

# **iucc** Irvine United Congregational Church

*An Open & Affirming, Just Peace, Global Mission, Creation Justice,  
Congregation of the United Church of Christ*

December 24, 2023 • 9:30am

**CHRISTMAS EVE**

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**Prelude**                                      ***Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light***                      Yuyoung Jeong, piano  
arr. Mark Hayes

**Gathering Song**                                      ***As We Gather***                                      **Congregation**  
by Coomes & Fay

As we gather may your Spirit work within us  
As we gather may we glorify your name  
Knowing well that as our hearts begin to worship  
We'll be blessed because we came  
(Repeat)

**Welcome**                                      [iucc.org/visitor](http://iucc.org/visitor)                                      **Rev. Dr. Sarah Halverson-Cano**

**Gong**

**Introit**                                      ***Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming***                                      **Chancel Choir**  
Theodore Baker, 1894

**Call to Worship**                                      **Renaë Boyum**

One: With Hope, we have waited for the birth of the Christ-child;

**Many: We have waited. We prepared. We are ready!**

One: With Peace, we pray for the world, we pray for our communities, we pray for peace in our hearts.

**Many: The Prince of Peace leads us onward.**

One: With Joy, we expectantly prepare for the Good News of which the angel sings;

**Many: Joyfully we celebrate the birth of the one light breaking into our world again.**

One: With Love, we give selflessly, knowing God has given us the most wonderful gift;

**Many: God's love is in us, through the gift of Jesus the Christ.**

One: And so, with the advent of the Christ, the hope of the hurting, the promise of peace, the joy of the world, the love of a mother –we pray:

**All: May Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love shine forth from us to light the world! The baby is coming!**

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, goodwill to men, from heav'n's all gracious king,  
 The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come with peaceful wings unfurl,  
 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.

O ye, beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low,  
 Who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow,  
 Look now for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing;  
 O rest beside the weary road and hear the angels sing.

For lo the days are hastening on, by prophets bards foretold,  
 When with the ever circling years comes round the age of gold;  
 When peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,  
 and all the world send back the song which now the angels sing.

**Lighting of Advent Wreath****The Furtado Family**

**Reader 1:** When the angel Gabriel visited Mary, announcing God's plan for her to conceive and give birth to the Messiah, "Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?'" (Luke 1:34)

And yet, only a few months later, Mary sings to Elizabeth, "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name." (Luke 1:46-49).

**Reader 2:** We, like Mary, hear God's call to be part of making God's dream for our salvation and flourishing a reality, and we question, "How can this be? I am only..." Yet, like Mary, the "onlys" that make us hesitate are gifts God can and will use as God's love transforms us into bearers of good news.

**Congregation:** We wait as people who have encountered divine Love that disrupts the status quo and ushers us into abundant life marked by mutual love and peace that flows from the flourishing of all people.

**Reader 1:** We light these candles as signs of our shocking hope, our just peace, our fierce joy, and the love that transforms us. May Love grow within us, transforming us into bold witnesses of God's salvation with our voices and our lives. Amen.

**Congregational Response**

A candle is burning, a candle of Love;  
 A candle to point us to heaven above.  
 A baby for Christmas, a wonderful birth;  
 For Jesus is bringing God's Love to our earth.

**A Fresh Word**

Anthem

**Sing Noel, O Sing Noel!**  
by Patti Drennan

Chancel Choir

**Reflective Singing**    **"Holy Spirit Come to Us"**  
J. Berthier



**Prayers of the Church**

Rev. Dr. Sarah Halverson-Cano

(concluding with the Lord's Prayer)

Our Creator (Father, Mother, or other name as you are comfortable),  
which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kin-dom 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.

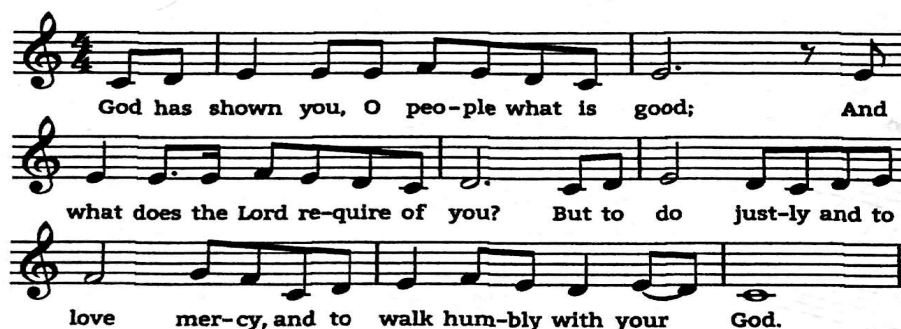
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kin-dom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

**Offertory Call**

Renaë Boyum

**Song of Thanksgiving • "Micah 6:8"**



**Offertory**

**Breath of Heaven**  
by Amy Grant and Chris Eaton

Joy Dorko

**Prayer of Dedication**

Renaë Boyum

**Scripture**

**Luke 1:26-38**

Renaë Boyum

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you

will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.” Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

**Sermon** **Rev. Dr. Sarah Halverson-Cano**

**Benediction** **Rev. Dr. Sarah Halverson-Cano**

**Response** **Alleluia** **Congregation**

by Jerry Sinclair

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

**Postlude** ***Ding Dong! Merrily on High*** **Yuyoung Jeong, piano**  
arr. Mark Hayes

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### Our Staff

Senior Pastor	Rev. Dr. Sarah Halverson-Cano	<a href="mailto:PastorSarah@iucc.org">PastorSarah@iucc.org</a>
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### The Church Office will be closed 12/26/22-1/2/23

Administrative Pastor, Craig Tyrll will begin on 1/1/23

Heidi and Craig are in the church office M-Th (949-733-0220);

Pastor Sarah is off through 01/04/2024 and can be reached by email or text to 714-293-0241.



## Irvine United Congregational Church

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