



**DECEMBER 24, 2021**

***Mifflin Avenue United Methodist Church***

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**On this night of nights, the church bids you welcome as we gather in expectation and gratitude for the gift of the Christ Child, who came that we may have life. This night, no one is a stranger. All are joined together as one family through the miracle of the birth of one small baby. We come from different walks of life as we gather in this place on this most holy night. Some of us come from various faith traditions, and others of us were born and raised in these very churches.**

**However we come, we come knowing we are loved by God. Let us approach the manger as the shepherds, who came to see this wondrous thing of which they had been told. Let us come to the manger with the steadfastness of Joseph who heeded the words of the angel and obeyed his Lord. Let us come to the manger with the love of Mary who responded to extraordinary words with absolute faith and certainty. Let us come to the manger like the three wise men, who left their lives and followed the star.**

DECEMBER 24, 2021  
CHRISTMAS EVE  
ORDER OF WORSHIP – 7:00 PM

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**CENTERING**



PRELUDE

“The Hills Are Bare At Bethlehem”

D. Johnson

GATHERING WORDS

Pastor: On this divine and holy night we gather with our hearts full of hope and anticipation as the bells ring out throughout the world, announcing the birth of a Savior. Listen! Hear the bells ring, announcing that “unto us a child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.”

THE BELLS RING OUT

“Come Christians Join to Sing”

Bell Choir

Pastor: Tonight is the night to travel around a manger to see the face of God in a tiny little baby. Let us share our joy and excitement at being present when God reaches down to touch the earth.

**CELEBRATION THROUGH ADORATION**

\*PROCESSIONAL

“Angels from the Realms of Glory”

No. 220

*Angels from the realms of glory  
Wing your flight over all the earth  
Ye, who sang Creation's story  
Now proclaim Messiah's birth  
Come and worship, come and worship  
Worship Christ the newborn King*

*Shepherds in the fields abiding  
Watching over your flocks by night  
God with man is now residing  
Yonder shines the Infant light  
Come and worship, come and worship  
Worship Christ the newborn King*

*Sages leave your contemplations  
Brighter visions beam afar  
Seek the great Desire of Nations  
Ye have seen His natal star  
Come and worship, come and worship  
Worship Christ the newborn King*

*Saints before the altar bending  
Watching long in hope and fear  
Suddenly the Lord, descending,  
In His temple shall appear  
Come and worship, come and worship  
Worship Christ the newborn King*

## CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: All through this season of Advent, we have encountered Hope, Peace, Joy and Love.

**People: Tonight we will hear the story of God's wonderful love.**

Pastor: Tonight we will be challenged to believe in all that God can do.

**People: Open our hearts, Lord, that we may be ready for your love. AMEN.**

## OPENING PRAYER

**Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, be born in our hearts this night. Shine your light into the darkness of our world, that all the earth might know your glorious presence and that all people might find hope in your love and grace. In your glorious name, we pray. Amen.**

## INTROIT

"O Holy Night"

Adophe Adam  
Dean Patterson, soloist

## LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES AND THE CHRIST CANDLE

Pastor: The birth of Jesus was God's way of saying to humankind, "do not be afraid. For I am with you.

**People: This is no ordinary night. This is not just the birth of a baby boy. This is God with us.**

Pastor: This is God within us. This is God refusing to let darkness rule! Among the abuse of power, in the midst of pain and suffering, hope was conceived. Peace has given a birth cry. Joy blinks his eyes out on the world. Love has Come down this Christmas.

## LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES AND THE CHRIST CANDLE

## HYMN

"Christmas Eve"  
(Tune: 'Away in a Manger')  
*Now Christmas is near and we hallow this day  
When truth is revealed and we follow his way.  
We lift hands in prayer as we celebrate birth,  
And angels still sing songs of peace to the earth.*

Ann Freeman Price

Pastor: Take a deep breath and know that God is as close to you as the air you breathe. We are never alone.

## PRAYER

**On this night of nights, O God, prepare our hearts for the coming of your light. As the Lights of hope, peace, joy, love and the light of Christ burn brightly, we take a deep breath knowing you are as close to us as the air we breathe. We rejoice in knowing You are Emmanuel, God with us! Amen.**

## HYMN

"Emmanuel, Emmanuel"

No. 204

*Em-man-u-el, Em-man-u-el,  
His name is called Em-man-u-el.  
God with us, revealed in us,  
His name is called Em-man-u-el.*

## CELEBRATION THROUGH PROCLAMATION

CHRISTMAS HOMILY

“God’s Love Letter”

Pastor Shuluga

## CELEBRATION THROUGH THE WORD THE CHRISTMAS STORY IN WORD AND SONG

ANTHEM

“Still, Still, Still”

Austrian Carol

### CALL TO REFLECTION

Pastor: In many and various ways God spoke to his people of old by prophets.

**People: But now in these last days God has spoken to us by his Son.**

Pastor: Unto us a child is born, and unto us a son is given and the government shall be upon his shoulders and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

**People: Let us now go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.**

HYMN

“Angels We Have Heard on High”

No. 238, v. 3

Come to Bethlehem and see Christ whose birth the angels sing;  
Come, adore on bended knee, Christ the Lord, the newborn King.

