



Pilgrim Congregational Church, UCC
December 31, 2023

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❖ PRELUDE:

I Wonder as I Wander by
John Jacob Niles

❖ OFFERTORY:

Silent Night — John Thompson

❖ POSTLUDE:

Harp Etude by Frederic Chopin

**From The New Century Hymnal,
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PILGRIM
Congregational Church



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST



Welcome to Pilgrim Congregational Church, United Church of Christ A Welcoming, Open and Affirming Congregation

Statement of Welcome

We honor the Biblical call to love one another as God first loved us. We welcome into the full life and ministry of the church all people of any race, nationality, religious background, educational background, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, economic status, and physical, mental, and emotional abilities.

Mission Statement

*A welcoming home to all spiritual seekers
Making a difference in our world,
By fusing our Christian faith with
everyday life and Serving God by serving others.*

Children at Pilgrim

Children are an important part of our worshipping community. We try to make them feel at home!

All are welcome. Professional childcare for infants and toddlers is available in the nursery from 10:15 to the end of the service.

Please note: The video of this service is posted online. If you prefer not to be filmed, please sit near the rear of the sanctuary.

Visual and Hearing Aids

Hearing devices may be picked up from the table in the narthex.

Large Print bulletins and Sermons texts are available.

Worship Sunday, December 31 2023

PRELUDE

I Wonder as I Wander by John Jacob Niles
Jim Munkres

GREETINGS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sarah Jane Fuller

PASSING THE PEACE

ONE: Peace be with you.

ALL: And also with you.

ONE: Let us share the peace of Christ with one another.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalm 96

ONE: O sing to the Lord a new song - sing to God all the earth!

ALL: Let us sing to God! Let us bless God's Name. Let us tell of God's salvation from day to day.

ONE: Declare God's glory among the nations, God's marvelous works among all peoples.

ALL: For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised;

ONE: Our God is to be revered above all gods.

ALL: Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it; let the field exult, and everything in it.

ONE: Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy

Before God; for God is coming, for God is coming to judge the earth.

ALL: God will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with truth.

OPENING PRAYER

Creative God,

you make all things new in heaven and on earth.

We come to you in a new year

with new desires and old fears,

new decisions and old controversies,

new dreams and old weaknesses.

Because you are a God of hope,

we know that you create all the possibilities of the future.

Because you are a God of love,

we know that you accept all the mistakes of the past.

Because you are the God of our faith,

we enter your gates with thanksgiving and praise,

**we come into your presence with gladness and a joyful noise, and we serve and
bless you. Amen.**

*OPENING HYMN

130

Joy to the World! the Lord Is Come

Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

ANTIOCH C.M.

Attr. to Georg F. Handel, 1685-1759

Arr. by Lowell Mason, 1792-1872

1 Joy to the world! the Lord is come: Let earth re -
 2 Joy to the earth! the Sav - ior reigns: Let men their
 3 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
 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
 And won - ders of his love, And won - ders of his

And heaven and na - ture sing, And
 Re - peat the sound - ing joy, Re -
 And won - ders of his love, And

sing, And heaven, and heaven and na - ture sing.
 joy, Re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
 love, And won - ders, won - ders of his love. A - men.

heaven and na - ture sing.
 peat the sound - ing joy,
 won - ders of his love,

Joy to the World Red Hymnal 130

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come!

Let earth receive her King;

let every heart prepare him room

and heaven and nature sing,

and heaven and nature sing,

and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!

Let men their songs employ,

while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and

plains,

repeat the sounding joy,

repeat the sounding joy,

repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

3 He rules the world with truth and grace

and makes the nations prove

the glories of his righteousness

and wonders of his love,

and wonders of his love,

and wonders, wonders of his love.

SCRIPTURE READING

Sarah Jane Fuller

Gospel Reading: Luke 2:25-38

²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what was customary under the law, ²⁸Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

²⁹"Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word,
³⁰for my eyes have seen your salvation,
³¹which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
³²a light for revelation to the gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."

³³And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul, too."

³⁶There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸At that moment she came and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

ONE: Here ends the reading. Hear what the Spirit of God is saying to the church.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

HYMN SING

Black Hymnal 101 to 154 Jim Munkres

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Sarah Jane Fuller

ONE: Let us pray.

ALL: Loving and creating God, let your goodness appear to us, that our hearts would be made to be a dwelling place for your Love made manifest. Come, O Bright Morning Star, show us the way and destiny of your unending love.

Immanuel, our hearts delight, we join the great celestial choir of angels in singing glory in the highest heavens. In our rejoicing, set us on your path of wisdom and knowledge, that we know the wideness of your love.

We pray that you would bless this church, a stable of strangers and angels, shepherdess and magi; help us continue to make this place a community that seeks to follow your humility and mercy.

O Light of the World, you came to earth, meek and mild to surround us with your tender presence. Christ, you wait among us in the rough places, the crib and cross. It is from these rough places that you reach out to this suffering world. End our sad divisions. Give us the freedom of your forgiveness.

Prince of Peace, we pray your blessings upon those who, like the holy family, have no place to stay, no security to relay on, and who are left to wander. Soften our hearts, Lord, that we may see you in our neighbors and in ourselves.

We pray all these things in the name of Christ; the one whose law is love and gospel is peace, and who gave us the words to pray together saying,

Our Father (Creator), 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. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

CALL TO OFFERING

God, you call us to give as we have received. On this Sunday following Christmas, when our blessings are great, when you have shared your Child with us, help us to share our blessing with those in need.

OFFERTORY

Improvisation on Silent Night — John Thompson

OFFERING PRAYER

We dedicate our lives and all that we have to the work of life, of love, of peace. Receive our gifts and lead us in wisdom and courage. Amen.



CLOSING HYMN

African-American spiritual
Arr. John W. Work II, 1907

Luke 2:8-20; Isa. 18:3; 52:7

Go Tell it on the Mountain — Black Hymnal 154

Refrain

G D7 G

Go tell it on the moun - tain, o - ver the hill and ev - ery - where.

G Em C G/D D7 G *Last time, end*

Go tell it on the moun - tain, that Je - sus Christ is born!

G D7 G

1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,
2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when lo! a - bove the earth
3 Down in a low - ly man - ger the hum - ble Christ was born,

G A7 D7 *to Refrain*

Be - hold through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.
Rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
And God sent us sal - va - tion that bless - ed Christ-mas morn.

Refrain:

Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills, and ev'rywhere;
go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born.

1 While shepherds kept their watching
o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens
there shone a holy light. [Refrain]

2 The shepherds feared and trembled
when lo, above the earth
rang out the angel chorus
that hailed our Savior's birth. [Refrain]

3 Down in a lowly manger
the humble Christ was born,
and God sent us salvation
that blessed Christmas morn. [Refrain]

BENEDICTION

**Loving God, now your servants may go in peace,
just as your word has promised;
for our own eyes have seen your salvation
made ready with everyone looking on,
a revealing light for outsiders,
and a glory for all your faithful people.
Grace mercy and peace,
from the Creator, Saviour and Counsellor,
be with us now and ever more. Amen!**

POSTLUDE

Harp Etude by Frederic Chopin

SOURCE NOTES

The Opening Prayer is by Maren Tirabasssi. The Benediction is by Bruce Prewer. The prayers of the people are adapted from Rev. Wes Conn, formerly of Memorial Church at Harvard. The prayer of dedication is by Anton Jacobs.

MANY THANKS to Jim Munkres for leading our beloved hymn sing this morning!

