



DECEMBER 24, 2022

CHRISTMAS EVE

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.

ORDER OF WORSHIP – 7:00 PM

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CENTERING

PRELUDE

'Noel grand jeu et duo'

Louis-Claude Daquan

GATHERING WORDS

Pastor: When all our lights go out,

People: a light shines in the darkness.

Pastor: When all other hopes fade away,

People: a new hope is born.

Pastor: When all other songs are stilled,

Pastor: an angel's chorus breaks forth.

Pastor: When silence fills the air,

People: the bells ring out throughout the world announcing the birth of the Savior.

Pastor: Hear the bells ring. Let our hearts be one as we worship the Christ Child.

THE BELLS RING OUT

"Holy, Holy, Holy"

Bell Choir

CHRISTMAS PROCLAMATION

Pastor: O come all ye faithful.

People: We come to worship the newborn King.

People: Come, you joyful and triumphant people.

People: We come to praise our God.

Pastor: Come and behold him.

People: We come with open hearts and minds.

Pastor: O come let us adore him!

People: We come to adore him, Christ the Lord.

CELEBRATION THROUGH ADORATION

*PROCESSIONAL

'O Come, All Ye Faithful'

No. 234 vs. 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5

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; Refrain*

*Refrain
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.*

2. *True God of true God, Light from Light. Eternal,
lo, he shuns not the virgin's womb.
Son of the Father, begotten, not created; Refrain*

3. *Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation;
O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Refrain*

4. *See how the shepherds,
Summoned to His cradle.
Leaving their flocks, draw nigh to gaze;
We too will thither
Bend our joyful footsteps; Refrain*

5. *Child, for us sinners
Poor and in the manger,
We would embrace Thee,
with love and awe;
Who would not love Thee,
Loving us so dearly? Refrain*

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

Holy God in days of old you sent your angels to tell shepherds the good news: "To you is born this day, a Savior, the Messiah, the Lord." Help us hear with the shepherds this good news, that we too may glorify and praise you for all that we have seen and heard. Amen.

INTROIT

'O Holy Night'
Music - Adolphe Adam

Eli Nitzberg

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES AND THE CHRIST CANDLE

Pastor Hope, peace, joy, and love. Four candles, four promises continually offered to us by God, and all of them manifest in this one we light tonight: the Christ candle.

People: In Christ we find the hope of transformation, the peace that follows justice, the joy of self-fulfillment in community, and the love that encompasses us in all our diversity, empowering us to make our own unique contribution to this world.

Pastor: In Christ we find light and life, and the courage to be like him, answering his call and following in his footsteps.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES AND THE CHRIST CANDLE

HYMN

'Love Came Down at Christmas'

No. 242 V. 1 & 2

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| <p>1. Love came down at Christmas. Love all lovely.
Love divine.
Love was born at Christmas; star and angels gave
the sign.</p> | <p>2. Love shall be our token; love be yours and
love be mine;
3. Love to God and neighbor; love for plea
and gift and safe.</p> |
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PRAYER

Source of love, you are the author of everlasting life. Touch us with the wonder of that holy night when your Son came into the world. For we yearn to leave the shadows behind to walk in darkness no more. We long to behold your light shining in our lives, as it shined in the stars above on the night love came down at Christmas. Guide our steps to the manger, and make us instruments of your justice and peace, that the gift of your salvation may reside in every corner of the globe. We ask this in the name of our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Amen.

HYMN

'There's a Song in the Air'

No. 249 V. 4

*We rejoice in the light, and we echo the song
That comes down through the night from the heavenly throng.
Ay! We shout to the lovely evangel they bring,
And we greet in his cradle our Savior and King!*

CELEBRATION THROUGH PROCLAMATION

CHRISTMAS HOMILY

"A Christmas Present Just For You!"

Pastor Shuluga

CELEBRATION THROUGH THE WORD THE CHRISTMAS STORY IN WORD AND SONG

CALL TO REFLECTION

Pastor: A light shining in the darkness.

People: What could it be?

Pastor: The sounds of angels’ wings.

People: What could it mean?

