



The Birth of Christ by Kim Ki-chang (1952-53)

Christmas Sunday
December 28, 2025 | 10:00 AM

Words of Welcome

"It is the mission of the Community Reformed Church of Colonie to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, with all our souls and with all of our minds; and to love our neighbors as ourselves." (Matthew 22:37-40)

We are a community bound together and energized by faith, love, and commitment to Jesus Christ. And even though you may not yet share that faith, love, and commitment, you are most welcome to be with us, to belong here, to experience what we're about. Then, if you are attracted and persuaded by what you see and hear, we hope you'll want to set down roots here long-term. And even if you don't, you'll always be a friend.

The Community Reformed Church of Colonie thanks you for worshiping with us!

Please join in the worship liturgy by reading aloud what is in ***bold italics***.

* - Please rise in body or in spirit

About the Today's Service

On this Christmas Sunday, our service centers on the messages of Christmas. To help us enter this story better, we will be drawing on the scholarship of the Visual Commentary on Scripture (VSC), a freely accessible online publication that provides expert commentary on the Bible in dialogue with works of art.

Throughout today's service, we will linger with these Christmas artworks through guided reflection and conversation, sing beloved carols, and share together in the wonder of the story they proclaim: God becoming human.

If you are joining us online, these times of discussion are also open to you! Please follow the instructions on the screen and in the chat.

PRELUDE - "Mary Did You Know"

THE COMMUNITY GATHERS

THE ELDER'S PRAYER - Linda Murphy

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

INTROIT "O Little Town of Bethlehem" | (verses 1 & 4 only)



1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!
2 For Christ is born of Mar - y and, gath - ered all a - bove,
3 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly, the won - drous gift is given!
4 O ho - ly child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;



A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by.
while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - dering love.
So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heaven.
cast out our sin and en - ter in; be born in us to - day.



Yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light;
O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth,
No ear may hear his com - ing, but in this world of sin,
We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad ti - dings tell;



the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.
and prais - es sing to God the king, and peace to all on earth.
where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.
O come to us; a - bide with us, our Lord Em - man - u - el!



CALL TO WORSHIP Based on Philippians 2

We gather to worship the One who is equal with God,
but also chose to become equal with us.

Christ did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited,
but instead chose to empty himself and come amongst us in love.

This is the mystery of Christmas.

This is the mystery of God's love!

Come, let us worship God in the manger, Jesus the Christ!



* **OPENING HYMN** “Angels, from the Realms of Glory” | (verses 1 & 4 only)

1 An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er
 2 Shep - herds, in the fields a - bid - ing, watch - ing o'er your
 3 Sag - es, leave your con - tem - pla - tions; bright - er vi - sions
 4 All cre - a - tion, join in prais - ing God the Fa - ther,

all the earth; you, who sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry,
 flocks by night, God with us is now re - sid - ing;
 beam a - far; seek the great de - sire of na - tions;
 Spir - it, Son, ev - er - more your voic - es rais - ing

now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:
 yon - der shines the in - fant light: come and wor - ship,
 you have seen his na - tal star: come and wor - ship,
 to the e - ter - nal Three in One:

come and wor - ship, wor - ship Christ, the new - born king!

PROFESSION OF FAITH - THE FIRST IMAGE



Nativity by Paula Rego (2002)

A liturgist will read the provided commentary by Johann Hinrich Claussen, and then follow the instructions for the subsequent questions:

“Certain ideas are so obvious that nobody thinks of them. It then takes an extraordinary person to do what should have been done centuries ago.

Paula Rego dared to do what nobody before her (to my knowledge) had tried, that is to show Mary giving birth. Isn't this what the Holy Night is all about? A young woman giving birth to a child (and God truly taking on flesh in him).

All the pious and beautiful Christian images that preceded this one showed the moments after the birth, when the child is freshly swaddled in the manger or being given his first bath. There are— influenced by some ancient theological traditions—usually no traces of the labour pains, fear, blood, or sweat of God's carnal coming into the world. ...

