

**FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
CHRISTMAS EVE
DECEMBER 24, 2024~4:00 P.M.**

PRELUDE

GREETING

THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

Now is the time to light the Advent Candles. This past Sunday was the final Sunday of Advent, and we lit four candles: the candle of Hope, the candle of Love, the candle of Joy, and the candle of Peace. Tonight, Christmas Eve, we now light the white candle, the Christ candle, which symbolizes the Light – along with the hope, love, joy, and peace – that Christ brought into the world.

RESPONSE.....“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”UMH #211, vs. 1, 2, 6

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty God, we thank you for the birth of the Christ child in Bethlehem, as announced by the angels on this holy night. May the mystery of the Word made flesh fill our souls with wonder and yearning. Change our hearts from a busy inn to a quiet chamber for your glory. May we who are gathered here join in song with the angels, share the delight of the shepherds, and adore him with the wise men. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

HYMN....."Joy to the World"UMH #246, vs. 1-4

PASSING THE PEACE *Let us pass the peace of Christ to one another.*

SPECIAL MUSIC.....Jarod True

FIRST READING: Isaiah 9:2-7.....Bob Hunter

The people walking in darkness
 have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness
 a light has dawned.
You have enlarged the nation
 and increased their joy;
they rejoice before you
 as people rejoice at the harvest,
as warriors rejoice
 when dividing the plunder.
For as in the day of Midian's defeat,
 you have shattered
the yoke that burdens them,
 the bar across their shoulders,
 the rod of their oppressor.
Every warrior's boot used in battle
 and every garment rolled in blood
will be destined for burning,
 will be fuel for the fire.
For to 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, Prince of Peace.
Of the greatness of his government and peace
 there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne
 and over his kingdom,

establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.

The zeal of the LORD Almighty
will accomplish this.

L: This is the word of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

HYMN.....“It Came Upon the Midnight Clear”UMH #218, vs. 1, 2, 4

SECOND READING: John 1:1-5.....Les Wells

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

L: This is the word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

SPECIAL MUSIC.....Joseph Shin

MESSAGE.....“Light”Rev. Dong Hun Shin

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, the power, and the glory forever, Amen.

HYMN.....“O Little Town of Bethlehem”UMH #230, vs. 1-4

THIRD READING: Luke 2:1-20.....Mark LaMont

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things

and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

L: This is the word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

HYMN.....“Away in a Manger”UMH #217, vs. 1-3

FOURTH READING:

“Christmas Bells” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.....Terra LaMont

Longfellow wrote this well-known poem in 1864, right in the middle of the Civil War.

I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old, familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet
The words repeat
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!
And thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along
The unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!
...
Then from each dark, accursed mouth
The cannon thundered in the South,
And with the sound
The carols drowned
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!
...

And in despair I bowed my head;
“There is no peace on earth,”
I said; “For hate is strong,
And mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!”
Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
“God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;
The Wrong shall fail,
The Right prevail,
With peace on earth, good-will to men.”

HYMN.....“What Child Is This”.....UMH #219, vs. 1-3

FOURTH READING: Christmas Truce of 1914.....Karen Ferch

On December 7, 1914, Pope Benedict the Fifteenth suggested a temporary cease-fire of World War I for the celebration of Christmas. The warring countries refused to create any official cease-fire, but on Christmas, the soldiers in the trenches declared their own unofficial truce. Starting on Christmas Eve, many German and British troops sang Christmas carols to each other across the lines, and at certain points the Allied soldiers even heard brass bands joining the Germans in their joyous singing. At the first light of dawn on Christmas Day, some German soldiers emerged from their trenches and approached the Allied lines across no-man’s-land, calling out “Merry Christmas” in English. At first, the Allied soldiers feared it was a trick, but seeing the Germans unarmed, they climbed out of their trenches and shook hands with the German soldiers. The men exchanged presents of cigarettes and plum puddings and sang carols and songs. There is even a documented case of soldiers from opposing sides playing a good-natured game of soccer. The so-called Christmas Truce of 1914 came only five months after the start of war in Europe and was one of the last examples of chivalry between enemies in warfare. It was never repeated—officers

stopped future attempts at holiday ceasefires with threats of disciplinary action—but it served as heartening proof, however brief, that beneath the brutal clash of weapons, God’s gift of peace endured. On this most holy night, long ago in the city of Bethlehem, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord, was born. Jesus brought his own life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

HYMN.....“Silent Night, Holy Night”UMH #239, vs. 1-4

DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING