

Christmas Eve 2024



Words of Welcome

"It is the mission of the Community Reformed Church of Colonie to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, with all our souls and with all of our minds; and to love our neighbors as ourselves." (Matthew 22:37-40)

We are a community bound together and energized by faith, love, and commitment to Jesus Christ. And even though you may not yet share that faith, love, and commitment, you are most welcome to be with us, to belong here, to experience what we're about. Then, if you are attracted and persuaded by what you see and hear, we hope you'll want to set down roots here long-term. And even if you don't, you'll always be a friend.

The Community Reformed Church of Colonie welcomes you
and thanks you for worshipping with us.

Please join in the worship liturgy by reading the sections in ***bold italics***.

* - Please rise in body or in spirit

FOR CONTEMPLATION

"I was taught that the birth of Jesus announced by the angels meant that hope, peace, joy, and love had at last landed on earth. No one noted what seems to be clear to me now: Advent speaks of the arrival of God's initiative... (but only) the beginning of the campaign."

Kelley Nikondeha

PRELUDE

"Coventry Carol"	(Ben April)
"Mary Did You Know"	(Michele Braungard and Ben April)
"O Holy Night"	(Marissa Lombardo and Ben April)
"All Is Well"	(Marv Helf and Ben April)
"What We All Want For Christmas Is Peace"	(Kevin Ingalls and Ben April)
"A Star Is Born"	(Tina Bottini and Ben April)
"The First Noel"	(Marissa Lombardo, Michele Braungard and Ben April)
"How Great Our Joy"	(Ben April)

THE COMMUNITY GATHERS

THE LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE - Cynthia Placek, Karen Reynolds
and Deb Helf

In a weary and worn world, how do we begin again? Where do we start?
Let us begin with hope. Let us continue with peace. Let us celebrate with joy. Let us experience love.

Yes, let us experience love, for love truly knows your name.
Tonight, in addition to the candles of hope, peace, joy and love, we light the Christ Candle. For surely God is in this place. Surely God knows our name and invites us in.

May we rest in that good news. For to us a child has been born, a light shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it.
Glory to God in the highest!

INTROIT – “What Child is This?”

THE CALL TO WORSHIP

There is room for you here.

Whether you are weary and worn and wondering about what comes next,

Or if you are confused and uncertain and afraid of what is going on.

There is room for you here.

Whether you are new or have been here before.

If you have come a great distance or from just around the corner.

Come in, come in. There is room for you here.

Here, God knows your name and welcomes you with open arms and a loving heart.

So, come in! Come in to worship God. Come in to receive love.

There is room for us here. There is room for all.



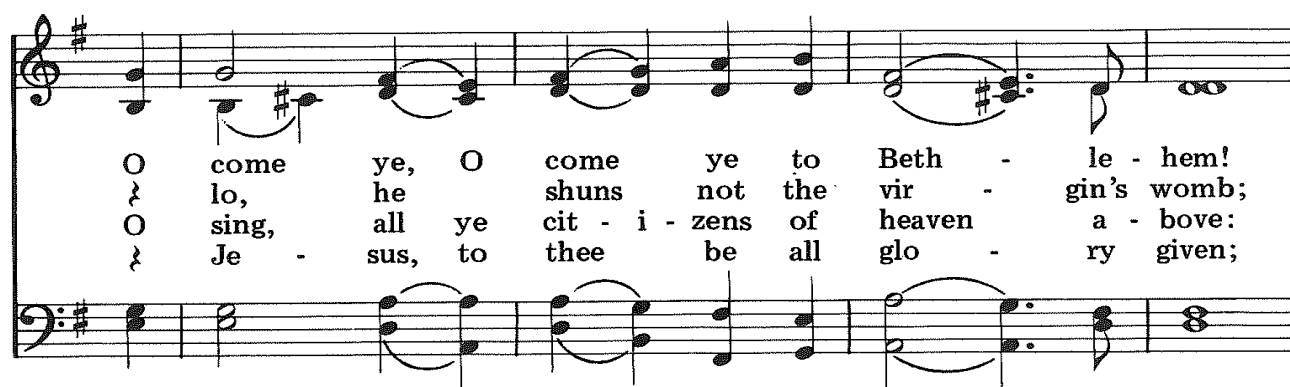
HYMN 173 "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