[Rego's] Christmas painting shows Mary giving birth: her eyes closed; her outstretched hands holding her bulging belly; her bare legs spread wide and firmly on the ground; her dress pulled far up, she is in the last throes of labor."

Privately answer the first question:

1. This Christmas scene shows the labor of birth. It's far from serene or peaceful. Looking back over the past year, or considering your life right now, where does your faith feel painfully in the process of being birthed?

Discuss the second question with your group:

2. Mary is straining, but she is also grounded and supported. When faith feels hard or strained for you, what helps hold you steady, and how might God be present in the struggle, rather than only after labor has passed?

SUNG RESPONSE “He Came Down”

He came down that we may have peace, love, He came down that we may have peace, love,
 joy, joy,

came down that we may have peace, love, Hal-le - lu - jah, for - ev - er - more!
 joy, joy,

CONFESsION LITANY - SECOND IMAGE



Flight Into Egypt by Henry Ossawa Tanner (1923)

A liturgist will read the provided commentary by Ian Boxall, and then follow the instructions for the subsequent questions:

“The journey of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph to the land of Egypt takes place under the cover of darkness. The fact that it happens ‘by night’ (Matthew 2:14) underscores the urgent note of danger and the threat of death. As the angel announces to Joseph, Herod is seeking to ‘destroy’ the child (Matthew 2:13).

Henry Ossawa Tanner was haunted by this story of flight, shaped by his formative years in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, of which his father was a bishop. He painted no less than fifteen versions of the story. Here, the fugitive character of the Holy Family is clearly foregrounded. With strong shades of blue and the use of shadows to intensify the drama, Tanner heightens the sense of forced migration. Mary’s donkey keeps close to the wall, moving slowly as if to avoid detection. The child is kept close to his mother’s breast, safely secured in her cloak, almost invisible. Joseph brings up the rear, fulfilling his traditional role as protector of the Holy Family. This is a family on the run, their ultimate destination uncertain.

Yet there are also visual clues that the fugitive family will find a ready welcome amongst the strangers they encounter. First, they are escorted by an anonymous figure, leading them through the darkened streets. The intensity of the light emanating from the lamp he carries, illuminating their path, is a reminder that this child too will be a ‘great light’ for the people dwelling in darkness (Matthew 4:16, quoting Isaiah 9:2). Second, the location of this scene is uncertain. Is it Bethlehem? Yet the family has apparently just passed through the gateway into the town (suggested by the arch just visible in the background). More likely, then, they have arrived at their first port of call, offering a temporary respite from the dangers of Herod’s henchmen.”

Privately answer the first question:

1. Seeing the Holy Family on the run, what feelings and/or judgments arise in you regarding the plight of displaced people today, and what might God be calling you to acknowledge or transform within yourself?

Discuss the second question with your group:

2. This painting shows Jesus as a child on the run, guided by a stranger’s light. How does seeing Christ as a migrant shape our faith, and what might it call us to do as a community in a world of displacement?

TAIZÉ MEDITATION “Gloria, Gloria” | (sing Latin, English, then Latin)

Canon ① Dm Gm C F ② Dm Gm C F

Latin Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a, in ex - cel - sis De - o!
English Glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God, in the high - est heav - en!

③ Dm Gm C F ④ Dm Gm C F

Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!
Peace be on earth, peace be on earth, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE - Vicki

WHISTLING & CAROLING SONG “On Christmas Night All Christians Sing”

Ben will play the tune on the piano, then everyone will whistle it while Ben plays the tune, and then everyone will sing and/or whistle the first verse only.

