



Christmas Eve Service

December 24, 2022

5:00 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.

Gathering Music

Words of Welcome

Prelude

Special Music

Pam McConnell – 5:00
Alex Sommerfeld – 7:30

Passing the Peace of Christ

Carol

O Come, All Ye Faithful

UMH 234

¹ O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem.
Come and behold him, born the King of angels;

³ Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation;
O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest; (Refrain)

Refrain:

O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

⁶ Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,
Jesus, to thee be all glory given.
Word of the Father, now in flesh appear

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Worship Leader: Over a hundred people, from the ages of two to eighty years old, were asked to fill in the blank for the statement:

“My story is. . .” From the voices of different generations, hear their answers:

Teenager: Amazing!

Child: Just beginning.

Adult: A wee bit messy, with lots of love.

Older Adult: Privileged.

Teenager: Hopeful.

Child: Full of silliness.

Adult: Still unfolding.

Older Adult: Long, but good.

Teenager: One of resilience.

Child: Incomplete, thank goodness.

Adult: Multilingual.

Older Adult: A work in progress.

Teenager: My story is not just mine, it's tied to yours.

OlderAdult: Tonight we tell the story that we tell every year—the story of Christ's birth, the story of love made flesh. It's a story that weaves through every generation. It's a story that picks up the bits and pieces of our narrative and braids us together.

Another worship leader or reader lights the candle.

Older Adult: So tonight we light the Christ candle, because from generation to generation, our story belongs to God. Thanks be to God for a love like that. Amen.

Carol

It Came Upon A Midnight Clear

UMH 218

¹ 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, good will to men,
from heaven's all-gracious King."
The world in solemn stillness lay,
to hear the angels sing.

² Still through the cloven skies they come
with peaceful wings unfurled,
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.

³ And 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!

⁴ For lo! the days are hastening on,
by prophet seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years
shall come the time foretold
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendors fling,
and the whole world send back the song
which now the angels sing.

Call to Confession

As a kid I used to think the prayer of confession was scary. I thought it was a moment designed to make me feel guilty, intended for eyes cast down and shoulders hung low. But that's not it at all.

The prayer of confession is an invitation.

It's an opportunity to say, "This is who I've been, and *this* is who I long to be."
So let us pray together. Let us be truth tellers. Let us hold our heads high and speak honestly before God and one another.

This is easy to do when we are surrounded by a God who delights in us. Friends, let us pray:

Prayer of Confession

Holy God,
We admit—we don't fully understand the Christmas story.
We are not familiar with angel choruses.
We have not walked many miles to be counted in a census,
and we don't always hear your voice in our dreams.

We don't fully understand this story, so we admit, sometimes we hesitate to tell it. Instead of running out into the streets to shout that there is a love bigger than we could imagine,

we whisper this good news.

Instead of throwing open the doors and inviting people in,

we simply leave them unlocked, hoping folks will figure it out.

Instead of telling the next generation why this night matters so much,

we stay quiet, afraid of creating pressure.

Forgive us for our silence.

Forgive us for our hesitation.

Forgive us for the moments when we fail to share your good news.

Plant this story of love so deep in our bones that we cannot help but share it from generation to generation. Amen.

Words of Forgiveness

Friends, repeat after me:

No matter where we go,

No matter where we go,

No matter what we say,

No matter what we say,

No matter what we do,

No matter what we do,

We belong to God.

We belong to God.

We are held.

We are held.

We are loved.

We are loved.

We are forgiven.

We are forgiven. Amen!

Hymn

Away in a Manger

UMH 217

¹Away 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.

²The 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.

³Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask thee to stay
Close by me forever, and love me, I pray;
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
And fit us for heaven to live with thee there.

"Blessing of the Children and Children's Storytime" ~~ *God's children of all ages are invited to come forward to receive an individual prayer of blessing from Rev. Mary Kay, and our youngest ones will receive a small gift from Pastor Jo Ellen* ~~

Special Music A Tapestry of Joyful Carols

Chancel Choir – 5:00 p.m.

The Reading of the Christmas Story

Luke 2:1-20

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed.

² (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

³ And all went to be taxed, every one into their own city.

⁴ And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

⁵ To be taxed with Mary, his espoused wife, being great with child.

⁶ And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

⁷ And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

⁸ And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

⁹ And, lo, the angel of God came upon them, and the glory of God shone round about them: and they were very afraid.

¹⁰ And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

¹² And this shall be a sign for you; You shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

¹⁴ Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward all.

¹⁵ And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go to Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which God has made known to us.

¹⁶ And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

¹⁷ And when they had seen, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

¹⁸ And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

¹⁹ But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

²⁰ And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told to them.

Series Hymn

God Became Flesh With Us To Dwell

Anna Stickland (2021)

¹ From Galilee to Bethlehem
Did Mary and Joseph their journey begin
Many miles from home without a room
Emmanuel came from Mary's womb

² A bidding in the fields that night
The shepherds saw a radiant light
When angels came to fill the sky
Breaking in to earth from heaven on high (R)

Refrain:

Noel, noel, noel, noel,
God became flesh with us to dwell

³ The shepherds went as the angels had said
To a manger in town with haste they sped
And there as earth and heaven converged
They shared with the parents all that had occurred (R)

Affirmation Of Faith

**We believe
that for generations
people have gathered together
on this holy night,
because there is something about this story
that speaks to the deepest parts of us.**

**We believe in bundling up this hope,
this good news, and passing it on—
to our children, to our neighbors,
to the world around us.**

**I believe my voice can make a difference,
just like I believe this story can make a difference,
so I will not stay quiet.**

**I will tell this story—of a love that makes room for all.
I will sing this story—of a love that knows our name.
I will live this story—because love has come again.
I believe that words have power. I will not stay quiet.
Amen.**

Hymn**O Little Town of Bethlehem****UMH 230**

¹ O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie;
above they 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.

³ How silently, how silently,
the wondrous gift is given;
so God imparts to human hearts
the blessing 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.

² 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.

⁴ O holy Child of Bethlehem,
descend to 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 with us,
our Lord Emmanuel!

Pastoral Prayer**Christmas Eve Offering**

Offertory
Doxology

Prayer of Dedication

God of Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow having blessed us with time, talent, and treasure, we in turn are to bless others in our stewardship of all you entrust to us. Receive the financial offerings we make and put them to good use. Amen.

Lighting of the Candles

For the Candle Lighting, acolytes will start the flame from the Christ candle and then move down the center aisle. The person on the inside end of the aisle will tilt their candle to receive the flame and then pass the flame to the other candles in their row. Once a candle is lit, it MUST stay up right. Unlit candles may tilt to receive the flame, but once lit, candles remain upright to avoid anyone being burned by a hot wax drip.

Carol

Silent Night, Holy Night

**UMH 239
Jay Ferris - Guitar**

¹ 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.

² 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!

³ 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.

⁴ 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!

Benediction

Postlude

**Pam McConnell – 5:00 p.m.
Alex Sommerfeld – 7:30 p.m.**