

Wednesday, December 24, 2025 - Christmas Eve

Welcome *Pastor Jeff will give announcements and welcome*

****Call to Worship** (*Liturgist parts are indicated in BOLD and ***)

****Merry Christmas, I am Malorie Packard, and will be serving as Worship Leader this evening. Would you please stand as you are comfortable and able to join me in the responsive Call to Worship?**

****Leader: Beloved, on this day/night, we gather to enliven the story once again of God who came to dwell among us as a vulnerable baby.**

People: We rejoice in the day that all the earth awaits.

****Leader: We remember the stable, the animals, and the manger that witnessed the arrival of Emmanuel, God with us.**

People: We rejoice in the day that all the earth awaits.

****Leader: We recall the angels who announced the Messiah's birth to the shepherds, those most unlikely witnesses of God's glory.**

People: We rejoice in the day that all the earth awaits.

****Leader: In our remembering and enlivening, we gather today as people of God's promise, witnesses to God's glorious presence among us in the vulnerable, forgotten, and tucked away places of the world.**

People: We gather to rejoice in the day that all the earth awaits, the day that has already come and will yet be. Thanks be to God! Amen.

****Will you join us in our opening song, "Angels We Have Heard on High", hymn #238, and the words will be on the screen**

Opening Prayer

****Leader: We have waited for a long time for your hope, your joy, your love to shine in the darkness of this world, Almighty God. Even now, in**

2 **our gathering here, we await you. In our hearts, we still hope that your light will blaze forth, banishing the shadows of this world and guiding all the people back to you.**

People: Yet you did not come into this world in a show of power and glory. You did not shine forth for all of creation to behold. A tiny spark – a newborn baby, visible to parents and curious animals. A host of angels—away from the populated areas, singing to migrant workers. A sparkling star – guiding foreigners to see what neighbors could not.

****Leader: Open our hearts, merciful God, to the sparks of your presence still in this world. Open our eyes, that we might behold your presence in the least likely of places, and among the least likely of people.**

People: God with us, kindle your spark within us, that together we may shine forth your light, we might banish the shadows of this world, we might be the continuation of the Christmas miracle: Emmanuel is in this world, God is with us, now and evermore. Amen.

Advent Wreath Readings and Candle lighting: Tylin, Taylin, Bailey & Bodie Sherman

Our Christmas Affirmation

Leader: Advent hope moves us; Advent love leads us; Advent joy stirs us; Advent peace stills us, that we might affirm our King Jesus. It is time we set flame to this Advent affirmation by lighting the Christ Candle.

People: We believe that Jesus is the Son of God. He was born of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem of Judea. He was the long-awaited Messiah whose coming was prophesied. The same Jesus lives today in our hearts. He deserves our highest loyalty and total commitment. In Jesus Christ, our hope is fulfilled; our love is consummated; our joy is complete; and our peace is sealed.

Leader: Rejoice, a Savior is born.

People: A savior is born, indeed. Joy to the world!

Christmas Eve Candle-Lighting Liturgy

Leader: We have heard the call to keep watch. But what are we keeping watch over? Maybe we're looking for something that will define us, something that will remake us, transform us. Some relationship, some hope, some love that will make us new. Maybe we're looking for the gift we remember this night.

People Singing: O holy Child of Bethlehem / Descend to us, we pray / Cast out our sin and enter in / Be born to us today / We hear the Christmas angels / The great glad tidings tell / O come to us, abide with us / Our Lord Emmanuel.

Leader: What we go out to see in the muddle of our world is not necessarily the Christ child or the light that glows within. No, I think what we watch over is the world that he came to save: the masses of humanity who think they can find salvation in the stuff of this life, like we know we do sometimes. When we forget. A world that has room for a Savior, even when we've forgotten it. And part of what we're keeping watch for is to see whether we can make room—room for grace, room for joy, room for peace, even at our worst. At our most needy. And most helpful, and grace-filled. Keep watch.

Let us light these candles and complete this circle as we rejoice in the light that shines in the darkness and declare with joy and with hope –

People: Joy to the world, the Lord has come! Hallelujah. Amen.

Children's Time

4 **Invitation for Christmas Eve Giving**

****Scripture Reading Isaiah 9:2-7 NRSV**

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. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. 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. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. 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.

Prayer of Confession

Lord Jesus, This most holy of nights brings us Gladness, Grief, and Joy. Gladness, because you left the splendor of Heaven's glory to come to a dark and cold world, to bring the light and warmth of your Kingdom to a world so in need of Your Love, Your Peace, Your Joy. Grief, Because you came into the world, yet the world did not receive You. You came to your own, and your own did not welcome you. And still today, people turn away from you. We turn away from you. Sin still scars your creation and the hearts of your own people. And Joy, because you offer perfect forgiveness and full cleansing to all who acknowledge their need of you. Cleanse our hearts tonight, Lord Jesus, so that we may welcome you as we long to, certain that we are also welcomed by You. Amen.

Choir Anthem: "Fairest Jesu" Arr. by Benjamin Harlan

****Scripture Reading Psalm 96 NRSV**

O sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord; bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples. For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; he is to be revered above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but the Lord made the heavens. Honor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts. Worship the Lord in holy splendor; tremble before him, all the earth. Say among the nations, "The Lord is king! The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved. He will judge the peoples with equity." Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar and all that fills it; let the field exult and everything in it. Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before the Lord, for he is coming, for he is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with his truth.

Special Music: Breath of Heaven - Jamee and Dannah

****Scripture Reading Luke 2:1-20 NRSV**

As this is a reading of the Gospel, please stand in body or spirit.

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

⁶ 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!” 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.” So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them, and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.

This is the word of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God!

Song: “There’s a Song In the Air”

Meditation - “Behold the Wonder of Christmas” Pastor Jeff Williams

CANDLE LIGHTING and “Silent Night”

Benediction