Capo 3: (D) F (G) B[♭] (D) F (A7) C7 (D) F

1 On Christ - mas night all Chris - tians sing, to hear the
 2 Then why should we on earth be sad, since our Re -
 3 When sin de - parts be - fore his grace, then life and
 4 All out of dark - ness we have light, which made the

(G) B[♭] (A) C (D) F (G) B[♭]

news the an - gels bring; on Christ - mas night all
 deem - er made us glad; then why should we on
 health come in its place; when sin de - parts be -
 an - gels sing this night; all out of dark - ness

(D) F (A) C (D) F (G) B[♭] (A) C (D) F

Chris - tians sing, to hear the news the an - gels bring,
 earth be sad, since our Re - deem - er made us glad,
 fore his grace, then life and health comes in its place;
 we have light, which made the an - gels sing this night:

(A) C (Em) Gm (D) F (A) C

news of great joy, news of great mirth,
 when from our sin he set us free,
 heav - en and earth with joy may sing,
 "Glo - ry to God in high - est heaven;

(D) F (G) B[♭] (A) C (G) B[♭] (D) F

news of our mer - ci - ful King's birth.
 all for to gain our lib - er - ty?
 all for to see the new - born King.
 peace on earth and good - will. A - men!"

DEACON'S PRAYER FOR THE WORLD - Kevin

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art 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.

ANTHEM

SERVICE OF THE WORD - IMAGE 3 (front cover)

The Birth of Christ by Kim Ki-chang (1952-53)

A liturgist will read the provided commentary by Johann Hinrich Claussen, and then follow the instructions for the subsequent questions:

“Throughout Christian history, artists have situated the stories of the Bible in their own cultural contexts: landscapes, buildings, clothing, bodies, gestures, and faces were drawn from the world around them. In this way, they brought the sacred story close to home... This work was created by Kim Ki-chang, a leading Korean artist of the twentieth century who grew up in a Protestant family. At the age of eight, he contracted typhoid fever and lost his hearing. Thereafter, faith became an indispensable support for him...

This Christmas scene is set in a large stable. There is no landscape to be seen. Instead, viewers have the impression of standing in the stable themselves. At the centre lies the newborn child. But, surprisingly, his face is turned away to regard his mother and the star that hangs above her, under the roof.

Luke's Gospel indicates that Mary is only betrothed to be married. The artist, however, has chosen to depart from that account here, and to encourage us to imagine Mary differently, for she is wearing a mantle-veil—the traditional outfit of married women [in Korea]. To her right, leaning against a post, stands Joseph with folded hands. He is wearing the clothes of a scholar: light blue robe, hat, white socks, and leather shoes.

Seven women (not shepherds or kings) enter from the left, bringing food for the mother—a widespread custom in Korea. In the foreground, a rooster pecks for grain—not a reference to Peter’s later betrayal, for in Korea this bird symbolizes hope and a good beginning. There is, here, no trace of suffering.”

Privately answer the first question:

1. What is so profound about this work of art is how the artist brought the Christmas story into his own world, his own life. When you think about the Christmas story, where do you notice yourself keeping it at a distance and treating it as something to observe rather than allowing it to enter and shape your own life? How might you let Christmas into your heart?

Discuss these two questions with your group:

2. The artist adapted the Christmas story to his Korean context, including clothing, customs, and gestures. Christians across every culture do this. It’s inherently “incarnational”: Just as God crossed the creaturely threshold to become human, the story of Jesus’ birth crosses cultural boundaries, becoming meaningful for every people and in every place.

How might understanding biblical stories within different cultural settings change the way we see God’s work in the world today?

3. Imagine retelling the Christmas story in a way that reflects your own culture or home. What details (clothing, food, customs, gestures, etc.) would you include, and how might it look in your family or chosen family?

* **SONG OF RESPONSE** “Gentle Mary Laid Her Child” | (verse 1 & 3 only)

1 Gen - tle Mar - y laid her child low - ly in a man - ger;
 2 An - gels sang a - bout his birth; wise men sought and found him;
 3 Gen - tle Mar - y laid her child low - ly in a man - ger;

there he lay, the un - de - filed, to the world a strang - er.
 heav-en's star shone bright-ly forth, glo - ry all a - round him.
 he is still the un - de - filed, but no more a strang - er.

