



Central Reformed Church
10 College Avenue NE
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503
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centralreformedchurch.org

Connecting all people to God and to one another through scripture, sacrament, song, and service.



Central Reformed Church
Christmas Eve
December 24, 2022
7:00 p.m.

REFLECTION

For those who believe in the transcendence and total otherness of God, it radically diminishes him. For those who do not believe in God, it is the ultimate absurdity. For those who stand somewhere between belief and unbelief, it challenges credulity in a new way. It is not a theory that can be tested rationally because it is beyond reason and it is not a theory, not something theologians have thought their way to. The claim is, instead, that it is something that has happened, and reason itself is somehow tested by it, humankind's whole view of what is possible and real. Year after year the ancient tale of what happened is told—raw, preposterous, holy—and year after year the world in some measure stops to listen.

Frederick Buechner
"Emmanuel" from *A Room Called Remember*

Ring In the New Year!



New Year's Day Worship
Holy Communion
Litany of Letting Go and Holding On
1 January 2023
10:00 a.m.

"Hope Amidst the Chaos"
Matthew 2:12-23
Pastor Matt Shults

"May each day bring bright beginnings!"

cover art: Nativity—Detail 14 © John August Swanson | Eyekons
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During the candle lighting at the close of service, ushers will have extinguishers available. For those worshipping at home,
as your situation allows, please light your candle, and if worshipping with others, kindly share your light with them as the
closing carol is sung.

NEW YEAR'S EVE CONCERT at CENTRAL REFORMED CHURCH

FEATURING
ADAM J. BRAKEL

Director of Music for St. James Cathedral and the Diocese of Orlando, Florida



[FREE ADMISSION]

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2022 at 7:30 p.m.



ORDER OF WORSHIP | CHRISTMAS EVE | DECEMBER 24, 2022 | 7:00 P.M.

GATHERING IN LOVE

The prelude is a call for personal preparation for the worship of God.

Prelude

"Noel Poitevin" | Jean-François Dandrieu
"Noel de Saintonge" | Jean-François Dandrieu
"The First Nowell" | Craig Curry
"Sussex Carol" | Arr. Matt Hyzer
"Infant Holy, Infant Lowly" | Keith Chapman
"Noël nouvelet," "Un flambeau, Jeanette, Isabelle" | Graham Yates
"O Holy Night" | Adolphe Adam, arr. Stephen Decesare
"O Come, All Ye Faithful" | Douglas E. Wagner

Call to Worship

One: Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy.
Many: To us is born this day in the city of David a Savior, the Messiah, the Lord.
One: This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in cloth and lying in a manger.
Many: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace!
One: Let us go now to Bethlehem.

*Processional Hymn

"Once in Royal David's City" | 49, v. 1 solo; interlude;
congregation standing v. 2, 3, 4

*The Bidding Prayer

*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.

**Please stand in body or in spirit.*

Lighting of the Christ Candle

One: Tonight, on Christmas Eve, we join with families all over the earth to worship the baby born in a manger.

People: **For four weeks the candles have been burning as we thought about hope, peace, joy, and love. These are the gifts that Jesus brought to us at Christmastime.**

One: Each week another candle glowed, and our wreath shone more brightly. Tonight we light our white candle, the candle which represents Jesus. It is the center of our wreath, just as Jesus is the center of our lives.

People: **O God, our hearts sing with joy and praise because of Jesus. At this happy season, we rejoice that Jesus came among us. By his birth and life he has shown us that we are your people and that we are greatly loved. Help us to remember Christmas all year long by giving to others the gifts of life: hope, peace, joy, love, kindness, and understanding. Amen!**

*The Peace

One: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

Many: **And also with you.**
(Please exchange the peace of Christ with those around you.)

Christmas Offering

Offertory "See Amid the Winter's Snow" | Dan Forest

*Alleluia.
See amid the winter's snow, born for us on earth below,
see the tender lamb appears, promised from eternal years.*

*Refrain: Hail, thou ever blessed morn, hail redemption's happy dawn,
sing through all Jerusalem: "Christ is born in Bethlehem."*

*Lo, within a manger lies he who built the lofty skies,
he, who, throned in light sublime, sits amid the cherubim.*

*Sacred infant, all divine, what a tender love was thine,
thus to come from highest bliss, down to such a world as this.
Alleluia.*

LISTENING IN EXPECTATION

First Lesson Genesis 3:8-15

*Carol "Good Christian Friends, Rejoice" | 28, all verses

Second Lesson Isaiah 9:2-7 (King James Version)

WELCOME TO CENTRAL REFORMED CHURCH

Welcoming Our Visitors: Thank you for joining us this evening to celebrate the birth of our Savior! Our mission is to connect all people to God and to one another through scripture, sacrament, song, and service. We have been in ministry for 183 years and are a part of the Reformed Church in America, a Christian denomination that began in New Amsterdam (now New York City) in 1628. To learn more, please visit our website at: www.centralreformedchurch.org.

