



CHRISTMAS EVE 2025

...and the Word Became Flesh

First United Methodist Church
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Christmas Eve is a holy night at First United Methodist Church. Tonight, we gather to celebrate the mystery at the heart of our faith—that God comes to us in Jesus Christ as light in the darkness, hope for the weary, and love made flesh. We are grateful you are here, and we pray that as we worship together, your love of God is renewed.

Each Christmas Eve, we receive a special offering to support a life-changing ministry in our community—an opportunity to respond to God’s love by putting love into action.

Tonight, every gift given to our special offering goes directly to the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank. Right now, **1 in 7 people** in the parishes served by the Food Bank does not have enough to eat. Your generosity helps provide food, dignity, and hope to children, families, and seniors in our community—especially during this holy season.

You may give to the special offering by visiting www.fumcbr.org/food, by scanning the QR code, or by writing “food” in the memo line of your check.



Thank you for sharing in this ministry of compassion and hope.

May the peace and love of Christ be with you this Christmas.

Merry Christmas!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brady". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Reverend Brady Whitton
Senior Pastor

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

4:00 and 6:00 p.m.

GATHERING “Processional on ‘Adeste Fidelis’” Setting by Connor Licharz

GREETING

“A Christmas Prelude”

Charles Callahan

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

We have watched; we have waited in hope, for peace, in joy, and with love. Now our redemption draws near! *The Christ candle is lit.*

Hear the Word of the Lord from Isaiah:

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 is given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Glory to God in the highest! Alleluia! Amen!

† CAROL “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:
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

God of God, Light from Light Eternal,
Lo! he shuns not the Virgin’s womb;
Son of the Father, begotten, not created:
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,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
Glory to God, glory in the highest:
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,
Jesus, to thee be glory given;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Please remain standing.

† THE BIRTH OF JESUS Luke 2:1-14

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. 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. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. 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. Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 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: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

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

MEDITATION "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus" Reverend Whitton

INVITATION TO HOLY COMMUNION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION *in unison*

Lord Jesus Christ, you are loving and merciful. Forgive us for being so captivated by Christmas that we forget that you, the little baby in the manger, grew up as the Lord over all creation. It is sometimes easier to leave you in the manger than it is to reckon with your difficult teachings and fierce challenges. So often we do not follow these teachings, and we do not live up to your challenges. We need your grace and your strength to follow you more closely.

Forgive us for all of our sins, as we continue to pray in silence...

People of God, through the coming of Jesus Christ, whose birth we celebrate, the Lord has comforted and redeemed us! Recall the words of the angels: Good news...Great joy...All people...

In Christ we receive the salvation of our God. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven. Glory to God. Amen.

† CAROL *Hark! the Herald Angels Sing*

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 triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn 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 newborn King!"

† PASSING OF THE PEACE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

An offering is collected to support the work of First United Methodist Church sharing God's love with the world. Please take a moment and record your attendance on a card located in the blue folders in the pews. Place the card in the offering plate when passed to you. Make a secure gift by scanning the QR Code or visit fumcbr.org/give to give online.



OFFERTORY "O Holy Night"

Adolphe Adam

O holy night, the stars are brightly shining, it is the night of the dear Savior's birth; long lay the world in sin and error pining, till He appeared and the soul felt its worth. A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices, for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn; fall on your knees, oh, hear the angel voices! O night divine, O night when Christ was born! Truly He taught us to love one another, His law is love, and His Gospel is peace; chains, shall He break for the slave is our brother, and in His name all oppression shall cease. Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we, let all within us praise His holy name; Christ is the Lord, oh, praise His name forever! His power and glory evermore proclaim!

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Gracious God, in this blessed Christmas season, we give you thanks and praise. You created all that is, and called it good. You made us in your own image. Though we have rebelled against your love, you loved the world so much that you sent your only Son to be our Savior.

As Mary and Joseph went from Galilee to Bethlehem,
So Jesus went from Galilee to Jerusalem.

As they came and found no room in which to stay,
So Jesus came and was rejected and despised by men.

As the babe was laid in a humble manger,
So Jesus humbled himself and died on a cross.

As in that lowly manger Jesus was born,
So from the shame of death He was raised to bring us to life.

BREAKING THE BREAD AND BLESSING THE CUP

With the shepherds and the wise men, we offer ourselves and our gifts in union with Christ's offering for us. By the power and blessing of Your Holy Spirit, may the bread which we share be a sharing of the body of the living Christ, and the cup which we share be a sharing of His blood. We join the entire company of heaven and all your people now on earth proclaiming, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward all."

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.

GIVING THE BREAD AND CUP *Unfermented juice is used.*

MUSIC FOR COMMUNION

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"	Setting by Jack Schrader
"Lo! How a Rose E'er Blooming"	Setting by Alfred Fedak
"Sans Day Carol"	Setting by John Rutter

THE WORD BECAME FLESH John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did

not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

BRINGING LIGHT INTO THE WORLD

Parents are asked to monitor children with lit candles. To light your candle, hold your unlit candle horizontally so that a lit candle, held vertically, can light yours. Lit candles should always be held upright.

† CAROL "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.

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.

† CAROL "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.

† BLESSING

Please extinguish your candles and return them to the baskets at the exits.

POSTLUDE "Gigue on 'Joy to the World'" Setting by Sondra Tucker

LEADING WORSHIP

Preaching

Reverend Brady Whitton, *Senior Pastor*

Liturgists

Pattye Hewitt, *Executive Director of Adult Education, Hospitality, and Care*

Reverend Kale Wetekamm, *Pastor to Children and Youth* (4:00 p.m.)

Musicians

Chancel Choir (4:00 p.m.); Dr. Chelsey Geeting, *Soprano*

Michael Hull, *Trumpet*; Nathan Anderson, *Flute*

Holden Miller, *Associate Director of Music and Organist*

Lamar Drummonds, *Director of Music and Worship*

Communion Servers

Alan Brock, Glennell Cottrill, Amy King, Chris King (4:00 p.m.)

Jim Howell, Patty Rives, Beth O'Quinn, Chris Spencer (6:00 p.m.)

Soundboard

Virginia Guffey (4:00 p.m.); Jim Hewitt (6:00 p.m.)

Welcome to First United Methodist Church

If you are new to First United Methodist and are ready to learn more or have questions, we invite you to join us for our monthly **Newcomer Coffee**. This is a great opportunity to ask questions and meet others. This event takes place on the first Sunday of each month from 9:45–10:45 a.m. in Ory Parish Hall. Registration is helpful (scan the QR code) but not required. For information, email Shan Schatzle, at shan@firstmethodist.org.



First Sunday after Christmas—Sunday, December 28. We will gather for one service in the Gymnasium at 10:00 a.m. There will be no Sunday School or evening activities. Merry Christmas!

Contributions for 2025 must be received by December 31, 2025, or have a valid postmark of December 31, 2025. Contributions received after this date will be credited to 2026 as mandated by the IRS. The church office will be open Wednesday, December 31, 2025 until 4:00 p.m. Please indicate clearly on the check memo line the exact designation of contributions, e.g. 2025 Pledge, or for a specific mission. Your support is deeply appreciated and enables First United Methodist Church to continue to glorify Christ through its many ministries. Please note that you can prepay your 2026 Pledge before the end of 2025 and claim the deduction in this tax year.