



First Christian Church

Disciples of Christ

430 S. 16th St. Lincoln, NE 68508 402.475.4289

Weekly Worship

love all • live spiritually • rejoice in hope • show hospitality

Rev. Dr. Karen Moritz, Pastor

Kelly Tyrrell, Church Administrator

Mark W. Miller, Director of Music Ministries

Sara Lugn, Stephen Ministry Leader

www.fcclincoln.org

info@fcclincoln.org

Week of December 24, 2021



Call to Worship

Feel free to follow along with our Call to Worship from today's live-streamed worship service.

One: Tonight old dreams die and new dreams come to life.

Many: **Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace.**

One: Our candles illuminate our story. Dawn invades midnight. The Light of the World has come!

Many: **Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace.**

One: This light is a light for all, lighting our lives with the presence of God-come-alive within us and among us, now and always.

Many: **Glory to God in the highest! Glory to the Newborn King!**

Public Worship WILL be held at 10:30 am Sunday morning. If you are not quite ready to join us for public worship, we invite you to follow along with this printed service.

Community Prayer

O Loving God, mother and father to us all, tonight is the night you touch our lives, you rock our world, and nothing will ever be the same. When you gave us the gift of your Son, he was not sent as a king, or a political ruler, not even as a religious elite. No, dear Lord, you sent us an infant, so tender and mild as they say. You sent us a babe in his mother's arms, to remind us that real power is found in humility, vulnerability, and love. It is this power, love, that you sent your Son to teach us. There is nothing we can do but sing your praise with our whole lives for this gift we could never earn, but you so freely give. In awe of the birth of your Son, we pray. Amen.

Check out our weekly video at www.fcclincoln.org, First Christian's Facebook page, or search for First Christian Church, Lincoln, Nebraska on YouTube.

www.fcclincoln.org/youtube

Even if you are worshipping from home, please continue your regular giving to the church in addition to your faith giving. The FCC office is accepting checks at 430 S. 16th Street, Lincoln, NE 68508. We can also mail you a debit authorization form to do automatic withdrawals. Finally, there is a "GIVE" button on the top right-hand side of the fcclincoln.org website to make an online donation via PayPal.

Scripture Reading

Luke 1:46-55

⁴⁶ And Mary said,
'My soul magnifies the Lord,
⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God
my Savior,
⁴⁸ for he has looked with favor on the
lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations
will call me blessed;

⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great
things for me,
and holy is his name.

⁵⁰ His mercy is for those who fear
him

from generation to generation.

⁵¹ He has shown strength with
his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the
thoughts of their hearts.

⁵² He has brought down the powerful
from their thrones,

and lifted up the lowly;

⁵³ he has filled the hungry with
good things,

and sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,

⁵⁵ according to the promise he made
to our ancestors,

to Abraham and to his descendants
for ever.'

Luke 2:1-7

¹ In those days a decree went
out from Emperor Augustus
that all the world should be
registered. ² This was the first
registration and was taken
while Quirinius was governor
of Syria. ³ All went to their
own towns to be registered.

⁴ Joseph also went from the
town of Nazareth in Galilee to
Judea, to the city of David
called Bethlehem, because he
was descended from the house
and family of David. ⁵ He went
to be registered with Mary, to
whom he was engaged and
who was expecting a child.

⁶ While they were there, the
time came for her to deliver
her child. ⁷ And she gave birth
to her firstborn son and
wrapped him in bands of
cloth, and laid him in a man-
ger, because there was no
place for them in the inn.

Reflection

Meditation for Christmas Eve

“Birthing the Divine”

Pastor Kelly Tyrrell

The birth of Jesus has really been on my mind recently. Well, let's be honest, the birth of Jesus is on most Christian's minds right now, but I mean specifically the *birth* of Jesus. How often do we get lost in the pomp and circumstance of Christmas? The soft moments of candlelight and the grand trumpets of “Joy to the World?” Our hymns proclaiming a “Silent Night” and a hushed town of Bethlehem seem to forget this is truly a story about labor and delivery. A “home” birth, if you can call a stable a home, of a very, very young mother whose joy and anticipation was likely rivaled only by her fear and anxiety.

