

# Calvary

## United Methodist Church

*A Reconciling Congregation*



*"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."*

*- Isaiah 9:2*

**December 24, 2021**  
Christmas Eve

# CELEBRATION OF WORSHIP

## Candlelight Service of Lessons & Carols

### GATHERING THE LIGHT

**Prelude:** "Wait for the Lord" (*Taize*)

**Welcome / Greeting**

**Carol:** "O Holy Night"

(*tune: Adolphe Adam / lyrics: John Sullivan Dwight*)

### **Call to Worship / Lighting the Christ Candle**

One: In the face of loneliness and loss, depression and despair, O God, we have been watching and waiting, expectantly, for your light.

**ALL: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness will not overcome it.**

One: In the face of pain and suffering, dis-ease and disease, O God, we have been watching and waiting, expectantly, for your light.

**ALL: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness will not overcome it.**

One: In the face of poverty and hunger, violence and injustice, O God, we have been watching and waiting, expectantly, for your light.

**ALL: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness will not overcome it.**

One: In the face of climate change and chaos, rising sea levels and rising temperatures, O God, we have been watching and waiting, expectantly, for your light.

**ALL: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness will not overcome it.**

Sung Response: "Light a Candle Bright and Tall"

(*tune: UMH #92 / lyrics: David Wood*)

*Light a candle bright and tall  
for the Christ we greet today.*

*Christ has come, our all in all.  
With the angels, let us say:  
Shine within our hearts today,  
come, O Christ, to us, we pray.*

One: Gracious God, made known to us in Jesus, come to us, this holy night, as light in our darkness.

**ALL: O come, O come, Emmanuel.**

One: As we light this Christ candle, ready us for your coming. Prepare new ways in us for hope and peace and joy and love to be born, that we might be midwives of hope and peace and joy and love in the world. Prepare new ways in us for your light to shine, that we might become the lights for which we all wait.

**ALL: O come, O come, Emmanuel. Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**Opening Hymn: "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"**

*(UMH #211)*

O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel,  
that mourns in lonely exile here  
until the Son of God appear.

Refrain

*Rejoice! Rejoice!*

*Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer  
our spirits by thy justice here;  
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
and death's dark shadows put to flight. *(Refrain)*

## **LESSONS & CAROLS**

**Prayer** *(John Pritchard)*

God of life,  
you make this night holy because you come  
to us.

Open us, we pray, to the wonder of that.

Open us to your presence among us.

Open us to your love still coming,  
still making all things new.

Open us to what you birth even here, even now,  
even in us.

Amen.

**Lesson:** Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

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.

**6** 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 (Creator), Prince of Peace. **7** His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his (kindom). He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

**Lesson:** Isaiah 11:1-9

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. **2** The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. **3** His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; **4** but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; . . . **5** Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins. **6** The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. **7** The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together;

and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. **8** The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. **9** They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

**Carol:** "We'll Be at Home"

*(tune: UMH #453 / lyrics: John Pritchard)*

Come, God, renew the earth;  
bring us your peace.  
Let war be learned no more,  
all conflicts cease.  
Let lambs with wolves lie down,  
in safety all be found.  
We'll be at home in your shalom.

Come, God, renew our world;  
all things refresh.  
Touch every wound and heal,  
broken ones bless.  
Blind eyes with sight be found,  
mute tongues with praise abound.  
We'll be at home in your shalom.

Come, God, renew our lives;  
give us your grace.  
Touch every heart until  
all know your face.  
Earth's every good we'll share,  
for one another care.  
We'll be at home, in your shalom.

Come, God, renew all things;  
grant a new start.  
Unlock the chains we wear;  
open our hearts.  
Grant each a welcome place,

a friend in every face.  
We'll be at home in your shalom.

**Lesson:** Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, **27** to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. **28** And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." **29** But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. **30** The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. **31** And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. **32** He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. **33** He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his (kingdom) there will be no end." **34** Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" **35** The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. **36** And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. **37** For nothing will be impossible with God." **38** Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

**Carol:** "To a Maid Engaged to Joseph" (UMH #215)

To a maid engaged to Joseph,  
the angel Gabriel came.  
"Fear not," the angel told her,  
"I come to bring good news,  
good news I come to tell you,  
good news, I say, good news.

“For you are highly favored  
by God the Lord of all,  
who even now is with you.  
You are on earth most blest,  
you are most blest, most blessed,  
God chose you, you are blest!”

**Lesson:** Luke 1:46-55

And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, **47** and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, **48** for (God) has looked with favor on the lowliness of (God's) servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; **49** for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is (God's) name. **50** (God's) mercy is for those who fear (God) from generation to generation. **51** (God) has shown strength with (God's) arm; (God) has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. **52** (God) has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; **53** (God) has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. **54** (God) has helped (God's) servant Israel, in remembrance of (God's) mercy, **55** according to the promise (God) made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

**Prayer** (*Pádraig Ó Tuama*)

God of Mary, Son of Mary:  
Neither birth nor death diminished you.  
Neither power nor pain destroyed you.  
Neither plenty nor little distracted you.  
So lift up our arms in strength  
so that we may lay down  
our arms and our armies,  
our fears and our prejudices  
Because, with Mary, we know that  
the silenced have words to speak.  
Amen.