173 O Come, All Ye Faithful

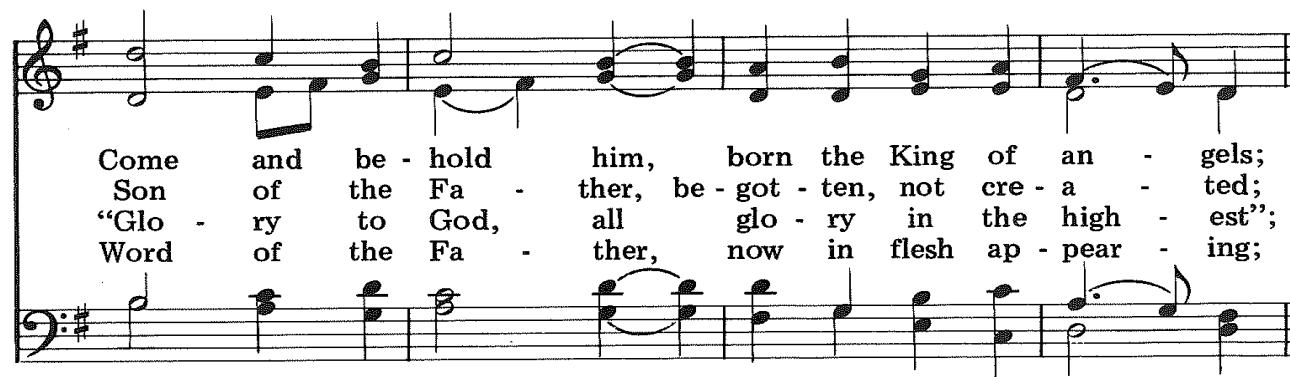
"Let's go to Bethlehem" . . . Lk. 2:15



1. O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant,
 2. True God of true God, Light from Light e - ter - nal,
 3. Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion!
 4. Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py morn - ing,

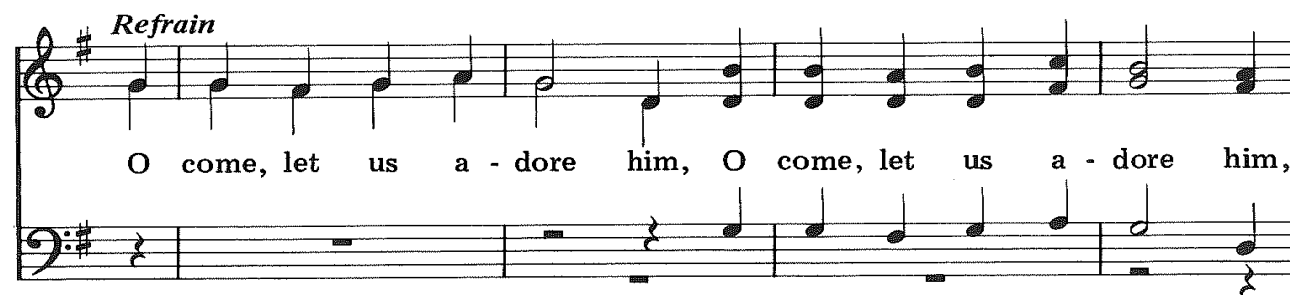


O come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem!
 lo, he shuns not the vir - gin's womb;
 O sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heaven a - bove:
 Je - sus, to thee be all glo - ry given;



Come and be - hold him, born the King of an - gels;
 Son of the Fa - ther, be - got - ten, not cre - a - ted;
 "Glo - ry to God, all glo - ry in the high - est";
 Word of the Fa - ther, now in flesh ap - pear - ing;

Refrain



O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him,

WORDS: Latin hymn, attr. John F. Wade, 1751; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1841, and others, alt.
 MUSIC: John F. Wade's *Cantus Diversi*, 1751

ADESTE FIDELES
 Irregular

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

*We believe that on a night like this one,
a baby was born and placed in a manger.
We believe that baby was God's love in the flesh,
who grew up to love the outcast and change the world.
We believe that Jesus' love was so big and so personal that the
world can never be the same.
So, despite the mystery of this holy night, we believe that a star
shone, that the shepherds ran, that the angels sang, and that love
was born.
Yes, we believe it when the prophets say that unto you,
unto US a savior is born.
Glory to God in the highest!
We believe!
Thanks be to God.*

