

WELCOME

Pastor Harold Henderson

PRELUDE

"It Came upon the Midnight Clear"
arr. Ann Slowins

Maggie Tran

CALL TO WORSHIP

Tony Witts

We are here because we have heard a promise of peace and we have faith its day will come.
We have heard a rumor of justice and we have faith its day will come.
We have heard a whisper of hope and we have faith its day will come.
We have heard a hint of love and we have faith its day will come.
We have heard of the birth of the Christ-child and we have faith his day is here. Welcome to Christmas! Welcome to worship!

HYMN

UMH 242

"Love Came Down At Christmas"

¹ Love came down at Christmas, Love all lovely, Love divine; Love was born at Christmas; star and angels gave the sign.

² Worship we the Godhead, Love incarnate, Love divine; worship we our Jesus, but wherewith for sacred sign?

³ Love shall be our token; love be yours and love be mine; love to God and all men, love for plea and gift and sign.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe in God, the creator and giver of life, who brought all creation to birth, who mothers us and fathers us, protecting, nurturing, and cherishing us.

We believe in Jesus Christ: God born among us as a fragile baby, embodying both love and the need for love, and calling us to rest in God as trustingly as a tiny child.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, breathed into us at our birth, always drawing us on to be born again, encouraging, exhorting, comforting, nourishing our growth and inspiring our living.

GLORIA PATRI

UMH 70

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

RECEIVING GOD’S TITHE AND OUR OFFERINGS

SPECIAL MUSIC

"Go, Tell It On the Mountain"
arr. Norah Duncan IV

CALL TO PRAYER

Take heart. Take heart! The One who calls to you will give you strength and see you through.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Pastor Alan Taylor

LORD’S PRAYER

UMH 895

GATHERING SONG

UMH 217 (vs 3)

"Away In A Manger"

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.

CHILDREN’S MOMENT

Elise Caton

SERMON

Christmas Surprise
John 1:1-3

Bishop Tom Berlin

HYMN

UMH 224

"Good Christian Friends, Rejoice"

¹ Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice; give ye heed to what we say: News, news! Jesus Christ is born today! Ox and ass before him bow, and he is in the manger now. Christ is born today, Christ is born today!

² Good Christian friends, rejoice, with heart and soul and voice; now ye hear of endless bliss: News, news! Jesus Christ was born for this! He hath opened heaven’s door, and ye are blest forevermore. Christ was born for this, Christ was born for this!

³ Good Christian friends, rejoice, with heart and soul and voice; now ye need not fear the grave: News, news! Jesus Christ was born to save! Calls you one and calls you all to gain his everlasting hall. Christ was born to save, Christ was born to save!

BENEDICTION

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

W&S 3154 "Draw the Circle Wide"

Draw the circle wide, draw it wider still. Let this be our song: no one stands alone. Standing side by side. Draw the circle. Draw the circle wide.

POSTLUDE

"Joy to the World"
arr. Geoffrey Stanton

Maggie Tran

WE WELCOME AND AFFIRM THOSE OF EVERY RACE, ETHNICITY, SEXUAL ORIENTATION,
GENDER IDENTITY, SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITION, FAMILY STRUCTURE,
AND MENTAL OR PHYSICAL ABILITY INTO ALL ASPECTS OF THE LIFE OF THIS CONGREGATION.



ALTAR FLOWERS

Today's altar flowers are given by
Kathleen and Ward Ruby in joyful celebration of their 41st wedding anniversary.
and by
Brendan Shortley in celebration of Helping Hand's clients and appreciation to those who support the clinic.

Our 2026 Flower Calendar still has some openings. To reserve a date on the 2026 calendar, you can sign up in the Narthex after worship today, or contact our Altar Flower Coordinator, Carol Morris, by email or text at AltarFlowers@fumcgnv.org or 239-595-6714.

PRAYER CONCERNS

If you have prayers to be lifted up or wish to be part of the team who lifts up prayers, drop an email to prayer@fumcgnv.org or go to <https://fumcgnv.org/PrayerRequest>.

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED THIS WEEK

The church office is closed this week and will re-open under its normal schedule on Monday, January 5, 2026 at 10:00 a.m.

HELPING HANDS MATCH CHALLENGE ENDS 31 DECEMBER

This December, we are celebrating the ministry of our mission partner, Helping Hands Clinic, who serves our community's most vulnerable as their primary source for healthcare. You can support this ministry in 2026 and beyond by participating in the Helping Hands Clinic Annual Holiday Donation Match Challenge where every gift is matched by an anonymous donor!

Donations can be made by check (put "Helping Hands Clinic" in the memo line), or through the First UMC web site at <https://fumcgnv.org/give> and using the Helping Hands 2nd Mile Giving link on the right.

YEAR-END GIVING

We continue to rely on both pledged and non-pledged giving to avoid finishing this year in a financial deficit. Any gift you can make before December 31 to our operating budget would be much appreciated. If there are extenuating circumstances that make giving financially at this time a hardship, we completely understand and are very grateful for each person's connection to our faith family!

MINI-EXHIBIT IN OUR FELLOWSHIP HALL: A JOURNEY FROM ARRIVAL TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY

From 2024, right up until the Presidential Inauguration Day in 2025, the Greater Gainesville International Center worked with the International Rescue Committee to resettle seven refugee families from Afghanistan, Guatemala, Venezuela, and Ukraine here in Gainesville. Experience the journey of these seven families as they work to make Gainesville their new home through the line drawings of Terrence Ho and narrative by Lauren Poe. This mini exhibit will be available for viewing before and after our Christmas Eve services and worship services on December 28 and January 4. The full exhibit can be viewed online at <https://mrhotravel.com/the-story-of-refugee-resettlement>.

"I was a stranger and you welcomed me." ~ Matthew 25:35b

COMMUNION AVAILABLE AFTER WORSHIP TODAY

A brief Service of Holy Communion will be held in the Shaw Memorial Chapel (adjacent to the Fellowship Hall) immediately after worship today. If you'd like to receive this tangible expression of God's grace, please join us. Everyone is welcome!



The light of Jesus shines most brightly when our God-given time and talents are shared in service to others. Learn where you can volunteer by using the QR code above or visit fumcgnv.org/ways-to-serve

WAYS TO SUPPORT OUR MINISTRIES



GIVE BY CHECK

Mail or bring your check to the Church Office
419 NE 1st Street
Gainesville, FL 32601



Have you considered long-term support of our church ministries through our Legacy Endowment Fund? For more details, contact legacy@fumcgnv.org



GIVE ONLINE

use the QR code above or visit fumcgnv.com/GiveOnline or via the First UMC app