**Prelude**: Carol of the Bells

**Welcome**

**Song**: “Angels We Have Heard on High”

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o’er the plains,
And the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

See him in a manger laid whom the choirs of angels praise;
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid while our hearts in love we raise.
Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

**Sharing the Peace of the Christ**

**A Time With Kids**

**Moment for Mission**: The Christmas Fund

**Sharing Our Joys and Concerns**

**Mary Ponders**

**Introduction**

**Scripture**: Luke 2:1-21

**Song**: “Away in a Manger”

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid 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 till morning is nigh.

**Reflection and Prayer**

**Scripture**: Luke 2:22-38

**Song**: “If I Could Visit Bethlehem”

**Reflection and Prayer**

**Scripture**: Luke 2:39-52
Reflection and Prayer

Celebrating the Sacrament of Holy Communion, including The Prayer Jesus Taught:

Our Father, who is in heaven: hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your 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 yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Announcements

Blessing

Postlude

If I Could Visit Bethlehem

1. If I could vis- it Beth-le-hem what pres-ents would I bring? If
2. I’d learn some sim-pile words to speak in Ar-a-ma-ic tongues. I’d
3. I’d say, “He’ll nev-er hurt or kill, and joy will fol-low tears. We’ll

I could see what hap-pened then, what would I say or sing? I
cro-dle him, and kiss his cheek, and say, “I’m glad you’ve come.” If I
know his name and love him still in twen-ty hun-dred years.” I

wouldn’t take a mod-ern toy but gold to pay for bread, some
Ma-ry asked me who I was and what her child would do, I
can-not vis-it Beth-le-hem but what I can, I’ll do: I’ll

wine to give his par-ents joy and wool to warm his bed.
wouldn’t talk a bout the cross or tell her all I knew.
love you, Je-sus, as my friend, and give my life to you.
Once in Royal David’s City

Once in royal David’s city stood a lowly cattle shed,
Jesus is our childhood’s pattern, daily like us lived and grew,

Where a mother laid her baby in a manger for a bed:
Jesus, little, weak, and helpless, tears and smiles and comfort knew.

Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ her little child.
Jesus felt the pain of sadness, and the joyous lift of gladness.

Go Tell It on the Mountain

Go tell it on the mountain, o’er the hill and everywhere.

Go tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born!

While shepherds kept their watching o’er silent flocks by night,

Be hold through-out the heav’ns there shone a holy light.

Welcome to Open Table United Church of Christ. We are an open table where all are welcome. We celebrate diversity, nourish and serve others, work for justice, and grow together in faith through the teachings of Jesus Christ and the voice of the still-speaking God.

Open Table UCC firmly believes in science and is following directives from state and federal agencies. To keep people as safe as possible, those coming into the church building must wear a face mask and remain socially distant from staff and others present who are not from their household. We are now holding hybrid worship, meaning you are welcome to come to in person worship or join us through Zoom in the comfort of your home, with the exception of the last Sunday of the month which is a Zoom only offering.

Today, we will share the meal of Holy Communion. At Open Table UCC, we celebrate an open table where all are invited to eat the bread and drink the wine or juice as we remember the life and death and resurrection of Jesus and offer thanksgiving for God’s amazing love. You are invited to gather some bread, crackers, water, juice or whatever you have at hand.

We hope you find our church family warm and welcoming, and that you experience worship as meaningful and spiritually uplifting. We are an Open and Affirming congregation, and we take seriously our commitment to create a worshipping community where ALL people feel welcome, affirmed, and valued. Please stay and join us after worship for an opportunity for fellowship. And please, when you are ready, share with us your contact information so that we can keep you up-to-date on all the exciting things happening at Open Table UCC!

Today
10:00 a.m. Zoom Worship
11:00 a.m. Fellowship Hour

12/27 - Monday
Office Closed - Merry Christmas!

12/28 - Tuesday
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Pastor’s Office Hours
6:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Youth Outlook - Zoom

12/29 - Wednesday
12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. Pastor’s Office Hours

12/31 - Friday
Office Closed - Happy New Year!

1/2 - Sunday
10:00 a.m. Zoom Worship
11:00 a.m. Fellowship Hour

1/4 - Tuesday
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Pastor’s Office Hours
6:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Youth Outlook - Zoom

1/5 - Wednesday
12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. Pastor’s Office Hours
3:00 p.m. Leadership Table Meeting
4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. Music Lessons
6:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal

1/7 - Friday
6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Music Lessons

1/8 - Saturday
11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Music Lessons
Our December Mission of the month is the Christmas Fund: caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years by providing extra monies for pensions, health insurance, emergency grants, and a Christmas “Thank You” gift to low-income retired UCC ministers. Emergency assistance to clergy and lay employees and their families is also available. When giving to this mission please write Christmas Fund in the memo section of your check, if giving online through our website; ucottawa.org ("Donate") or Open Table UCC Ottawa Facebook page ("Learn More"), make a note in the memo or notes section that the donation is for the Christmas Fund.

The office will be closed for Christmas Monday December 27. We will be closed for New Year’s on Friday, December 31. Have a beautiful Christmas and Happy New Year!

Please remember that if you would like to make a contribution to Open Table UCC for the 2021 tax year, the church must receive that contribution in 2021 prior to December 30 as December 31 is the Federal observance of New Year's Day and the office will be closed. Donations/contributions received after December 30 will be credited toward the 2022 tax year. If mailing a check, please allow sufficient time for the donation to be delivered to the church before the 30.