TAIZÉ MEDITATION 152 "Angels We Have Heard on High" (2 times)

*"Gloria in excelsis Deo,
Gloria in excelsis Deo.*

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

*Loving Christ, when the shepherds heard that you were born, they
dropped everything and ran to where they could find you. They
trusted the angels' message and invitation. They believed that
your love existed for them. I hope we can be more like them than
those who did not listen or believe.*

*Because, somewhere between the angels' message and the
manger, we tend to lose our way, get distracted, or weary for the
journey. We doubt ourselves. We question the invitation. We
challenge that your love can actually know our names and make
the kind of difference in us that you say.*

*Remind us, once more, that your love is personal and specific.
Remind us that the good news shared this day is for us.
Remind us.*

With hope we sing and pray and run to you. Amen.

OUR REQUEST FOR MERCY “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus” (Verse 2)

*Born thy people to deliver,
born a child and yet a king,
born to reign in us forever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
By thine all sufficient merit raise us to thy glorious throne.*

ASSURANCE OF GOD’S FORGIVENESS

THE CHRISTMAS PRAYER

ANTHEM “Manger Throne”

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

Isaiah 9:2-6

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.

Luke 2:8-20

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

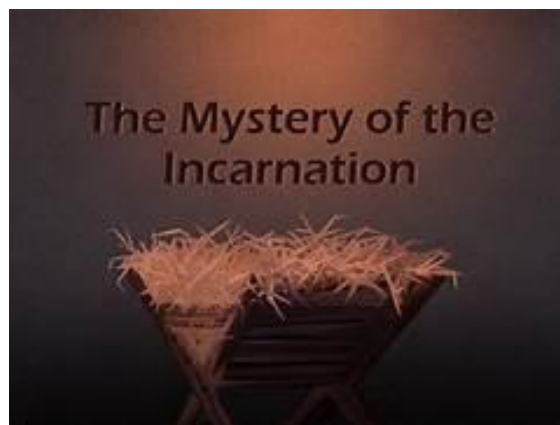
this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!” 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.

This is the Word of The Lord. ***Thanks be to God.***

MEDITATION - “Love Knows Your Name”

ANTHEM “Love is Born”

THE GREAT MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION John 1:1-14



HYMN 164 "Silent Night"

Silent Night! Holy Night! 164

So they . . . found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. Lk. 2:16

Descant

3. Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-

1. Si - lent night! ho - ly night! All is calm, all is bright
 2. Si - lent night! ho - ly night! Shep-herds quake at the sight,
 3. Si - lent night! ho - ly night! Son of God, love's pure light,
Stil - le Nacht! hei - li - ge Nacht! Al - les schläft, ein - sam wacht

lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

'round yon vir - gin moth-er and Child, ho - ly in-fant so ten-der and
 glo - ries stream from heav-en a - far, heav-enly hosts sing Al - le - lu -
 ra - dant beams from thy ho - ly face, with the dawn of re - deem - ing
nur das trau - te, hoch-hei - li - ge Paar hold-er Kna - be im lock - i - gen

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth.

mild, sleep in heav-en-ly peace, sleep in heav-en-ly peace.
 ia; Christ the Sav - ior is born, Christ the Sav - ior is born.
 grace, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth.
Haar, schlaf in himm-lisch-er Ruh, schlaf in himm-lisch-er Ruh!

WORDS: Joseph Mohr, 1818; tr. John F. Young, 1863
 MUSIC: Franz Gruber, 1818; desc. Donald P. Hustad, 1989
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STILLE NACHT
 Irregular

THE PROMISE John 3:16-17

RESPONSE 146 "Joy to the World!"

Joy to the World! the Lord Is Come 146

Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Ps. 98:4



1. Joy to the world! the Lord is come; let earth re-
 2. Joy to the earth! the Sav-ior reigns; let all their
 3. No more let sins and sor-rows grow, nor thorns in-
 4. He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the



ceive her King; let ev-ery heart pre-pare him room,
 songs em-ploy; while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
 fest the ground; he comes to make his bless-ings flow
 na-tions prove the glo-ries of his right-eous-ness,



and heaven and na-ture sing, and heaven and na-ture
 re-peat the sound-ing joy, re-peat the sound-ing
 far as the curse is found, far as the curse is
 and won-ders of his love, and won-ders of his
 (1.) and heaven and na-ture sing,



sing, and heaven, and heaven and na-ture sing.
 joy, re-peat, re-peat the sound-ing joy.
 found, far as, far as the curse is found.
 love, and won-ders, won-ders of his love.
 heaven and na-ture sing,