Pastor: 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 ANNUNCIATION STORY

SCRIPTURE

Luke 1: 26-33, 2: 1-5

MINISTRY OF MUSIC

‘Mary Did You Know?’
Mark Lowry & Buddy Greene
Arranged by Ken Barker

Rebecca Spencer

THE BIRTH IN A MANGER

SCRIPTURE

Luke 2: 6-7

MINISTRY OF MUSIC

‘Away in a Manger’

Children’s Choir

THE ANGELS’ SONG

SCRIPTURE

Luke 2: 8-14

HYMN

‘It Came upon the Midnight Clear’

No. 218 v. 1 & 2

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| <p>1. <i>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 heavens all gracious King!"
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.</i></p> | <p>2. <i>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.</i></p> |
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THE SHEPHERD'S RESPONSE

HYMN

'The First Noel'

No. 245, Vs. 1 & 2

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 gold
winter's night that was so deep.*

2. *They looked up and saw a star shining in
the east, beyond them far; and to the earth
it gave great light, and so it continued both
day and night.*

Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.

Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.

THE QUEST OF THE WISEMEN

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 2: 1-6

HYMN

'The First Noel'

No 245 vs. 3, 4 & 5

3. *And by the light of that same star
Three wise men came from the country far;
To seek for a King was their intent
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.*

4. *This star drew nigh to the north-west;
O'er Bethlehem it took its' rest.
And there it did both stop and stay,
Right over the place where Jesus lay.*

Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.

Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.

*5 Then entered in those wise men three,
fell reverently upon their knee,
And offered there in his presence.
Their gold and myrrh and frankincense.*

Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.

THE STAR LEADS TO BETHLEHEM

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 2: 7-12

HYMN

'Hark! The Herald Angels Sing'

No. 240 vs. 1 & 2

1. *Hark the herald angels sing
"Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild
God and sinners reconciled"
Joyful, all ye nations rise
Join the triumph of the skies
with the angelic host proclaim:
"Christ is born in Bethlehem"
Hark! The herald angels sing
"Glory to the newborn King!"*

2. *Christ, by highest heaven adored;
Christ, the ever lasting Lord;
Late in time behold him come,
Offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the God-head see;
Hail th'incarnate Deity,
Pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus our Emmanuel.
Hark the herald angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King!"*

CELEBRATION THROUGH COMMITMENT OUR CHRISTMAS RESPONSE

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

Tonight, we come with our hopes and our dreams. We come as little children. We come because for some of us it is tradition for the whole family to go to church on Christmas Eve. Some have come out of curiosity. Some come because of loneliness. We are here in this place, waiting on tiptoes for something to happen. We come offering our lives and bringing our gifts. In the spirit of this night, let us receive our Christmas offering.

THE LORD'S OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

'What Child Is This'

Kim Viehland

OFFERTORY 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.*

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Blessed Lord, you have given us your greatest gift—your very Word came to earth, to live with us and through us; you have filled us with your grace and truth—your holy child sent to free us from our bonds. How can we repay such divine generosity? Receive our thanks and praise.

As you have given to us, so now we share your gifts and your grace with a world in need. May this offering help bring your light and love to those who still wander in darkness. 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 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

- 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 Al-le-lu-ia!
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, 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: Walk in darkness no longer.

People: We will walk in the light of Christ.

Pastor: Sing of Christ's birth with the choirs of angels.

People: We will sing with the heavenly host.

Pastor: Go and proclaim the good news.

People: Jesus Christ is born.

HYMN

'Joy to the World'

No. 246, vs. 1 & 2

1. *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.*

2. 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

'in dulcimer júbilo'

Max Drischner



IN MEMORY / IN HONOR 2022

Those who purchased poinsettias are welcome to take them home following the service.

In Memory Of...

Chris & Stephen Koesel

Larry Harvey

Parents, Grandparents, Family

Erik Nystrom, Patricia Spencer,
Emma Elise Nystrom, Joan Morrison

Beatrice & James Gratton

Given By...

Mitchells (1 red)

Paulette Harvey (1 red)

Viehlands (1 marble & 1 red)

Brenda Lordon (4 red)

Gail Gratton (1 red)

In Honor of....

Pastor Russel & Nancy

Our grandchildren: Cole, Jane and
Ryan

The Faithful Disciples of MAUMC

Given By....

Mifflin Avenue Congregation (1 white)

Dai and Candy Morgan (1 red, 1 white, 1 marble)

Gail Gratton (1 red)