



First United Methodist Church, Pasadena

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

December 24, 2023 - 10 p.m.

GATHERING TOGETHER

Welcome to Worship. We are so glad that you are joining us for Christmas Eve!
We invite you to open your spirit to this time of worship, song, prayer,
inspiration and challenge.

In consideration of others, please silence electronic devices.

“+” indicates to stand in body or spirit as you choose.

GATHERING MUSIC

Scott Lehmkuhl, David Garrett, The Resound Ringers, and Nadine Whitty

PRELUDE

Still, Still, Still

David Cherwein (b. 1957)

WELCOME

+ GATHERING IN WORSHIP

In the quiet of the night, A woman gives birth:

A personal act of faith; accepting God's charge upon her.

In the quiet of the night, A husband becomes a father:

A personal act of faith; accepting God's charge upon him.

In the quiet of the night, A baby breathes the air:

A personal act of grace; God steps out of the divine and into our very lives.

In the quiet and excitement of this night, may we open ourselves to the holy blessing of Christ being born anew in our lives.

Let us sing, let us praise, let us give our heartfelt thanks, for on this holy night, Christ is being born among us and within us!

+ OPENING HYMN

O Come All Ye Faithful

UMH 234

1. O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant, O
2. Sing, choirs of an - gels, Sing in ex - ul - ta - tion, —
3. Yea, Lord, we greet thee, Born this hap - py morn - ing, —

come ye, O come — ye to Beth - le - hem;
Sing all ye ci - ti - zens of heav'n — a - bove;
Je - sus, to thee — be — glo - ry giv'n;

Come and be - hold him Born the King of an - gels:
Glo - ry to God — In — the — high - est:
Word of the Fa - ther, Now in flesh ap - pear - ing:

O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him,

O come, let us a - dore him, — Christ — the Lord!

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

Eric Dyson

During the four Sundays of Advent, we lit the candles on this wreath, reminding us of the hope, peace, joy and light that Christ brings to our lives and to our world.

Tonight, we celebrate that Jesus has been born among us,
and so tonight we light the Christ Candle.
Tonight, we affirm that Christ's light shines into all darkness,
and that no darkness can overcome this light.
Tonight, we draw near to the cradle,
Peeking in to see that indeed, this night, and in every day,
God's love is being born into our lives and into our world.

Living Christ, you are the Light of the World.

God of all grace, fill us with your hope as we welcome the Christ's birth among us, and within us. Guide our feet, open our hearts, and lead our lives in the ways of peace. Inspire us with a new and expectant joy as we celebrate the arrival of the Christ Child. Reveal your love to us that we may love you, ourselves and all people more fully. May the light of Christ fill our hearts, now and always. Amen.

CHORAL ANTHEM

The Wexford Carol

arr. René Clausen

GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 2:1-20

In those days a decree went out from Emperor 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 for them in the inn.

In that 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. But 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, as it had been told them.

The word of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God.

CHORAL ANTHEM

How Far Is It to Bethlehem

arr. Stephen Paulus

HOMILY

Rev. Dr. Amy Aitken

OFFERING TO GOD OUR HEARTS, OUR LIVES AND OUR GIFTS



Our offering this evening will be given to support our Social Service Ministry which provides food, clothing and other necessities to our unhoused community in Pasadena. Thank you for your generosity.

If you'd like to make an offering this evening, you may use your phone to scan this QR code to access the church's online giving website. Boxes to receive paper checks and currency are located at the rear of the Sanctuary and in the entry from the parking lot.

OFFERTORY

Gaudete!

arr. Mark Burrows

+PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Holy and Loving God, on this night where we bask in the wonder of your presence among us,
we offer to you these gifts.

On this night, we celebrate the miracle of Christmas.

When the candles are blown out,
when the ringing of the bells has ceased
when the angels and shepherds have gone home,
may we continue to shine your light into the world
through the giving of these offerings.

May these gifts be a blessing and a sign of your love to our
unhoused neighbors in Pasadena,
and to all who need to know of your love made real in their lives.
Amen.

HOLY COMMUNION

In the United Methodist Church, all who love God and are striving to love their neighbor are invited to share in this holy meal. The bread we use is gluten-free and cup contains unfermented grape juice, so that all may partake of this meal safely together.

We join with Christians around the world and across the centuries in sharing prayers of confession and the liturgy of The Great Thanksgiving.

If you are joining us online, we invite you to use bread/crackers and juice/wine (whatever you have on-hand will be fine). Whether we are in this sanctuary together or apart from one another, we recognize that God's love knows no bounds.

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.

The Pastor continues to give thanks, remembering God's acts of salvation, and concludes:

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

The Pastor continues, concluding with:

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.

The Pastor continues, concluding with:

Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church,
all honor and glory is yours, Creator God, now and forever.

Amen.

THE 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.

