



*Christmas Eve Candlelight Service  
December 24, 2023, 7:00 p.m.*

# Christmas Eve Candlelight and Carols Service

(\*Please rise in body or in spirit.)

PRELUDE

Christie Spriggs

GREETING

Rev. Todd Lattig

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

The Lattig Family

\*CALL TO WORSHIP (responsively)

Kathleen Meredith

This night can feel overwhelming.

**Some of us have arrived with full brains and distracted hearts.**

Beloved, won't you stop and rest a while; listen to the story we tell,

**A story as old as time and yet new again.**

So, in the midst of the urgency the world says is necessary,

**We gather to stop, rest, and listen.**

\*OPENING HYMN "O, Come All Ye Faithful"

UMH 234

\*OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Kathleen Meredith

**God-with-us, our hearts are quiet, our minds are still. On this gentle night may we sense your presence in the flicker of a small candle held tenderly in our hands. Amen.**

CHOIR ANTHEM "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming" Chancel Choir

Melinda McCoy-Miller, flute

CHRISTMAS PRAYER

Rev. Lattig

SCRIPTURE READING

**Luke 2:1-20**

Kathleen Meredith

2 At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. <sup>2</sup> (This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) <sup>3</sup> All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census. <sup>4</sup> And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. <sup>5</sup> He took with him Mary, to whom he was engaged, who was now expecting a child.

<sup>6</sup> And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. <sup>7</sup> She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.

<sup>8</sup> That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. <sup>9</sup> Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, <sup>10</sup> but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all

people. <sup>11</sup> The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! <sup>12</sup> And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger.”

<sup>13</sup> Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup> “Glory to God in highest heaven,  
And peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.”

<sup>15</sup> When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, “Let’s go to Bethlehem! Let’s see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

<sup>16</sup> They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup> After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. <sup>18</sup> All who heard the shepherds’ story were astonished, <sup>19</sup> but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often. <sup>20</sup> The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them.

This is the Word of God for the people of God.

**Thanks be to God for this Word.**

SPECIAL MUSIC

Kathleen Meredith, Shirley Spooner

“What Child Is This?/Child of the Poor”

SERMON

**PREPARE: Go!**

Rev. Lattig

OFFERTORY

“Messiah”

Praise Band

You may proceed up the center aisle to leave your offering in the plate or scan one of the QR codes below to give electronically.

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\*DOXOLOGY

UMH 95

\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION (unison)

Kathleen Meredith

**Lord, you are the giver of every good and perfect gift. Thank you for the gifts you have given to each of us gathered here this evening and especially for the precious gift of your son, Jesus. It is our joy to give our gifts as an expression of our love for you and ask that you use them to advance your kingdom work on earth. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.**

**\*THE SHARING OF CHRIST'S LIGHT**

**While the carols are sung, we share Christ's Light. Let us receive His light with joy and share it with everyone.**

- \* **Take your light from the person next to you.**
- \* **Always tip the unlit candle into the lit candle.**

**It Came Upon the Midnight Clear (UMH 218)**

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, good will to men, from heaven's all-gracious King."  
The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.

**O Little Town of Bethlehem (UMH 230)**

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie;  
Above them 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.

**The First Noel (UMH 245)**

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 cold winter's night that was so deep.  
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel. Born is the King of Israel.

**\*CLOSING 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! Song 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.

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!

(Hum one more time through with candles raised)

**\*BENEDICTION**

Rev. Lattig

**POSTLUDE**

Christie Spriggs