

ST. LUKE'S

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

CELEBRATE

*God's
Gift*

CHRISTMAS EVE

A child is born to us, a son
is given to us.
Isaiah 9:6a

2025

Rev. Seok Nam Lim

December 24, 2025

10:00 am

GATHERING

PRELUDE

The Christmas Song
The Prayer
O Holy Night

Leon Beaudin, Piano

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Lisa Killey, Liturgist

*** ADVENT READING AND LIGHTING OF THE CANDLE**

Bev Walker's family, Mark and Jodi Shaw

FOURTH ADVENT READING

Isaiah 9:1-7

Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan—

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.

Luke 2:8-14

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."

***LIGHTING THE CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLE**

L: Tonight, we gather to remember with the prophet Isaiah:

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. Great will be his authority, 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 (Isaiah 9:6-7).

P: We gather to once again bask in the glory that visited a stable and a manger, shepherds watching their flocks, and a young couple cradling the newborn Messiah.

L: We light the Christ candle as a sign of the glory that came among us in unexpected places and to unexpected people, that we may be people who seek and follow the glory of the Christ child here and now.

P: O come, O come, Emmanuel.

Light the center candle of the Advent wreath.

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Behold! Our God, earth's maker, appears anew.

Let all the earth declare God's marvelous works.

A Word arrives from skies and fields, a message for a world beset by conflict, fire, flood, and storm.

The heavens are glad! The earth rejoices! The seas roar! The trees sing!

This good news, heralding the coming reign of peace for all creation.

**Sing a new song of God's glory and strength,
of lives made new! Let us worship God.**

HYMN Joy to the World

UMH 246

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

This bright night is for mystery, O God. We scarcely understand the ways you break into this world and into our lives. Yet we know you do. The whole earth still needs your peace, with peoples in conflict and climate in crisis. May the ancient story of your arrival this night make us courageous bearers of good news and doers of good deeds. For the sake of your beautiful, created world, we pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

A READING FROM THE PSALMS

Psalm 96

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Rev. Seok Nam Lim

HYMN

The First Noel

UMH 245

PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev. Seok Nam Lim

SCRIPTURE READING

Hebrews 2:5-18

MESSAGE

Christ, Our Helper

Rev. Seok Nam Lim

OFFERING OUR TITHES AND GIFTS

OFFERTORY

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

Leon Beaudin

DOXOLOGY

Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow

UMH 95

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Creator God, may these gifts – offered for good work throughout the world – ascribe glory and strength to you. In the name of Jesus, the Son of God, we pray. Amen

HOLY COMMUNION

COMMUNION MUSIC

Leon Beaudin, Organist

HYMN

Silent Night, Holy Night

UMH 239

Mutual Candle Lighting among the Congregation

SENDING FORTH

BENEDICTION

Rev. Seok Nam Lim

People of God, you heard the good news of great joy. It is real. It is for the earth. Go forth, bearing this news. And may all who hear it and see it, reveal this good news in their lives, and be amazed.

Amen.

POSTLUDE

Fanfare on Adeste Fideles'

Leon Beaudin, Organist

Sermon Summary

Christ, Our Helper (Hebrews 2:5-18)

Summary: The author exhorts the Hebrew Christians, who are losing their spiritual vitality because of the persecution on them, to focus on Christ, the Son of God, who downgraded himself to be lower than the angels and become a human being and to be united with his people. God crowned him to be superior to any creature.

Do not drift away!

The community of Hebrew Christians, who were the recipients of the letter to Hebrews, were on the verge of the bankruptcy of their faith in Christ because of the dissonance between their faith in Christ and their life experience. What they believed about Jesus is that He is the Son of God, “the radiance of God’s glory,” and “the exact representation of his being” (Heb. 1:3); God appointed him the “heir of all things,” through whom all God’s promises spoken through the prophets have been achieved (Heb. 1:1-2). Jesus is superior to the angels; He is “crowned with glory and honor,” and everything is put under his feet, in subjection to his power and authority (Heb. 2:7-8).

However, the community of Hebrew Christians was in a severe test: They lived in “slavery by their fear of death” (Heb. 2:15) because of the hardship and persecution on them. Because of many troubles threatening their life, these Hebrew Christians were about to give up their faith in Christ Jesus and return to their old religion, Judaism: “So do not throw away your confidence” (Heb. 10:35). They were giving up gathering as the community of Christ: “Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing” (Heb. 10:25). They were losing their spiritual vitality. They were wavering in their faith and practice.

How can we claim the sovereignty of Christ over the world when we face difficulties?

Hebrews is the letter of exhortation to the second generation of Hebrew Christians “standing in a great contest of suffering” (Heb. 10:33). What is remarkable in the exhortation to the church in suffering is that it begins with the Christian doctrine or theology, the teaching about Christ. The vitality of the church is founded upon our knowledge of Christ and our faith in him. Our power of bearing upon us the unbearable weight of suffering and difficulty comes from Christ himself. Jesus promises us our victory: “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

Christmas message: Christ as the triumphant ruler over the whole world

- 1. Christ's downgrading:** We see God's purpose fulfilled in Christ, who “was made a little lower than the angels, not crowned with glory and honor” (Hebrews 2:9).

