

Evangelical  
United Church of Christ



December 24, 2007

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Evangelical United Church of Christ  
33 South Ellis Street  
Cape Girardeau, Missouri  
December 24, 2007  
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service  
(\*Those who are able are invited to stand)

PRELUDE  
CHORAL INTROIT  
*"The Birthday of a King"* —Choir

GREETINGS WITH SENTENCES

\*CALL TO WORSHIP

LEADER: Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace and goodwill toward us all.

**PEOPLE: For out of God's own being, Jesus has come to bring love and light to all people.**

LEADER: Jesus is our Emmanuel—God with us—come to gather our tears and laughter, **our work and play into God's love.**

PEOPLE: *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and goodwill toward all.*

LIGHTING THE ADVENT & CHRISTMAS CANDLES

1st Candle: We light the first candle, reminding us of God's promise of peace on earth.

2nd Candle: We light the second candle, reminding us that we are to dispel the darkness of sickness, poverty, injustice, and suffering all around us.

3rd Candle: We light the third candle, reminding us to be constant and patient in our relationships and in our living.

4th Candle: We light the fourth candle, reminding us that the way of following Jesus is the way of righteousness, trust, and faithfulness. O God, we have watched for your coming with longing and with expectation, with patience and with hope. Now, as the prophets promised so long ago, you have come to us once again; and with the shepherds, we are filled with wonder and amazement.

White Candle: Lord, you come as a tiny, fragile baby; yet we know that you are God, and you are with us. May the flame of this candle remind us that you are the light of the world and that if we follow you, we will never walk in darkness, but will have the true light of life.

\*THE PEACE: SHARING THE LIGHT

[With words, "The peace of the Lord be with you", the candles of the people are lit from the Christ candle and lights in the church are dimmed]

\*CHOIR with CONGREGATION  
While the LIGHT is passed  
*"Silent Night! Holy Night!" #253*

\*ALL LEAVE IN SILENCE



Poinsettias

In Memory of Bill Brinkopf by Ramona Brinkopf  
In Memory of Bill Seabaugh, Allen Lee, Albert & Minnie Schloss  
by Kaye Lee Seabaugh

\*HYMN OF ADORATION  
#250 *“O Little Town of Bethlehem,”* verse 4

CALL TO SUPPER

LEADER: The gifts of God for the people of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died and was raised for you.

SHARING THE ELEMENTS

LEADER: The body of Christ, the bread of heaven.

*PEOPLE: Amen!*

LEADER: The blood of Christ, the cup of salvation.

*PEOPLE: Amen!*

\*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

LEADER: Let us pray.

*ALL: Bountiful God, we give you thanks that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world with courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

\*HYMN OF PARTING #278  
*“Angels We Have Heard on High”*

\*BENEDICTION

LEADER: Glory to God in the highest!

*PEOPLE: Jesus is born! God has come to us and shared our common lot, and so we rejoice!*

LEADER: Go forth rejoicing in the love of God, the peace of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit.

*PEOPLE: Amen.*

\*INVOCATION

LEADER: We come before you in awe, O God, freshly aware of your glory and your love embodied in the midst of this world. Here amid dirt and straw, amid noise of cattle and labor of birth, we perceive your work. We dare to believe that it is you, God, coming to be among us in Jesus, so we praise you with songs of Joy. Glory be to you, O God, now and for ever. Amen.

CALL TO CONFESSION

LEADER: God loves this world of flesh and blood, stone and tree, sheep and oxen, star and field. God loves the world so much that God comes to us in Jesus. **Yet we are careless with God’s creation. Let us confess our sin.**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

*ALL: How amazing is your love, great God! You are not distant from us in some far away heaven; you have come close to us in a child born of simple parents and cradled in a borrowed bed of straw. We confess we abuse this created world. When we stand by while the earth is despoiled and its destruction threatened, God forgive. When we inflict physical or emotional pain on those with who we share our lives, God forgive. When we abuse or neglect our own bodies, God, forgive. By your great love, God, draw us into new ways of living. Teach us to cherish and nurture life in this fragile world, in the manner of Jesus the Christ, whose birth we celebrate today. Amen.*

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

LEADER: Hear the good news; in compassion, God forgives us, enabling us to turn from the ways of violence and death; God shows us how to choose and cherish life. I say to you in the name of Jesus: Our sins are forgiven. Rejoice and sing!

LESSONS & CAROLS

READ: Isaiah 9:2-7

**HYMN #277 “Hark! the Herald Angels Sing”**

READ: Luke 1:68-79

**HYMN #259 “Angels from the Realms of Glory,”** verses 1,2 and 5

Read: Luke 1:26-38

HYMN #266 “That Beautiful Name”

READ: Luke 2:1-20

HYMN #272 “While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks” verses 1,3 and 6

OFFERING INVITATION

LEADER: Friends, what a gift we have been given! Unto us a child is given, and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting God, Prince of Peace. Can there be any other response but thankfulness? Let our thankfulness spill over into generosity!

