

The Church of the Red Rocks
United Church of Christ
A Stephen Ministry & Open and Affirming Faith Community
Through Christian Worship, Education and Mission
we share and celebrate Faith in God with all.

December 24, 2023 — **Christmas Eve**

*Congregation standing in body or in spirit

"Sometimes I feel lost," said the boy.

"Me too," said the mole,

"But we love you, and love brings you home."

*"I think everyone is just trying to get home."
said the mole.*

--from "The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse" by Charlie Mackesy

Gathering for Worship

Prelude "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" arr. Susan E. Geschke CRR Handbell Choir

The Christmas Story Luke 2:1-20 Abigail Wagner

Lighting the Christ Candle Isaac Wagner

***Hymn of Invitation** No. 133 "O Little Town of Bethlehem" vs. 1,2,4

Greeting & Welcome The Rev. Dr. Margaret Gramley

One: Whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey...

All: YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!!

Invocation (together) Rev. Gramley

God of the journey, we long for home.

God of light, your presence is revealed in the dark.

God of glory, we find you in the most ordinary of events.

God of many names, we know you in Jesus Christ.

**Gracious and Loving God, touch us on this Holy Night,
filling us with wonder and joy and peace. (...a time of silence...)**

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Special Music "The First Noel" arr. Sandra Eithun
CRR Handbell Choir

Listening for Our Still-Speaking God

Lesson from the Hebrew Scripture Isaiah 60:19-20 Jussara Wagner

*The sun shall no longer be your light by day, nor for brightness shall
the moon give light to you by night;*

*but the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your God
will be your glory. Your sun shall no more go down,*

or your moon withdraw itself; for the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your days of turning shall be ended.

***The Christmas Story in John's Gospel** John 1:1-5, 15 Jussara Wagner

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,

and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

[seated] **Meditation Hymn** No. 152 “Born in the Night, Mary’s Child”

Message “Welcome Home” Rev. Gramley

Anthem “Rejoice, Your Light Has Come” Mary McDonald
CRR Chancel Choir

Responding with Gratitude

Invitation to Generosity and Commitment

Offering of Music “O Holy Night” Traditional
Mia Murray, soloist

***Doxology**, chorus No. 125 – “Angels We Have Heard on High”

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

***Prayer of Thanksgiving**

Service of Holy Communion

Invitation to the Table Rev. Gramley

Prayer of Consecration (together)

Holy God, send your Spirit upon these gifts of grain and grapes that they might be for us the presence of the living Christ. Pour your Spirit upon us so we also might be taken, blessed, broken and distributed so others might know the blessings of living in worldwide communion with you and one another. Through Christ, with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are yours, now and forever. Amen.

“The Lord’s Prayer” (sung together) Albert Mallotte

The Words of Institution (responsively)

PASTOR: On the night he was betrayed, the Light of the World took bread and blessed it. Then he thanked God for it and broke it, saying:

ALL: **“This is my body which is broken for you. Whenever you eat it, remember me.”**

PASTOR: And likewise at the end of the meal, Jesus took the cup, blessed it and thanked God for it. Pouring out the red wine, he said:

ALL: **“This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you. When you drink this cup ever after this night, remember me.”**

PASTOR: Great is the mystery of Faith.

ALL: **Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.**

Sharing of the Bread and Cup

You will be invited forward by the ushers to receive the elements as a medley of familiar Christmas carols is played. Feel free to sing or hum along.

Blessing

PASTOR: May the light of God, Christ and the Holy Spirit, keep and preserve you to everlasting life. Amen.

Thanksgiving

All: We have been fed, Dear God, by your presence and led by your light. May we bask in this glow now and forevermore. Amen.

Service of Candlelighting

The light will be brought to each row. When passing the light tip the UNLIT candle into the flame, and **keep the lit one upright.**

Carol

"Silent Night"

Departing to Serve ... With God's Kind of Love

*Godspeed and Blessing

Rev. Gramley

*Benediction (sung twice by all)

"May You Run and Not Be Weary"

Murakami/Hanson

**May you run and not be weary
May your heart be filled with song
And may the love of God continue
To give you hope and keep you strong
And may you run and not be weary
May your life be filled with joy
And may the road you travel always lead you home.**

Postlude

"Joy to the World"

arr. David Lanz
Carole Weinhardt, soloist

***When our worship is over, our service begins.
Go and serve the world God loves.***

The staff and leaders of Church of the Red Rocks wishes everyone a joyful Christmas and a very happy new year. We are honored to serve with you.

Requests for prayer may be made on the purple cards in the pews or on the Church of the Red Rocks Prayer Wall at www.churchoftheredrocks.com under the heading <About Us>. **Join us next Sunday** as Pastor Len responds to your questions submitted during Advent. There is still time... email yours by this Wednesday

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