HYMN NOTES:
*It Came Upon the Midnight Clear* (123)

This text was written by Edmund H. Sears, a Massachusetts Unitarian minister, who was deeply involved in the “social gospel.” It was first published in *The Christian Register* in December 1849. This was the first of the carol-like hymns from the pens of American poets. Hymns stressing the social message of Christmas—“peace on earth, good will”—are distinctly American. Based on Luke 2:13-14, it is a call for us to respond to the song of the angels and to send back to heaven the message that we will make peace on earth. After 2000 years, we are still working on that!

The tune is by Richard S. Willis and was composed for a different text. Willis was born in Boston and studied at Yale and then with Felix Mendelssohn in Germany. When he returned to New York he became a music critic for various publications.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Wednesday Bible Study, led by Cindy Huffman

A study of the Book of Matthew meets every Wednesday at 7:00pm through Zoom. The study guide being used is *The Immersion Bible Study: Matthew* by J. Ellsworth Kalas. If you’d like to join the Wednesday Bible Study or need a study book, please email Cindy Huffman at lucindy1@aol.com and she will forward you the Zoom link. All are welcome!

Experiencing God Class, led by Vicki Krueger

If you’d like to join the Experiencing God class virtually via Zoom at 10:30am on Sunday mornings, please contact Vicki Krueger via email at vickilee33@aol.com and she will send you the meeting details each week.

Fresh Brewed

Fresh Brewed will meet on the first Friday of every month at 10:30am via Zoom. The next meeting is February 5th. The book we are studying is “Deeply Rooted; Knowing Self, Growing in God” by Christopher Marcie. Please contact Louise Mylin for a Zoom code and if you have any questions (727) 787-9868.

MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Follow the link to view our weekly email:
https://mailchi.mp/6da7a9ed214fcitylightupdate-12152020

“By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

John 13:35
Order for the Public Worship of God  
December 20, 2020  
4th Sunday of Advent  
11:00 AM Worship Service

WE COME TO WORSHIP

OPENING VOLUNTARY  “O Come, All Ye Faithful”  Douglas E. Wagner  
Jubilation Handbells  “O Come, All Ye Faithful”  arr. Mark Hayes  
Piano and Organ

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP  “Love Came Down at Christmas”  GARTAN  
Stephanie Carson, Soloist  
Love came down at Christmas, Love all lovely, Love divine;  
Love was born at Christmas, Love all lovely, Love the sign.  
Worship we the Godhead, Love incarnate, Love divine;  
Worship we our Jesus, but where with for sacred sign?  
Love shall be our token, love be yours and love be mine;  
love to God and all men, love for plea and gift and sign.  
Test by Christina G. Rossetti, 1885

PRAYER OF THE DAY

CAROL #119  “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”  MENDELSSOHN  
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the new born king,”  
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!”  
Joyful, all ye nations rise; join the triumph of the skies;  
with angelic host proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”  
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the new born king!”  
Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
late in time behold him come, offspring of the virgin’s womb,  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail the incarnate deity,  
Christ’s glory. Amen.

CAROL #123  “It Came Upon the Midnight Clear”  CAROL (stanzas 1,2,5)  
It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,  
from angels bending near the earth, to touch their harps of gold:  
“Peace on the earth good will to all, from heaven’s all gracious King”;  
the world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angel sing.  
Still through the cloven skies they come, with peaceful wings unfurled,  
and still their heavenly music floats o’er all the weary world:  
above its sad and lowly plains they bend on hovering wing,  
and ever o’er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.  
For lo, the days are hastening on, by prophets seen of old,  
when with the ever circling years shall come the time foretold,  
when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,  
and the whole world give back the song which now the angels sing.  
We grow in the Word

SCRIPTURE READINGS  
Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38 (RSV)  
SERMON  
Advent Series: The World Is Not Yet Finished  
#4 “Turning Towards Love”  
Chris Curvin, Pastor

WE GO OUT TO SERVE

CAROL #140  “Once in Royal David’s City”  BBY (stanzas 1,2,4)  
Once in royal David’s city stood a lowly cattle shed,  
where a mother laid her baby in a manger for his bed:  
Mary was that mother mild; Jesus Christ, her little child.  
He came down to earth from heaven who is God and Lord of all,  
and his shelter was a stable, and his cradle was a stall;  
with the poor and weak and lowly, lived on earth our Savior holy.  
And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own redeeming love;  
for that child so dear and gentle is our Lord in heaven above;  
and he leads his children on to the place where he is gone.

ASSUARANCE OF PARDON

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD’S PRAYER

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.

CALL TO OFFERING

CAROL  
“Advent: Love”  
“Ignite”

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (Together)

While we ask, Lord, for the most meaningful Advent season ever, we sadly confess having done so little with so much. Forgive us Lord, for not bending the knee, for not reading your Word, for not searching our hearts, for not facing our sins. Grant that when Christmas morn comes to us, we may have a fresh resolve to live to the praise of Christ’s glory. Amen.

BENEDICTION

CLOSING VOLUNTARY  “Toccata on MENDELSSOHN”  Joel Raney  
(Hark! The Herald Angels Sing)

Stephanie Carson, Music Director  
Tom Huffman, Organist & Associate Music Director  
Paul Means, Associate Pastor  
Tom Huffman, Organist & Associate Music Director

GOD’S BLESSING TO YOU