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE “Carol of the Bells”

All of the liturgical resources for our Advent and Christmas worship theme, “Words for the Beginning” are used with permission from “A Sanctified Art LLC” and have been adapted from those prepared by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed

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Karl Coté

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Kevin Ingalls
Marissa Lombardo

Deacon of the Day
Kevin Ingalls

Liturgist
Vicki Lane

Sound and Lighting Technician
Jerry Kallner

Video Director
Cameron Kaercher

Welcome Hosts
Lori Coté
Cynthia Placek

Choir
Tina Bottini
Michele Braungard
Teresa Cranfield
Maggie George
Marv Helf
Kevin Ingalls
Pam Izzo
Jen Kenna
Christine LaPaix
Marissa Lombardo
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Debi Todd

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Mary, Did You Know

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What Child is This

Traditional English, arr. Joel Raney
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Manger Throne

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and Tony Wood, arr. David Wise
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1863
Music: Franz Gruber, 1818; desc. Donald
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Coventry Carol

Traditional Carol, arr. Victor Labenske
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Angels We have Heard on High

Words & Music: Richard E. Gerig
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Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

Words: Charles Wesley
Music: Rowland H. Prichard,
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Words: Public Domain
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What We All Want for Christmas Is Peace

Words & Music: Joel and Susie Raney
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How Great Our Joy

German Carol, arr. JB Taylor
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Abolition Baby

by Nicolette Peñaranda

Inspired by Luke 2:1-20, Isaiah 9:6

Paper collage on canvas

Before I started this piece, I went to the Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts and Culture in Charlotte, North Carolina.⁷ As our guide explained some of the architectural features of the building, I learned that abolitionists used to hang quilts outside of their homes to signal safety for those on the underground railroad. A few minutes later, I walked into an exhibit of large quilts draping the vibrant exhibit hall with explicit stories from slavery, 1990s ballroom culture, and an interpretation of Greek mythology. I was mesmerized by the manipulation of fabric and the storytelling that took place within each stitch. Are quilts symbols of resistance?

This trip inspired me to take a different approach to creating art for the Christmas story. While I typically produce maximalist canvases with overwhelming details, this piece is toned down and more precision-oriented. As someone who has never been able to draw a straight line, creating this quilt design out of paper was a discipline in and of itself. Creating it made me think of the kind of diligence and patience needed to sew a fabric quilt. These are projects made with love.

The hands that sew them should never be taken for granted.

It is for this reason that I titled this piece, *Abolition Baby*. Even though we are over 150 years removed from the Civil War, abolitionism is still relevant today. The United States is only 4% of the world population, but it contains nearly 25% of the world's incarcerated population.⁸ According to the 13th amendment, slavery is illegal in the U.S. with the exception of incarcerated individuals. Some of the largest prisons in states such as Louisiana and Georgia are former plantations.⁹ Prison labor is used by major corporations where they pay Black and Brown people pennies on the dollar.¹⁰ I will not declare Jesus an abolitionist, but I will note that Jesus would grow up to call out any society that created environments where people are forced to commit crimes or work in unprecedented fields in order to survive. Mary was excited to bring Jesus into the world because she believed in the promise of liberation for her people. Jesus' birth was a symbol of hope for the future, for a freed people. Love knows his name. And it is freedom. —

Rev. Nicolette Peñaranda

Offerings and gifts to the church may be submitted online via PayPal (link found below or on our website), by mailed check, by direct bank payment or by placing them in the offering box.

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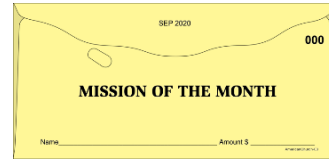
www.communityreformedchurch.com

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Special Offering Envelopes –

There are three special offering envelopes for December



ZOOM

To join in Sunday Worship via Zoom,
use the link below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6880887155>

Meeting ID: 688 088 7155

By Phone: 1-646-558-8656

COMMUNITY REFORMED CHURCH OF COLONIE

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Please email prayer requests to:

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