2022 offering envelopes are available in the living room area of Fellowship Hall. You are welcome to pick up a set on Sunday or during office hours.

PFLAG Ottawa is taking a break during this Christmas Season and resumes January 23 at 2:30 p.m. PFLAG Ottawa meets the fourth Sunday of the month and provides confidential support, education and advocacy for LGBTQ people, their families and allies. For more information please speak with Ken Brown; 815-830-7682 or kendempsiebrown@gmail.com or visit PFLAG Ottawa’s Facebook page.

Coffee Fellowship resumes in January. We'll follow the "active masking" protocol, i.e., remove your mask to sip or to take a bite, and replace your mask to chew, swallow, speak, and breathe. We continue to monitor covid case rates and adjust protocols accordingly, recognizing that we each have personal responsibility for what activities we will or will not engage in. A sign-up sheet for hosts is in the worship area (thank you, Dawn Haggard, for hosting on January 2!)

Leadership Table will meet on Wednesday, January 5 at 3:00 p.m., if you have something for the agenda please speak with one of the members: Jordan Johnson, Moderator; Steve Malinsky, Moderator-Elect; Sharon Karasti, Clerk; Donna Martin, Treasurer; Sarah Reckmeyer, Member at Large focusing on Ongoing Small Projects.

One of our goals for the New Year is YOU! We want to stay current with you. To help us stay in touch, please confirm or update your information with the office at your convenience. It is always good to verify an email, phone number and address in the event that we may have gotten something wrong or something has changed. You can contact the office at 815-433-0771 or office@opentableottawa.org.
They Came When You Needed Them

They came when you needed them. They answered the phone when you called. They baptized and married and buried your loved ones. They gave up weekend after weekend after weekend to care for your spirit, lead you in worship, and point to God in your midst.

Some of them did it for less money than they could easily live on. Some of them did it for less than they would have been willing to do any other job for, because of what they believe about who God is, and what they believe about who you are.

For all the sacrifices that clergy and lay church workers have made in our congregations, over 100 years ago the Pension Boards of the United Church of Christ created the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund, to help support them in retirement and during times of emergent need.

The Christmas Fund provides supplementation of small pension payments for retired clergy who often served small congregations throughout their careers. It provides supplementation of health premium costs, to help ensure their wellness throughout their lives. And the Christmas Fund provides emergency grants Christmas “Thank You” gift checks for retirees and those facing unforeseen financial hardship.

A gift to the Christmas Fund is your opportunity to join with others in the United Church of Christ to bring good news and great joy to those who have given so much to our church.

In 2020, gifts to the Christmas Fund enabled:

- Monthly pension supplementation for 276 retired clergy and lay employees ($1,180,187)
- Health benefits supplementation for 89 retired clergy and lay employees ($274,008)
- Emergency grants for 96 individuals and families ($214,649)
- Christmas “Thank You” gift checks to 504 retired clergy and lay employees ($252,000)

The Christmas Fund
For the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund
Chicago Theological Seminary is pleased to present the latest issue of our annual magazine, Challenge & Response! To read this and all issues, please visit https://www.ctschicago.edu/challenge-response.

This is an issue of change. CTS is changing, growing more diverse and bringing people together like never before – and doing so with an Interim President and Interim Dean. But we remain dedicated to our Commitments. With that in mind, this issue of Challenge & Response showcases how all this change is a direct outgrowth of the CTS mission. It includes interviews with former President Rev. Dr. Stephen G. Ray, Jr., Interim President Dr. Marsha Foster Boyd, and Interim Dean Rabbi Dr. Rachel Mikva; an update on the Black Faith Leader Collective, which has taken on a life of its own; information on our partnership with Bayan Islamic Graduate School; and much, much more.

The outdoor mobile food pantry of the Community Food Basket of Ottawa is Saturday, January 8 at OSF Healthcare parking structure, 1050 E. Norris Dr. in Ottawa. Registration is from 9:30 - 11:30 a.m., distribution begins at 10:00 a.m. Please bring a container to take food home in and be prepared to wait as the process can take up to 2 hours. This event is open to anyone in need of food assistance regardless of residency and you must be present or send a representative with a completed proxy form in order to receive food for your household. Proxy forms are available for download here: https://tinyurl.com/y2n7x25h.

The Community Food Basket schedule for distribution is Monday and Tuesday 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. and Wednesday and Thursday 3:00 - 6:00 p.m. at 519 W. Madison Street in Ottawa. For more information call 815 431-0155 or visit https://www.ottawafoodbasket.org/.

Conservation Achievement Scholarship Program
The Illinois Conservation Foundation awards the annual Conservation Achievement Scholarship to encourage the next generation of leaders to preserve and enhance a sustainable outdoor environment.

Up to four one-time scholarships of $2,000 are given to outstanding high school seniors in Illinois who have demonstrated effective, voluntary and long-term dedication to the preservation, protection, enhancement and/or promotion of Illinois’ natural resources.

Applicants must be Illinois residents and a senior in an Illinois high school during the year of the scholarship award for more information and to apply visit: https://ilconservation.org/Portals/0/Forms/2022%20Scholarship%20Requirements.pdf?ver=2021-10-25-160432-630&timestamp=1635195880746

Office Hours: Mon. and Fri. 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
   Tues. - Thurs. 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
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Email: office@opentableottawa.org
Address: 910 Columbus St., Ottawa, IL 61350
OTUCC Website: www.uccottawa.org
Facebook: Open Table UCC Ottawa
Pastor’s Office Hours:
   Tuesdays 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
   Wednesdays 12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.
pastor@opentableottawa.org