**Carol:** "Canticle of the Turning"

*(tune: traditional Irish / lyrics: Rory Cooney)*

My soul cries out with a joyful shout  
that the God of my heart is great,  
and my spirit sings of the wondrous things  
that you bring to the ones who wait.  
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight,  
and my weakness you did not spurn,  
so from east to west shall my name be blest,  
could the world be about to turn?

Refrain

*My heart shall sing of the day you bring,  
let the fires of your justice burn.  
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near,  
and the world is about to turn!*

Though I am small, my God, my all,  
You work great things in me.  
And your mercy will last from the depths of the past  
to the end of the age to be.  
Your very name puts the proud to shame,  
and to those who would for you yearn,  
You will show your might, put the strong to flight,  
for the world is about to turn. *(Refrain)*

From the halls of power to the fortress tower,  
not a stone will be left on stone.  
Let the king beware for your justice tears  
ev'ry tyrant from his throne.  
The hungry poor shall weep no more,  
for the food they can never earn;  
there are tables spread, ev'ry mouth be fed,  
for the world is about to turn. *(Refrain)*

Though the nations rage from age to age,  
we remember who holds us fast;  
God's mercy must deliver us

from the conqueror's crushing grasp.  
This saving word that out forebears heard  
is the promise which holds us bound,  
'til the spear and rod be crushed by God,  
who is turning the world around. *(Refrain)*

**Lesson:** Matthew 1:18-25

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. **19** Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. **20** But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. **21** She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." **22** All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: **23** "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." **24** When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, **25** but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

**Lesson:** Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Emperor 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 for them in the inn.

**Carol:** "O Little Town of Bethlehem" (*UMH #230, altered*)

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 shineth  
the everlasting light;  
the hopes and fears of all the years  
are met in thee tonight.

How silently, how silently,  
the wondrous gift is given;  
so God imparts to human hearts  
the blessings of (God's) heaven.  
No ear may hear his coming,  
but in this world of sin,  
where meek souls will receive him, still  
the dear Christ enters in.

**Carol:** "O Come All Ye Faithful" (*UMH #234*)

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.*

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation;  
O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God, all glory in the highest; (*Refrain*)

**Lesson:** Luke 2:8-15

In that 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 Christ, 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, praising God and saying, **14** "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace, goodwill among people!" **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."

**Prayer** (*Pádraig Ó Tuama*)

God of fear,  
God of the night,  
God of the expectation,  
You visited shepherds in the night  
with songs and sights of joy.  
In all of our nights, turn us  
towards hope, because  
hope might just  
keep us alive.  
Amen.

**Carol:** "Angels We Have Heard on High" (*UMH #238*)

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

Refrain

*Glo - ria, in excelsis Deo!*

*Glo - ria, in excelsis Deo!*

Shepherds, why this jubilee?

Why your joyous strains prolong?

What the gladsome tidings be

which in spire your heavenly song? *(Refrain)*

**Carol:** "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing" *(UMH #240)*

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 triumphs of the skies;

with th' angelic host proclaim,

"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Refrain

*Hark! the herald angels sing,*

*"Glory to the newborn 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 the incarnate Deity,

pleased with us in flesh to dwell,

Jesus, our Emmanuel. *(Refrain)*

**Lesson:** Luke 2:16-20

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** But 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, as it had been told them.

**Carol:** "What Child Is This" (UMH #219)

What child is this who, laid to rest,  
on Mary's lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,  
while shepherds watch are keeping?

Refrain

*This, this is Christ the King,  
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
haste, haste to bring him laud,  
the babe, the son of Mary.*

**Carol:** "Go, Tell It on the Mountain" (UMH #251)

Refrain

*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 throughout the heavens  
there shone a holy light. (Refrain)

The shepherds feared and trembled,  
when lo! above the earth,  
rang out the angel chorus  
that hailed the Savior's birth. (Refrain)

## **GOING FORTH IN LIGHT**

**Litany of Light** (John Pritchard, adapted)

One: The prophet said, "The people who walked in deep darkness, on them has light shined."

**ALL: The light of God's way cracks open the shadows of our hearts and the shadows of our world.**

One: Jesus said, "I am the light of the world."

**ALL: The light of God's way puts on flesh and lives in our midst.**

One: Jesus also said, "You are the light of the world."

**ALL: The light of God's way calls to our flesh to do justice and love kindness.**

One: Behold, the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness will not overcome it.

**ALL: May every shadow be lifted, every wound healed, by the One who is among us as God's light.**

## Lighting the Candles

**Carol:** "Silent Night, Holy Night" (*UMH #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 Alleluia!

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.

## Benediction

**Departing Carol:** "Joy to the World" (*UMH #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.

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.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS!**