

# Roxbury Congregational Church

A Congregation of the United Church of Christ  
*We Are a Community Seeking to Share God's Love!*



The Congregation Gathered (remotely) for Worship  
Physically Distanced – Spiritually Connected

December 24, 2020

7:00 p.m.

## *Christmas Eve*

“The birth of Jesus made possible not just a new way of understanding life but a new way of living it.”

- Frederick Buechner, *The Faces of Jesus: A Life Story*

### God Gathers Us in Community

*We ask all on Zoom have their computer mics on MUTE during the service.*

If you are joining us virtually – have a candle(s) ready to be lit near the end of the service and for the singing of Silent Night.

**Prelude**      Christmas Melodies

**Sandy Kleisner**

**Words of Welcome**

**Rev. David Peters**

### **Call to Worship**

One: Good news! Unspeakable joy!

**All: A great light has burst forth, overcoming the darkness!**

One: A child is born for us—a son has been given!

**All: Bringing a kingdom of endless peace, we shall call him**

## Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God!

One: Come, let us see what God has brought us! Let us see what the Lord has done!  
Glory to God in the highest!

**All: And on earth, peace and goodwill to all!**

**Carol** "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

*sung by Rebecca Racz, Cantor*

CH 148

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,  
Christ the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels,  
sing in exultation,  
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God, all glory in the highest;  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord

## Prayer of Invocation

**Scripture** Isaiah 9:2-7 *Christ's birth and kingdom are foretold by the prophet Isaiah* **Phil deVries**

<sup>2</sup>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. <sup>3</sup>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. <sup>4</sup>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. <sup>5</sup>For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. <sup>6</sup>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. <sup>7</sup>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.

**Carol** "Away in a Manger"

*sung by the Cantor only*

CH 147

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,  
the little Lord Jesus lay 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  
'til morning is nigh

**Scripture** Matthew 1: 18-25

*The Birth of Jesus*

**Nadia Racz**

<sup>18</sup>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. <sup>19</sup>Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. <sup>20</sup>But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup>She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." <sup>22</sup>All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: <sup>23</sup>"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." <sup>24</sup>When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, <sup>25</sup>but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

**Carol** "Angels We Have Heard on High"

*sung by the Cantor only*

CH 155

Angels we have heard on high,  
sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
and the mountains in reply  
echoing their joyous strains

Come to Bethlehem and see  
Christ, who comes in lowly birth.  
Come, adore on bended knee,  
Jesus, joy of heav'n and earth.

Gloria, in excelsis Deo!  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Gloria, in excelsis Deo!  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

**Scripture** Matthew 2:1-12

*The wise men are led by the star to Jesus*

**Diana deVries**

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup>asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." <sup>3</sup>When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; <sup>4</sup>and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. <sup>5</sup>They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: <sup>6</sup>'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'" <sup>7</sup>Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup>Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." <sup>9</sup>When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup>When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with

joy. <sup>11</sup>On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. <sup>12</sup>And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

**Carol** “Joy to the World”                      *sung by the Cantor only*                                              CH 143

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.

Joy to the world, the Savior reigns!  
Let all their songs employ;  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills and  
plains  
repeat the sounding joy  
repeat the sounding joy  
repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

### **Prayer at Christmas**

### **Spreading Christ’s Light Out into the World**

Light your candle – holding the already lighted candle upright and tipping unlit ones.

**Carol**                      “Silent Night, Holy Night!”                                              CH 145

1. 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.

2. 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!

3. Silent night, holy night,  
Son 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.

### **Benediction**

### **Postlude**

Please place your extinguished candle in the receptacles provided on your way to your car.

We thank our Cantor and Soloist for this evening, **Rebecca Racz**, and our readers **Phil & Diana deVries, Nadia Racz**, and greeters **Colby Kalisher, Cathy Racz, and Barbara Biafore**.

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Selected Worship Liturgy from The Presbyterian Church in Canada. The New Revised Standard Version, The Bible, The National Council of Churches, USA.

**For those who have joined us in person...** We ask that you wear your masks until you return to your car and maintain a 6-foot social distance at all times. Let's not let our guard (or masks) down at this critical time. The Church has planned carefully to provide a safe worship experience acknowledging the time-honored tradition of candle lighting and singing of Silent Night. We ask you to do your part and resist the temptation to risk each other's health.

**We welcome all** - especially our guests online this evening! If you do not have a church home, we invite you to consider the Roxbury Church as such.

We invite you to sign our guest book at <https://tinyurl.com/rccguestbook>

If you would like to express your generosity towards the church, you can point your browser to [roxburychurch.org/give](http://roxburychurch.org/give) – there you can safely use your credit card and support our ministries. Thank you in advance.

Want to have the latest information about what is happening at Roxbury Church?

Go to [www.roxburychurch.org](http://www.roxburychurch.org) and sign up to receive eFaith Matters normally on Mondays and Fridays. Be in the know!

#### Year-End Giving: Making Your Gift to Roxbury Church: 2020 Changes from CARES Act

Your gift to Roxbury Church can reduce your 2020 taxable income by up to \$300 (\$600 for couples). This is a special benefit for 2020 to encourage giving to causes impacted by the COVID-19 crisis.

Additionally, through the CARES Act, individuals can deduct up to 100% of their adjusted gross income, but only for charitable contributions made in the 2020 calendar year. Previously, individuals could deduct charitable contributions up to 60% of their adjusted gross income. For more information about these changes, please consult your tax preparer or the IRS website.

The Congregation and Staff of the Church  
Wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year!



### Roxbury Congregational Church, UCC

Ministers in the World – Members of the Congregation

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### Social Media Links

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YouTube:    https://tinyurl.com/RoxburyCyoutube  
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**Southern New England Conference**  
United Church of Christ  
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