Such a babe in such a place, can he be the Sav - ior?
 Shep-herds saw the won-drous sight, heard the an - gels sing - ing;
 Son of God, of hum - ble birth, beau - ti - ful the sto - ry;

Ask the saved of all the race who have found his fa - vor.
 all the plains were lit that night; all the hills were ring - ing.
 praise his name in all the earth; hail the King of glo - ry!

* CHARGE & BENEDICTION

* THE IRISH BLESSING

***May the road rise to meet you,
May the wind be ever at your back,
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
And the rains fall soft upon your fields.
And until we meet again, and until we meet again,
May the God who loves us all
Hold you in the palm of His hand.
Amen.***

WORSHIP TEAM

Worship Leaders
Melody York
Vicki Lane

Elder of the Day
Linda Murphy

Deacon of the Day
Kevin Ingalls

Children's Message
Vicki Lane

Welcome Host
Cynthia Placek

Music Director
Ben April

Soloist
Marv Helf

Sound Technician
John Lombardo

Video Technician
Alex Huiest

Coffee Hour Host
Linda Murphy

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The Irish Blessing
Words: Traditional
Music: Benjamin April© 2021 Benjamin April

ZOOM

To join Sunday Worship via Zoom, use the link below:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6880887155>
Meeting ID: 688 088 7155

By Phone: 1-646-558-8656

Offerings and gifts to the church may be submitted online via PayPal (link or QR code found below or on our website), by mailed check, by direct bank payment or by placing them in the offering box.

PayPal:

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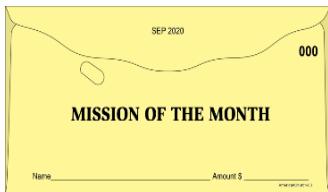
Website:

www.communityreformedchurch.com

Mailing Address:

Community Reformed Church of Colonie
701 Sand Creek Road
Colonie, NY 12205

December Special Offering Envelopes -



Prayer E-Chain

Please email prayer requests to:

Karen Latta
kmlatta@nycap.rr.com
&
Karen Reynolds
kreynolds150@gmail.com

COMMUNITY REFORMED CHURCH OF COLONIE STAFF AND CONSISTORY

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CONSISTORY

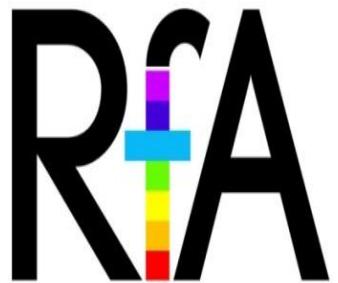
Elders

Karl Coté, VP
Vicki Lane
Linda Murphy
Melody York

Deacons

Kevin Bottini
Marvin Helf
Kevin Ingalls
Jessica Kaercher

The Community Reformed Church of Colonie is a **Room for All (RfA)** congregation. Room for All congregations affirm and welcome lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning individuals, and their families into our lives and the full life of the church. As an RfA congregation, we are committed to working with Reformed Church in America churches nationwide to reform denominational policies to allow full inclusion and to celebrate the diversity of all who worship our Lord. Christ's door remains open here and there is "room for all."



A wheelchair is located in the entranceway of the church.



A sign-up sheet for CD copies of this morning's service is located on the back table.



Large print bulletins are available on request.



Our sanctuary is now equipped with a hearing assistance system. Please ask the elder or deacon for a receiver.



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Telephone: 518-869-5589**

**Website - www.communityreformedchurch
Facebook - facebook.com/coloniereformed
Twitter - @ColonieReformed**

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

O SING UNTO THE LORD
A NEW SONG;
FOR HE HATH DONE
MARVELOUS THINGS.

PSALM 98:1, KJV