



**Order of Worship
December 24, 2023
Christmas Eve
7 and 9 PM**

GATHERING AND PRAISE

Welcome

Prelude

Away in a Manger

Murray

Call to Worship

7pm, Susan Whitman
9pm, Tina Wilmoth

Come, faithful watchers, and behold, your salvation is here!

We greet the Wondrous Light, our Messiah, Christ the Lord.

We have waited and watched, longing for God to show up and save us from the suffering and pain in our world.

We greet the Wondrous Light, the fulfillment of our shocking hope.

We have waited and watched, longing for peace to reign among us, a peace that removes unjust barriers, frees us from sin, and binds us together as neighbors, family, and friends.

We greet the Wondrous Light, the bringer of our just peace.

We have waited and watched, longing for joy that is persistent in the face of the grief, lament, chaos, and oppression that weigh on us day in and day out.

We greet the Wondrous Light, the source of our fierce joy.

We have waited and watched, longing to encounter the love that transforms us, the Love that is now here among us, first as a babe in a manger, then as a teacher, a friend, and our Savior.

We greet the Wondrous Light, Love Incarnate who has come to save us and transform us. Amen.

Invocation

Emmanuel, God-with-us most of all tonight, your light lifts our hearts, our spirits, and our voices. We give you thanks for your birth long ago and presence with us always. Your hope is more trustworthy than our promises. Your peace is deeper than our prayers. Your joy teaches us to sing even when we want to cry. Your love is wider than the chorus of the galaxies, and yet your Star shines on us now in this church which has become a manger. **Amen.**

***Hymn**

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O Come, All Ye Faithful

Verses 1-3

UMH 234

Passing the Peace of Christ

7pm, Susan Whitman

9pm, Tina Wilmoth

Therefore, since we are people who have encountered God's unfailing love let us offer one another signs of love and reconciliation.

Lighting the Christ Candle

7pm, Susan Whitman

9pm, Greg and Tina Wilmoth

Reader 1: To a people longing for hope and yearning for deliverance, the prophet Isaiah declared, The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness on them light has shined...For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:2, 6)

Reader 2: Tonight, we come seeking hope, peace, joy, and love, and we find these things in a child. God made flesh as a baby in a manger. A baby who is both the beginning and the end of our salvation, who dwells with us even now, our Emmanuel, God with us.

Congregation: We live as people in the in-between who celebrate the arrival of the Light that shines in lost and broken places as we wait for the day when we will live in the fullness of God's kingdom.

Reader 1: We light these candles as signs of our shocking hope, our just peace, our fierce joy, the love that transforms us, and Jesus Christ, our wondrous Light. May the Light burning in our hearts guide us, comfort us, protect us, and tend us in all seasons and

circumstances, reminding us that day and night, in the light and in the darkness, God is with us. Our salvation has come! Amen.

Light all five candles of the Advent wreath.

A Story for the Children (7pm service)

Pastor Larry

Ministry of Music

7pm Mary, Did You Know?

Amy Tashiro

9pm A Miracle This Holy Night

Harmony Choir

PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

Prayer for Understanding

All Praying

**Be born in our hearing, Lord Jesus,
and open our lives to you:
Our Word, our Light, our Life.
Amen.**

The Christmas Story

Luke 2:1-20 (NIV)

7pm,

Susan Whitman/9pm Tina Wilmoth

2 In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2 This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 All went to their own towns to be registered. 4 Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. 5 He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. 6 While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. 7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room.

The Shepherds and the Angels

8 Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: 11 to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah,[b] the Lord. 12 This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host,[c] praising God and saying,

14 "Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has

made known to us.” 16 So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger. 17 When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child, 18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them, 19 and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. 20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.

I John 4: 13-21

¹³ This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴ And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵ If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. ¹⁶ And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. ¹⁷ This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. ¹⁹ We love because he first loved us. ²⁰ Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. ²¹ And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

This is the Word of God for the people of God.
Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Gifts That Won't Break: Christ

Pastor Larry

***Hymn**

Away in a Manger

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Offertory Invitation

7pm, Susan Whitman

9pm, Tina Wilmoth

Giving God, as we recount the story of your gift of a Savior on that night long ago, we remember there were some who said, “There’s no room”, and others who responded, “Come, we’ll make room.” As we bring our gifts to your altar, which group will be the best fit for each of us? Help us give with a heart of abundance and not one of scarcity! On this holiest of nights, let us dwell with those whose chorus is, “Come, we’ll make room...,” remembering your abundant love for us. In the name of our Savior and Redeemer, we pray. Amen.

Worship with Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory

The Coventry Carol

English Carol

**Doxology*

Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow

Praise God who blesses everyone!

Praise Jesus Christ, who is to come!

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Praise Spirit, making Three-in-One!

All praise the miracle begun!

Alleluia! Alleluia!

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

View monitor for responses

Invitation to the Lord's Table

The Sacrament of Communion

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing,

always and everywhere to give thanks to you,

Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth.

You created light out of darkness and brought forth life on the earth.

You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life.

When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast.

You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God,

and spoke to us through your prophets.

In the fullness of time

you gave your only Son Jesus Christ to be our Savior,

and at his birth the angels sang

glory to you in the highest and peace to your people on earth.

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven

we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,

heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ.

As Mary and Joseph went from Galilee to Bethlehem
and there found no room,
so Jesus went from Galilee to Jerusalem and was despised and rejected.
As in the poverty of a stable Jesus was born,
so by the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection
you gave birth to your Church,
delivered us from slavery to sin and death,
and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

As your Word became flesh, born of woman, on that night long ago,
so, on the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread,
gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:
"Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over he took the cup,
gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:
"Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant,
poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."
And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,
we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving
as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us,
as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,
and on these gifts of bread and wine.
Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ,
that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.
By your Spirit make us one with Christ,
one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world,
until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet.
Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church,
all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Sharing of the Bread and Cup

Prayer of Thanksgiving (All Praying)

7pm, Susan Whitman
9pm Tina Wilmoth

**Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given
yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit, to
give ourselves for others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

GOING FORTH WITH JOY

Prayer

Pastor Larry

It was indeed a Holy Night when Jesus was born. God's light came into the world to dispel the darkness. God's light is still burning brightly in those who have made room in their hearts for Jesus. May we take God's light out into our homes, our communities and to the world.

(Begin the candle lighting from the Christ Candle)

Please tip your candle to the lighted candle. Children may break their glow sticks at this time.

***Christmas Hymn**

Silent Night, Holy Night

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Please extinguish candles after the singing of the hymn.

As you leave, please place the candle in the basket located by the sanctuary doors.

***Benediction**

Pastor Larry

We have seen his glory,
the glory as of God's only-begotten,
full of grace and truth.
How great our joy!
Go forth, and proclaim it!

***Hymn**

Joy to the World
verses 1 and 4

UMH 246

***Postlude**

Joy to the World

Handel

O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL

*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:

***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!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest;*

(Refrain)

AWAY IN A MANGER

*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.*

*2. The 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.*

*3. 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.*

JOY TO THE WORLD

*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.*

*He rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.*

SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT

*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!*