Refrain: Gloria, in excelsis Deo!  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

## THE WORD FORETOLD



THE PROPHET FORETELLS JESUS’ BIRTH

Isaiah 9: 2-3, 6-7

HYMN

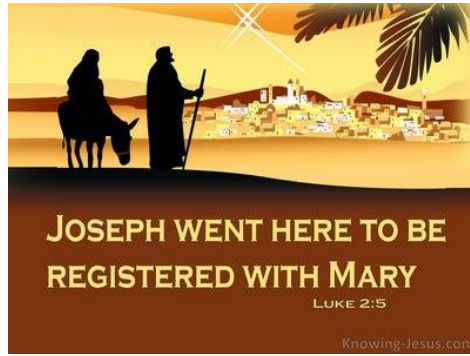
“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

No. 234 v. 1 & 3

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

*Sing choirs of angels, sing in exultation,  
O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God, all glory in the highest;  
O come, let us adore him, O come let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

## THE WORD IS PRONOUNCED



A DECREE BY CEASAR AUGUSTUS GUIDES MARY AND JOSEPH TO BETHLEHEM Luke 2: 1-6

HYMN

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"

No. 230 v. 1 & 4

*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 shin-eth the everlasting light;  
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to-night.*

*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 tells;  
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!*

## THE WORD IS GIVEN



JESUS IS BORN IN A HUMBLE STABLE

Luke 2: 7

HYMN

"Away in a Manger"

No. 217 v. 1 & 3

*Away 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.*

*Be 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.*

## THE WORD IS ANOUNCED



THE SHEPHERDS HEAR THE MESSAGE OF THE ANGELS

Luke 2: 8-15

HYMN

“The First Noel”

No. 245 v. 1

*The first Noel the angel did say was to certain poor  
shepherds in fields as they lay; in fields where they lay  
keeping their sheep, on a cold winters night that was so deep.  
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.*

## THE WORD IS SPREAD ABROAD



THE SHEPERDS FIND JESUS AS PROCLAIMED  
BY THE ANGELS AND SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS

Luke 2: 16-18

HYMN

“Go, Tell It on the Mountain”

No. 251 v. 1 & 2

*Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;  
Go, tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born.*

*While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,  
Behold through-out the heavens there shown a holy light.*

*Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;  
Go, tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born.*

*The shepherds feared and trembled, when lo! Above the earth,  
rang out the angel chorus that hailed the Savior's birth.*

*Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;  
Go, tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born.*

## CELEBRATION THROUGH COMMITMENT OUR CHRISTMAS RESPONSE

### INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

Kings brought gifts. Angels sang praise. Shepherds told tales. Every gift we have to offer the Christ child is a precious gift, blessed by God. Bring your gifts. Bring your hearts. Bring your lives, in gratitude and celebration of the Christ child whose birth we celebrate this night.

### THE LORD'S OFFERING

### HYMN OF OFFERING

### OFFETORY DEDICATION (A Christmas Offering Hymn to the tune of 'It Came Upon A Midnight Clear)

*Our Christmas offering we present to you, oh newborn one!  
Bless it, we pray, and all the love we have for you, God's Son.  
Our world is deeply needing gifts that only you can bring,  
Help us, your people, heal the world. That all your praise may sing. Amen.*

### OFFETORY PRAYER

**Beautiful Savior, we are so grateful for your birth so many years ago, and we are so joyful to have your presence in our lives this night. In gratitude, we offer our gifts, however humble they might be. Transform our gifts with your glory and grace, that our gifts might become grace and love, and light and hope, for a world in need of you. Amen.**

## CELEBRATING THE LIGHT

The pastor now gives light to the ushers; they in turn will give light to the first person in each pew. Each person shall then pass the light to the next person. The lighted candle is never tilted, but always held upright when giving light to another. When all candles are lit the congregation shall rise and sing 'Silent Night.'



\*HYMN

"Silent Night"

No. 239

*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 Al-le-lu-ia!  
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, Al-le-lu-ia to our King  
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born.*

\*PRAYER FOR LIGHT

Lord Christ, you came into our world to meet us where we live. As we hold our candles, make your bright light shine upon us in the darkened corners where we wait for your arrival. Dispel gloom and anger, fear and hatred, that your pure radiance may become the beacon burning in our hearts, illuminating those about us. Thank you for the gift of Your Son, the gift of pure love. Lord make us yours forever. In your holy name we pray. Amen.

(Please extinguish your candle by blowing it gently. Be sure to hold it upright until the wax hardens. Thank you.)

SENDING

\*BENEDICTION

Pastor: In darkness we arrived.

**People: In light we now leave.**

Pastor: Though once we stumbled,

**People: we now walk with confidence.**

Pastor: Rise up and go, for the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all.

**People: May the light of Christ lead us forevermore.**



\*RECESSIONAL HYMN"

"Joy to the World"

No. 246

*Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her King;  
let every heart prepare him room,  
And heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.*

*Joy to the world the Savior reigns!  
Let all their songs employ;  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.*



\*POSTLUDE

"Angels From The Realms Of Glory"

C.S. Lang