From Our Senior Minister: "Our season of watching and waiting has ended. We waited, not because we do not know the story of Jesus' coming into the world, and not because we do not know that God is already and always here. We patiently waited because to wait is to expect something more, to expect that the Christmas story might enter our hearts and our world in new ways, to bring the change for which we long. May the first stirrings of Christmas joy remind us, with gladness, that God's great love for us has been revealed in the ultimate gift, the birth of Jesus Christ, who is our Savior and Lord. Merry Christmas!" –Pastor Steve Pierce

About Christmas: The word Christmas comes from Middle English Cristemasse, which in turn comes from Old English Cristes-messe, literally meaning "Christ's Mass," the day of commemorating the Incarnation of the Word of God in the birth of Jesus Christ. The origin of the designation Christ is also not without interest. It comes from Greek Χριστός (Christós), meaning "anointed", which is a translation of Hebrew מָשִׁיחַ (māšîaḥ—"anointed") that has been incorporated into the English language as "messiah." Hence, "Christ" and "Messiah" mean essentially the same, the former originating in Ancient Greek and the latter in Classical Hebrew. Sometimes we see or hear people say "Xmas" instead of Christmas. The "X" is actually an abbreviation of the Greek name of "Christ", Χριστός (Christos), which starts with the Greek letter Chi. Abbreviating "Christ" as "X" can be traced many centuries back, with some written documents dated as early as 1100 AD. [adapted from the work of Jakub Marian]

Christmas Offering: This Christmas Eve, we have the opportunity to bless our friends in Big Falls, Belize with our Christmas offering. Last June, our youth served with Big Falls Baptist Church. Jay Harsevoort and Scott Webb will lead another group from Central to Big Falls in June 2023. This Christmas gift will help them as they grow their church in their neighborhood, add signage to their building, provide food for those in need, and create fun and engaging spaces for their youth. Help us continue to support this relationship by giving generously this Christmas Eve. To learn more about our work in Belize, please reach out to Jay Harsevoort, Nick Loubert, or Scott Webb.

Christmas Day Worship: Join us tomorrow morning, December 25, for worship on Christmas Day at 10:00 a.m. Preservice music will begin at 9:50 a.m. Pastor Steve Pierce will be preaching on the subject, "Stepping Out of the Picture" based on John 1:1-14. We will also be celebrating the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.



Stewardship: Your financial gifts help Central fulfill its mission of connecting all people to God and to one another. As your situation allows, please consider a gift to Central. To make a one-time or recurring gift, either via credit card or via your bank account, please visit Central's online giving platform:bit.ly/centralgive, also accessible via QR code.

WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS

Crucifer: Helen Phillips

Acolyte: Patricia Duthler

Principal Organist: Norma de Waal Malefyt

Director of Music Ministries: Taemin Han

Flutist: Jodi MacLean

String Quartet: Grace Kim, Andrew Laven, Christopher Martin, Leslie VanBecker

Celebration Ringers

Chancel Choir

Percussionists: David Jigo, Jesse Monroe

Preacher: Pastor Steve Pierce

Vocalist: Katheryn Becksvoort

Christ Candle: Ron and Nancy Hager

Readers: Brian Andrew, Patricia Duthler, Larry Gerbens,

John Norden, Lauren TerMaat, Pastor Matt Shults

Video Tech: Tom TerMaat

Sound Tech: Michael Beachy

*Carol	"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing!" 31, all verses
Third Lesson	Micah 5:2-4
*Carol	"O Little Town of Bethlehem" 44, all verses
Fourth Lesson	Luke 1:26-38
*Carol	"Of the Father's Love Begotten" 309, v. 1 soloist; v. 2-3, all; omit "Amen"
Fifth Lesson	Luke 2:1-7 (King James Version)
Music for Meditation	"Pastoral Symphony" from the oratorio "Messiah" G. F. Handel
Sixth Lesson	Luke 2:8-20
Anthem	"Still, Still, Still" Melvin Rotermund <i>Still, still, still, your heart with joy I'd fill; for you I would sing and kneel by the manger, safely kept and free from danger.</i> <i>Sleep, sleep, sleep in a stable with the sheep. My heart, your manger, glows with glory, awed by angels with their story.</i> <i>Love, love, love sent down from heav'n above; my soul declare and pay thanksgiving, joyous song my voice be singing.</i>
The Christmas Meditation	
Anthem	"The Shepherd's Carol" Dan Forrest <i>Carols so sweet, angels did sing.</i> <i>As lately we watched o'er our fields through the night. A star there was seen of such glorious light. All through the night, angels did sing carols so sweet of the birth of a King.</i> <i>His throne is a manger, his court is a loft. But hosts of bright angels, in strains sweet and soft, him they proclaim, our Christ by name, and earth, sky, and air straight are filled with his fame.</i> <i>Then, shepherds, be joyful, salute your new King, let hills and vales ring to the song that ye sing. Blest be the hour, welcome the morn for Christ our dear Savior on earth now is born.</i> <i>All through the night, angels did sing carols so sweet, for the birth of a King.</i>

RESPONDING IN FAITH

Reflection

When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and princes are home,
when the shepherds are back with their flocks,
the work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost,
to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry,
to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among people,
to make music in the heart.

—Howard Thurman

Silent Meditation

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

“Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life’” (John 8:12). The light of our Lord shines through us wherever we go. By lighting candles, we are reminded of the many gifts he gives us, especially the “light of life.”

We invite you to pass the light from the Christ Candle to the person at the end of each pew, then down the pew. Dip only the unlit candle when lighting from your neighbor’s candle. Please hold burning candles upright. Children may participate with their parents’ permission.

*Carol

“Silent Night” | Franz Xaver Gruber

Solo:

*Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht. Alles schläft; einsam wacht;
Nur das traute hochheilige Paar. Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar,
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh, Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh!*

(the congregation will stand at the interlude)

*All:

Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright,
Round yon virgin, mother and child! Holy Infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar, Heavenly hosts sing “Alleluia!
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born.”

Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from Thy holy face, With the dawn of redeeming grace.
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

Silent night, holy night! Wondrous star, lend thy light;
With the angels let us sing, Alleluia to our King;
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born.

*The Christmas Blessing

One:

Many:

May the song of the angels, the joy of the shepherds, and the peace of the Christ child be with you tonight and always. Merry Christmas!
Merry Christmas!

Postlude

“Grand Chœur Dialogué” | Eugène Gigout