BREAKING OF THE BREAD AND GIVING OF THE BREAD AND CUP

Please follow the direction of the ushers, to come forward to receive Communion.
If you would like to be served in your seat, please let an usher know.

Angels' Carol

John Rutter

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION Having received of Christ's love and grace at this holy table on this sacred night, let us take this Love into the world.

Let the love that shaped earth and heaven,
dwell within us this Christmas.

Let the love that created humanity,
dwell within us this Christmas.

Let the love that overcomes suffering and hatred,
dwell within us this Christmas.

Let the love that causes us to rejoice with loved ones,
dwell within us this Christmas.

Let the love that forgives and renews,
dwell within us this Christmas.

Let the love that brings reconciliation after separation,
dwell within us this Christmas.

Let the love that brings the blessing of peace,
dwell within us this Christmas.

And may we share that peace,
with all people near and far. **Amen.**

SHARING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

+HYMN

Peace, Peace/Silent Night

Powell/arr. Fred Bock

During the choir's introduction, please pass the light of Christ to your neighbors. Remember to hold the lighted candle upright, tilting only the unlighted candle.

Choir:

Peace, peace, peace on earth and good will to all.

This is a time for joy, this is a time for love.

Now let us all sing together of

Peace, peace, peace on earth.

When indicated by the leader, please join in singing:

Silent Night

UMH 239

1. Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm, all is bright,
 2. Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God, love's pure light;

'Round you Vir - gin Moth - er and child! Ho - ly in - fant, so ten - der and mild;
 ra - dian beams from thy ho - ly face with the dawn of re - deem - ing grace,

Sleep in heav - en - ly peace, Sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
 Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth.

Words: Joseph Mohr, 1818. Tune: STILLE NACHT by Franz Gruber, 1818. Public Domain.

+ BENEDICTION

+CLOSING HYMN

Joy to the World

UMH 246

1. Joy to rules the world, the Lord is come!
 2. He rules the world with truth and grace,

Let and earth makes re - ceive her King.
 and makes the na - tions prove

Let the ev - ery heart pre - pare him -
 the glo - ries of his righ - teous -

room, and heaven and na - ture sing, and
 ness and won - ders of his love, and

heaven and na - ture sing, and heaven, and
 won - ders of his love, and won - ders,

heaven and na - ture sing.
 won - ders of his love.

Candles are extinguished.

Please blow the candles out gently to help keep the wax from spilling.
You may deposit the candles in the baskets as you exit.

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES @ FIRST UMC

For more information, email us at connect@fumcpasadena.org

POINSETTIAS



Flowers are provided by a donation in memory of Esther and Harvey Hyde and Family.

STATEMENT OF INCLUSION

All people are welcome at First United Methodist Church. We are proudly part of the Reconciling Ministries Network and welcome all persons, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnicity, age, physical or mental capacity, and education, socio-economic or marital status.

INDIGENOUS LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We, acknowledge that the land upon which we worship was the ancestral homeland of the Tongva People for thousands of years. Approximately two thousand Tongva people still live in the Los Angeles area. We honor their connection to this region and give thanks for the opportunity to live, work, worship and learn on this sacred land.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Join the Bible Year 2024 - Have you wanted to know more about the Bible but weren't sure how, or where, to begin? Good News! In 2024, we are inviting the whole congregation (yes, you!) to lean into your faith, and join in a year-long walk through the entire Bible.

The Bible Year breaks up the Bible into shorter, daily readings with a concise explanation of key themes and a devotional to help you grow closer to God. You may choose to just do the readings on your own, or join a small group (in-person and online) to discuss and delve deeper into the Bible stories. Learn more and register at the QR below.



Managing Anger begins Wednesday, January 17 from 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. on Zoom. Anger has many different faces: sarcasm, irritability, frustration, intimidation, shouting, door-slamming.

In this 4-session group, we uncover the purpose for anger, identify learned patterns of thinking and acting that influence our anger, and look at positive ways to express our emotions.

For more info, or the Zoom link, contact connect@fumcpasadena.org

SERVING IN MINISTRY

The entire congregation shares in offering the ministries of this church. Some of the people who help lead our ministries include:

Today's Worship Liturgist:
Eric Dyson

Pastor
Rev. Dr. Amy Aitken

Associate Pastor:
Rev. Mina Nau-Mahe

Director of Music Ministries:
Scott Lehmkuhl

Organist:
Aaron Shows

Ministry Coordinator:
Dori Fotsch

Facilities & Office Manager:
Aisha Williams

Finance Manager:
Tim Sun

Communications Director:
Ashley Slade

Leadership Council Chairperson:
Kevin Lussier

Lay Leader for Faith Development
Mikala Rahn

Lay Leader for Finance & Generosity:
J.P. Harris

Lay Leaders for Missions:
Pam Marx & Rosalie Niemann

Chair of Trustees:
Paul Audley