\*PRAISE RESPONSE #815

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise Him, all creatures here below.  
Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

*ALL: Giving God, you have freely given us so many good gifts! But today we celebrate the gift of gifts, your child, Jesus Christ, born into this world as love itself. Through the giving of this offering, we too would offer ourselves. Like the shepherds, we too would glorify and praise you for all we have seen and heard. Amen.*

COLLECT

LEADER: O God, you have caused this holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light: Grant that we, who have known the mystery of that Light on earth, may also enjoy him perfectly in heaven; where with you and the Holy Spirit he lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.

READ JOHN 1:1-14

CONGREGATIONAL HYMN #282

*“O Thou Joyful, O Thou Wonderful”*

HOMILY

*“Emmanuel!”—Pastor Dan Johnson*

ANTHEM—Choir

*“O Holy Night!”*

LEADER: Holy One, show forth among us the presence of your life-giving Word and Holy Spirit, to sanctify us and your entire church through these holy mysteries. Grant that all who share the communion of the body and blood of our risen Savior may be one in Jesus Christ. May we remain faithful in love and hope, until the perfect feast with our exalted Savior in the external joy of your heavenly realm.

*ALL: Gracious God, accept with favor this our sacrifice of praise, which we now present with these holy gifts. We offer to you ourselves, giving you thanks for the perfect offering of the only one begotten by you, Jesus Christ our Savior: By whom and with whom and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory be to you eternal God, now and forever. Amen.*

PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

LEADER: Let us pray as Christ our Savior has taught us:

***ALL: “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.*

*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*

*For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.*

***Amen.”***

BREAKING OF BREAD and POURING WINE

LEADER: The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ. The cup of blessing which we bless is the communion of the blood of Christ.

LAMB OF GOD

*ALL: Jesus, Lamb of God: have mercy on us. Jesus, bearer of our sins: have mercy on us. Jesus, redeemer of the world: give us your peace.*

## GENERAL PRAYER

*ALL: Loving God, we thank you that you have come into our lives and that you act with saving power to make all things new. We thank you for pouring out your life into the human form of Jesus and for the continual rebirth of Christ in the human heart. Touched by your Word made flesh, we would embody, incarnate, and signify your love on this earth. May this joy of Christmas never end, but continue through the ages until at last your reign of justice and peace is fully established on this earth. We pray in the name of Jesus, the Word. Amen.*

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

## CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH

## HOLY COMMUNION

### \*INVITATION

LEADER: Beloved in Christ, the Gospel tells us that on the first day of the week Jesus Christ was raised from death, appeared to Mary Magdalene, on that same day sat at the table with two disciples, and was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

*ALL: This is the joyful feast of the people of God. Men and women, youth and children, come from the east and the west, from the **north and the south, and gather about Christ's table.***

LEADER: This table is for all Christians who wish to know the presence of Christ and to share in the community of God's people.

### \*COMMUNION PRAYER

PASTOR: God be with you.

PEOPLE: *And also with you.*

PASTOR: Lift up your hearts.

PEOPLE: *We lift them to God.*

PASTOR: Let us give thanks to God Most High.

PEOPLE: *It is right to give God thanks and praise.*

PASTOR: We give thanks, Holy One, almighty and eternal God, always and everywhere, through Jesus Christ, the only one begotten by you before all time, by whom you made the world and all things. We bless you for your continual love and care for every creature. We praise you for forming us in your image and for calling us to be your people. Although we rebelled against your love, you did not abandon us in our sin, but sent us prophets and teachers to lead us into the way of salvation. Above all, we give you thanks for the gift of Jesus, our only Savior, who is the way, the truth, and the life. In the fullness of time, you came to us and received our nature in the person of Jesus, who in obedience to you, by suffering on the cross, and being raised from the dead, delivered us from the way of sin and death. We rejoice in the good news of the birth of Jesus; with the angels, the shepherds, and the faithful of every nation, we glorify your holy name. We praise you that Jesus now reigns with you in glory and ever lives to pray for us. We thank you for the Holy Spirit who leads us into truth, defends us in adversity, and gathers us from every people to unite us in one holy church. Therefore, with the entire company of saints in heaven and earth, we worship and glorify you, God Most Holy.

*ALL: Holy, holy, holy God of love and majesty, the whole universe speaks of your glory, O God Most High. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of our God! Hosanna in the highest! [Congregation may now be seated.]*

LEADER: For in the night of betrayal, Jesus took the bread, and after giving thanks to you, broke the bread, and gave it to the disciples, and said: "Take, eat: **This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.**" In the same way, also after supper, Jesus took the cup, and after giving you thanks, gave it to them and said: "Drink this, all of you: this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you and many, for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

***ALL: Christ's death, O God, we proclaim. Christ's resurrection we declare. Christ's coming we await. Glory be to you, O God.***