God made his Son a human being “lower than the angels” for a little while and then “crowned him with glory and honor and put everything under his feet” (Heb. 2:7-8; Ps. 8:7-8). Jesus is the “ruler over the works” of God's creation because God “put everything under him (or under his feet)” and “left nothing that is not subject to him” (Heb. 2:8; Ps. 8:6).

Christ was crowned with glory and honor through his suffering and his crucifixion: God made Jesus the ruler over God's creation through his suffering and death, which made him crowned with glory and honor. God is the Creator, “for whom and through whom everything exists” (Heb. 2:10). He called his children to glory through Christ Jesus. In order to bring them to glory, God gave up his Son, Christ Jesus, to the cross, so that God made him “as the author of their salvation” perfect (Heb. 2:10). It is God's way of salvation to make us as holy and perfect through Christ, who has been made perfect as “the author of

our salvation” through his suffering and death (Heb. 2:10-11). The perfection of our salvation comes from the crucifixion of Christ.

2. Christ Jesus in solidarity with us: “Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.” (Hebrews 2:11)

Christ and all Christians are of the same family; we are united with Jesus in his perfection, his holiness, and righteousness. Jesus who makes us holy and we who are made holy by him are “of the same family” (Heb. 2:11). For this reason, “Jesus is not ashamed to call them [us] brothers” (Heb. 2:11). Jesus stays among us: “He says, ‘I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation, I will sing your praises.’ And again, he says, ‘Here am I, and the children God has given me’” (Heb. 2:12-13).

We are set free from the fear of death: Jesus has flesh and blood like all human beings, especially, the children of God: “He too shared in their humanity” (Heb. 2:14). His purpose to have flesh and blood, being a little lowered than the angels, is to bring into destruction the devil, the one who has the power of death over all human beings alienated from God because of their sins (Heb. 2:15). It is Jesus who set them free from the power of the devil, and the fear of death through his crucifixion: he freed “those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death” (Heb. 2:15).

Christ is the answer to the Hebrew Christians in suffering and fear

1. God disciplines us through our suffering: God gives us hardship and suffering because we are his children: “Endure hardship as discipline. God is treating you as sons...God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness” (Heb. 12:7, 10).

Without suffering and hardship, we cannot grow up to the image of Christ. Christ is the exemplar of faithfulness to God even at the time of suffering and persecution. If we believe ourselves in solidarity with Christ, we must be in

solidarity with him in terms of his suffering, bearing our own cross, and following him. As God rewarded Christ with glory and honor for his endurance of suffering and his faithfulness to God even to the point of death on the cross, God will give us glory and honor in our faithfulness to Christ, even in the time of suffering. This is God's purpose: to put us to the test—through our suffering, we will experience God's sovereign power to put everything under his control and be crowned with glory and honor in God's kingdom (Hebrews 2:7-8). Suffering is the path to experiencing God's promise to make us the inheritors of his kingdom in Christ our Lord.

2. Christ as our helper: Jesus became lower than the angels to help the children of God, that is, "Abraham's descendants" (Heb. 2:16).

Christ is our High Priest with a merciful and faithful heart toward us. He was made like his family members on earth in every way, so that he can make the empathetic communication with us and help us in our test: He is "the merciful and faithful high priest in service to God," who is made a human being like his sisters and brothers in every way, so that he may be the atonement for their sins and also the helper for them in their suffering and test (Heb. 2:17-18). We have the assurance that Christ can help us in any circumstance: In his name we always get access to God for his help: "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" (Heb. 4:15-16).

HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Come to the table of love.

Jesus meets us here.

We gather as the beloved community,

hungry to be fed with the gifts of the Spirit,

thirsting for the waters of life.

God is here and everyone is welcome.

The GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, Jesus took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over, Jesus took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood. By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and forever. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

And now, with the confidence of children of God, let us pray:

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, now and forever. Amen.

BREAKING THE BREAD

Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf. The bread which we break is a sharing in the body of Christ. The cup over which we give thanks is a sharing in the blood of Christ.

GIVING THE BREAD AND CUP

The body of Christ, given for you. **Amen.**

The blood of Christ, given for you. **Amen.**

Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit, to give ourselves for others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

POINSETTIAS

We are sincerely grateful for the lovely poinsettias adorning our church, graciously given by members of our congregation. These flowers represent the affection and cherished memories we share during this meaningful season.

Anne Connell and Doug Bentall

In memory of Jeanne and Clyde Connell

The Felch Family

In memory of Ruth Felch

Melissa Felch

In memory of Don and Sally Grunder

Sheila Good

In memory of Dave Good

Soon-Shil Lim

In memory of Ho Lim

Charlotte and Pete McGrath

In memory of John McGrath (brother)

Ashley Markham

In celebration of family Christmas

Dan and Karla Morgan

In celebration of family Christmas

Fritzi Stevenson

In celebration of family Christmas

If you purchased a poinsettia, you may pick it up after the Christmas Eve service or on Sunday, December 28th.

Any plants not collected will be delivered to local shut-in facilities.



Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you;
he is the Messiah, the Lord.

Luke 2:11 (NIV)

Volunteers

Liturgist

Lisa Killey

Ushers

Henry Roeder
Joe Fleming
and others TBD

Communion

Eileen Casciano
Joye Kramer
Henry Roeder
Nancy Tacey

Stay Connected



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Adult Sunday School

Fall, Winter, Spring
9:00 am in Esther's Parlor

Children's Church:

Following Children's Message
in Classroom

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