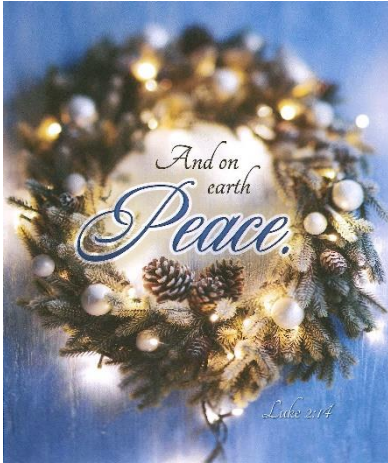


Wesley United Methodist Church



Sunday Worship

December 24, 2023

Christmas Eve

At Wesley we foster a sanctuary culture by creating a safe environment where all feel welcomed, loved, accepted, valued, and affirmed for who they are, through intentional practices such as empathy, compassion, generosity, hospitality, and inclusion.

Please let an usher know if you have questions, need assistance, or have a concern about health or safety.

Prelude

What Child is This?

Joel Raney

Silent Night

Joel Raney

Variations on Lo, How a Rose 'ere Blooming

Bjarne Sløgedal

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

Dale Wood

Greeting

Pastor: In the quiet of the night a woman gives birth: a personal act of faith; accepting God's charge upon her.

Congregation: In the quiet of the night, a baby breathes the air: God steps out of the divine into the mundane for us.

Pastor: May the peace of God be with you.

Congregation: And also with you.

*Hymn

"O Come, All Ye Faithful" (verses 1-4)

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;
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

True God of true 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;
O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all 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.

*Please stand in body or in spirit.

See how the shepherds, summoned to his cradle,
leaving their flocks, draw nigh to gaze;
we too will thither bend our joyful footsteps;
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

***Candle Lighting**

- One: To a people longing for hope and yearning for deliverance, the prophet Isaiah declared, 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 given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
- One: Tonight, we come seeking hope, peace, joy, and love, and we find these things in a child. God made flesh as a baby in a manger. A baby who is both the beginning and the end of our salvation, who dwells with us even now, our Emmanuel, God with us.
- Many: We live as people in the in-between who celebrate the arrival of the Light that shines in lost and broken places as we wait for the day when we will live in the fullness of God's kin-dom.**
- One: We light these candles as signs of our shocking hope, our just peace, our fierce joy, the love that transforms us, and Jesus Christ, our wondrous Light. May the Light burning in our hearts guide us, comfort us, protect us, and tend us in all seasons and circumstances, reminding us that day and night, in the light and in the darkness, God is with us. Our salvation has come! Amen.

Light all five candles of the Advent wreath.

Hymn

"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.

Still through the cloven skies they come with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heavenly music floats o'er all the weary world;
above its sad and lowly plains, they bend on hovering wing,
and ever o'er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.

And ye, beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow,
look now! for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing.
O rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing!

For lo! the days are hastening on, by prophet seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold
when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
and the whole world send back the song which now the angels sing.

Common Prayer (*unison*)

**O God, you have brought us again to the glad season
when we celebrate the birth of your Child, Jesus Christ our Lord.
Grant that his Spirit may be born anew in our hearts this day
and that we may joyfully welcome him to reign over us.
Open our ears that we may hear again the angelic chorus of old.
Open our lips that we, too, may sing with uplifted hearts.
Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth, peace, goodwill toward all;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The Offering

Offertory

This Darkest Night

John Drum cf. 20th century

This darkest night I saw a sight, a star as bright as day.
And far below, a maiden young, who held her child and to him sung,
"Lullay, by by, lullay".

She laid him in a manger bed and to her child did say,
"My little son, what savior king is born among such hay?"
The child replied, "My mother dear, though born in earthly stall,
A king I am, Thy Kingdom's sway is o'er the hearts of all."

"Now tell me, darling, infant, born to be the promised one:
How shall I keep you rightly fed, and care for you and find a bed, befitting God's own Son?"

"Mother dear, when time it be, then take me in thy arms,
I'll hold thee close till day is night, and if I weep or may not rest,
I'll sing Lullay, by by."

"Child, why are you restless?"

"Mother, I am frightened."

"Child, why are you frightened?"

"Mother, all is darkness."

"Dry your tears, my Christ-child; do behold the star that shines for you."

*Doxology

THE FIRST NOEL

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.
Praise God, all creatures here below.
Praise God above, ye heavenly host.
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.

*Prayer of Dedication

*Gospel Reading

Luke 2:1-20

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes;
I love thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky
and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask thee to stay
close by me forever, and love me, I pray;
bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
and fit us for heaven to live with thee there.

Message

Anthem

Lullaby

John Ness Beck 1930–1987

A child, a holy child, fast asleep beneath a winter sky,
Is warm at rest at his mother's breast as she sings her lullaby.

The lambs, the cattle too, are sleeping in a bed of hay,
And all around there's no other sound than lullaby lullay.

Lullaby, sleep well, sleep well, my precious one;
Lullaby, my love, my only son; New life has now begun.

So the story goes: once upon a winter morn
A tiny boy bringing love and joy, the Prince of Peace was born.

Candle Lighting & Hymn

"Silent Night"

(Individual candles are lit while singing. Please tip your unlit candle and light it from the flame of the candle of the person next to you. The sanctuary lights will be dimmed during the hymn.)

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 streams 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.

*Departing Prayer: The Canticle of Simeon

Pastor: In the quiet of the night a woman gives birth: a personal act of faith; accepting God's charge upon her

Pastor: The holy child of Bethlehem has come to us this night.

Congregation: We have welcomed the Prince of Peace.

Pastor: Now, like Simeon, that righteous and devout man who looked forward to the consolation of Israel and who beheld the coming of our Emmanuel, we pray.

Congregation: God, let your servants now depart in peace, according to your word; for our eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all people, a light for revelation and for glory to all your children.

*Benediction

(Please extinguish your candle and put it in the basket as you leave the sanctuary.)

Postlude

Voluntary on the tune *Christmas Eve*

Norberto Guinaldo

*Refrain: Now let good Christians all begin, an holy life to live,
and to rejoice and merry be, for this is Christmas Eve.*

Worship Leaders: David Dagle, Cynthia Fletcher, Joseph Fletcher, Chris Kerns, Byungmoo Lee, Marjorie Ness, William Ness, Debbie O'Driscoll, Anna Pak (flutist), David Potts, Chancel Choir, Worship Tech Team

Candle Lighting – The United Methodist Church Discipleship Ministries, by Lisa Hancock.
Common Prayer – *The United Methodist Book of Worship*, 276, ALT.
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