good news of great joy!
 One: Through empty wants and desperate needs
All: blazes a star to light our way.
 One Through pounding turmoil and dazing fear
All: sounds an angel chorus.
 One: Receive the news! Follow the star! Heed the angels!
All: Through song and silence, word and wonder,
let us make our way to Bethlehem.
 One: Let us worship the Holy One
 who beckons in an infant's cry.



Lighting the Wreath of God's Love

One: Hope, wisdom, trust, and love. Four candles,
 four promises continually offered to us by God, and all
 of them manifest in this one we light tonight: the Christ
 candle. In Christ we find the hope of transformation,
 the wisdom that informs justice, the trust we seek with
 God and one another, and the love that encompasses
 us in all our diversity, empowering us to make our own
 unique contribution to this world. In Christ we find light
 and life, and the courage to be like him, answering his
 call and following in Christ's footsteps.

All: We rejoice in God's steadfast presence in our lives, and in God's unique presence in the life of Jesus of Nazareth—born of Mary, growing through childhood into an adult ministry, in all his life manifesting the peace, love, and justice of God; his voice undimmed by the centuries, his call and his promise as clear to us as it was to his disciples so long ago. Come to us, Lord Jesus, be born in us this night, in our hearts, our minds, our lives. May the light of your life be kindled in us, and lead us to the shining truth of God with us, God for us, God in us. Amen.

Carol *Angels We Have Heard on High*

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply, echo back their joyous strains.

Refrain: *Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.*

Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come adore on bended knee,
Christ, the Lord, the newborn King. **Refrain.**

Lessons and Carols

The Prophecy ~ Isaiah 9:2-7

Carol *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

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

Announcement of the Nativity ~ Luke 2:1-7

Carol *Away in a Manger*

Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.
The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.



The Shepherds Hear the Good News ~ Luke 2:8-14

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Carol *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*

Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies;
With angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

Shepherds Visit the Christ Child ~ Luke 2:15-20

Christmas Message

The Magi Come Bearing Gifts ~ Matthew 2:1-12

Behold, the Son of God *Mary Did You Know?*

Offering Our Gifts *Tonight's Gifts will be given to either the United Church
(white envelope) or Natural Disaster Relief (manila envelope).*

***Song of Thanksgiving** *What Child is This?*

Bring gifts of incense, gold, and myrrh; come, join in jubilation;
The Holy Child, though meek and mild,
has come with God's salvation. Raise, raise the song on high,
the mother sings her lullaby.

Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary.

***Blessing Our Gifts**

All: Thank you, God, for coming to us in a human life so expressive of love that two thousand years have not extinguished the flame. May that love burn so brightly in our lives that its fires will spread. Use our offerings to ignite in the world such caring and compassion that all your children may know joy and peace, in Jesus' name.

Paying It Forward

*This evenings offering will be going toward
the United Church and/or Natural Disaster Relief.
Please choose the appropriate envelopes as marked.*

Christmas Prayer

The True Meaning of Christmas *O Holy Night* **Video Projected**

***Spreading the Light of Christ**

(Please pass the light w/the lit candle always held upright)



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