

CHRISTMAS EVE

10:30 a.m.

December 24, 2023

GATHERING

The people of God come together in the Lord's name

Prelude - *The Nativity (Manger, Shepherds, Angels, Holy Family)* - Jean Langlais

Introit - *An Advent Processional* – Pearson
(Congregation sings refrain on insert)

Call to Worship

You know what time it is,

how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep.

For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers.

The night is far gone, the day is near.

Opening Hymn 238** - *Angels We Have Heard on High*

*Angels we have heard on high
sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply
echoing their joyous strains.*

Refrain:

*Gloria, gloria, gloria, gloria,
in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, gloria, gloria, gloria,
in excelsis Deo!*

*Shepherds, shy this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
which inspire your heavenly song?
(Refrain)*

*Come to Bethlehem and see
Christ whose birth the angels sing,
come, adore on bended knee,
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.
(Refrain)*

*See him in a manger laid,
whom the choirs of angels praise,
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid,
while our hearts in love we raise.*

Invocation

Ever-present God, you taught us that the night is far spent and the day is at hand. Grant that we may ever be found watching for the coming of your son. Save us from undue love of the world, that we may wait with patient hope for the day of the Lord, and so abide in him, that when he shall appear, we may not be ashamed through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PROCLAMATION

The Word of God is read and proclaimed for all ages.

Advent Candle Lighting

Lift Up Your Eyes - Joel Raney (sing on director's cue)

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?'" 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."

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.

All: 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.

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.

Scripture Reading - Psalm 80:1-7 (Old Testament p. 540/511)

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Gloria Patri (sung)

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Anthem - *While By Our Sleeping Flocks We Lay* - Jung

God's Word for Young Disciples

Scripture Reading - Isaiah 7:10-16 (Old Testament p. 636/598)

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon - *The Promise of Love*

Pastor Howard Pippin

RESPONSE

The people of God respond to the Word

Hymn of Response 242** - *Love Came Down at Christmas*

*Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, Love divine;
Love was born at Christmas;
star and angels gave the sign.*

*Worship we the Godhead,
Love incarnate, Love divine;
worship we our Jesus,
but wherewith for sacred sign?*

Love shall be our token;

*love be yours and love be mine;
love to God and others,
love for plea and gift and sign.*

Offertory - *Gesu Bambino* - Pietro Yon
(Please fill out the attendance sheet found in the pew.)

Doxology**

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him all creatures here below; praise him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayers of the People/The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

SENDING FORTH

The people of God are sent forth to serve others and witness to their faith

Closing Hymn 240** - *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

*Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new born King,
peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations rise,
join the triumph of the skies;
with th' angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new born King!"*

*Christ, by highest heaven adored;
Christ, the everlasting Lord;
late in time behold him come,
offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead 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!"*

*Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing,*

"Glory to the new born King!"

Benediction and Congregational Response (Hymn 211)
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Postlude - In dulci jubilo - J. S. Bach



The flowers on the altar are dedicated to the glory of God.

Service Music: Chancel Choir; Epworth Choir

Music: One License A-731491

CHURCH NOTES

Holiday Nuts: The nut sale is back! You may purchase them between and after services on Sundays, in the office during the week, or you may pre-order and pick them up on the Sunday of your choice. We have Deluxe Mixed, whole cashews (both at \$10/lb.) and raw pecans (\$12/lb.) You may drop your order form off at the Welcome Center. Proceeds will benefit Work Camp.

Did You Know? Your pledges aren't automatically renewed from year to year. That's one reason it's important to return your pledge card. We appreciate everyone's giving throughout the year, but it helps us to have the pledge cards when it comes time to do the yearly budget and to make plans for programs, worship, and other opportunities for the coming year.

Epworth Alumni: You are invited to come sing at the 8pm service on tonight with the Epworth Choir. We will sing All is Well and Were You There on that Christmas Night. If you were part of the Epworth choir in 2019 sang O Little Town of Bethlehem with Dan Forrest you are invited to join the Chancel Choir for that anthem as well.

ZOE Empowers: Our Christmas offering has gone to a different mission each year. This year it will go to ZOE Empowers, where it will be used to support a group of vulnerable orphans in Zimbabwe. ZOE uses an empowerment model rather than a traditional charity model. For more information, visit their website at www.zoeempowers.org.

**FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH –
PRAYER BULLETIN
DECEMBER 24, 2023**



MINISTERS & STAFF:

Forrest Waller

HOSPITALIZED:

MEMBERS TO BE REMEMBERED IN PRAYER:

Scott Adie Bob Ahonen Debbie Amundsen Glenn Atwood Jim Bailey Bill & Janet Blank Mark & Cindy Blaser	Mark & Cindy Blaser Lee Minier Kathi Sawyer Christina Shaw Martha Shoults Ken Tunstall
--	---

DEEPEST SYMPATHY & PRAYERS:

Dudley (Lori) Turner and family on the death of his brother, Darcy Turner on 12/17.
Ann (Terry) Lewis and family on the death of her father, Thomas Misiak on 12/2.