I was young when I had my boys, too, only 22 and 24 years old respectively. Slightly older than Mary, but still so young and unexperienced; I had no idea what I was in for. A newlywed, I was so excited about having my boys, but the closer I got to the big day, the more fearful I became. I can't imagine Mary was any different. And like many mothers-to-be, I had a moment around the fifth hour of labor when I realized the man I loved did this to me! Imagine Mary's consternation, then, that it was no man but the God of Israel who put her in this position. You can't very well throw your ice chips at God! But of course, like me, she chose this, or at least agreed to it. She humbly accepted her position and delighted in being chosen by God, favored in the eyes of her Lord, to bring forth the Son of God.

It's the nitty gritty that's been on my mind, though; wondering if she had midwives to help, wondering if Joseph was rubbing her back, wondering if she could catch her breath in between contractions. Natural childbirth is anything but a “Silent Night!” And in the midst of the uncertainty, I can't help but admire her submission to the process. I mean, the whole process, from beginning to end. What commitment and perseverance it must have

taken to see a baby through to a healthy, live birth, especially considering this is 1st century Judea. But that's an amazing thing about childbirth: how a woman's body seems to instinctually know what to do. You're no longer in full control of what's happening; you're just along for the ride. It takes a level of humility and vulnerability that isn't for the proud or the faint of heart.

Can you even dream of that moment when Mary first held Jesus in her arms? Her blood, sweat, and tears literally on her clothing; Jesus's sweet eyes looking up to his earthly mother. I imagine him wrapping his tiny fingers around hers, Mary attempting to breast-feed her son, wrapping him in those bands of cloth so gently, making sure the hay in the manger was just right to support his little head. To think this child would be the Light of the World! We know the Angel Gabriel gave Mary a good idea of just who and what her son would be, but to see with her own eyes would have been indescribable. If we think it's hard to wait for 4 weeks - try waiting for 9 months!

During Christmastide, we celebrate our personal encounters with Jesus with our own eyes. We rejoice in his coming to earth and dwelling among us. We look forward to his ministry, healing, teaching, and praying, desiring to follow in his path. In some ways, our faith is an awful lot like Mary's labor. Like Mary, we give up our pride, ego, and reputation to submit to Jesus. We are no longer in full control, but we trust the One who is. As we join with family this season, eat our body weight in things coated in almond bark, and sing our favorite songs around our trees, may we also remember sweet, young Mary; excited and scared, holy and beloved, mother of our Lord.

AMEN

Prayers & Praises

December 24, 2021

In Our Church Family:

- Arlene Heimer
- Marvin Thurber
- William Deterding
- Our sympathy to the family of Alice Peterson, upon her recent passing
- Vic Burgess
- Harold & Donna Baker
- Polly Putney
- Jessica Vocasek

Relatives:

- Friends and Family of Vic Burgess
- Greg Ogren, prayers for healing, still ill after surgeries and treatments, son of LaVonne Ogren
- Mark Carpenter, with colon cancer, brother of Jill Carpenter and Dick & Roxie Pickel
- Lorie Chrastel, Mark Carpenter's fiancée, prayers for recovery from a stroke
- Roger Christianson, with stage 4 cancer, father of Brady Christianson
- Mother of John Swanson, prayers for health as she is ill with COVID-19
- Emily Carpenter, aunt of Carpenters & Pickels is in hospice due to Covid in May
- Gerald Deterding, prayers for healing from cancer and pneumonia, father of William Deterding

Friends:

- Tallu Schuyler Quinn, prayers for diagnosis of glioblastoma, friend of Kaleo and D'Arcy Blosser
- Cedric Gibb, healing prayers, friend of Cec Burkhart
- Jim Bottolfsen, for stage 3 lung cancer, friend of the Vocaseks
- Carson Mousel, 13-year-old grandson of Bob and Eileen Kunz, from Mildred Brockemeyer
- Jamin and Hailey, for the safe delivery of their baby girl, from Tony Flack

Our Timothys:

- Bruce Frogge at Cypress Creek CC in Spring, TX
- Glenda Dietrich Moore, Creative Arts Ministry in Lincoln, NE

In the Nebraska Region:

- Blessings to Seminarians and those training for Ministry

Our Global Ministries Missionaries:

- Andrew Larson serving in the Philippines

Find more information and stories about our Global Ministry partners at

www.globalministries.org



Song of the Week

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Words: Phillips Brooks, 1868

Music: Lewis Henry Redner, 1868

O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary
and, gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the king,
and peace to all on earth.

How silently, how silently,
the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming,
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still
the dear Christ enters in.

O holy child of Bethlehem,
descend on us, we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in;
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us; abide in us,
our Lord Emmanuel!

