

# Christmas Eve

## CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

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### HANDBELL PRELUDE

### CALL TO WORSHIP

L: We have gathered tonight to join the Greatest Story in heaven and earth.

**All: for unto us a Child is born.**

L: The angel's promise interrupted a bridegroom's doubts & despair.

**All: for unto us a Son is given!**

L: A young girl's life changed the world when she opened her life to God.

**All: And he shall be called wonderful Counselor and Mighty God**

L: A baby was born, wrapped in simple cloth and cradled in a manger.

**All: And he shall be called the Prince of Peace.**

L: Two thousand years ago, these words spoke of a different kind of love.

**All: For God so loved the world, He gave his only Son. He has come!**

L: Let us live and let us remember that God is good...

### OPENING PRAYER

*"O Come All Ye Faithful"* UMH 234

### LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

EMMANUEL UMH 204

ANTHEM *"Silent is the Night"* Jay Althouse

THE PROPHECY Isaiah 9:2-7

*"Joy to the World"* UMH 246, (v 1,2,&4)

THE PROCLAMATION Luke 2:8-20

MEDITATION A Christmas Carol

### SHARING OUR GIFTS

Almighty Father, You have already given us so much,  
yet one thing more we ask, a grateful heart. Amen.

Offertory *"Star Over Bethlehem"* Robert J. Powell

Doxology (UMH 95)

ANTHEM *"Night of the Father's Love"* Pepper Choplin

### SHARING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

Tonight we celebrate the coming of the Light of the World. We light each individual candle to proclaim that by accepting Christ, we have also become the bearer of His light and grace in a world consumed with darkness.

**All: Those who bring light to the lives of others cannot keep it from themselves. The light we share is the Light of Christ.**

*"Silent Night"* UMH 239

The emptiness of a people who live in darkness has been filled with a brilliant light whose warmth and radiance captivated the heart and moves the soul; those living in darkness and despair have the hope of *Immanuel*, God with us.

**All: For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given. The spread of his influence and of his peace will never end. By our witness all will know of Christ's arrival.**

Therefore, go out into the world with great joy and share the Light you have been given. And the grace of Bethlehem's Child, the love of the God who never ceases to make all things new, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit who never wearies, will be with you always.

**All: Thanks be to God! Come Lord Jesus, Come! Amen**

POSTLUDE *"From Heaven Above"* Wilbur Held

◆ *Please stand as you are able* **Organist:** Janet Hasty  
Pastor Steve Gedon

*"I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach!"* Charles Dickens, A Christmas Carol

## A Christmas Prayer

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Lord, in this holy season of prayer and song and laughter, we praise you for the great wonders you have sent us: for shining star and angel's song, for an infant's cry in lowly manger and shepherd's stories. We praise you for friends, family, faith and fellowship gathered as one tonight. We praise you for the Word made flesh in a little Child and we have come to behold His glory revealed in the smiles and hearts of the faithful and we are bathed in its radiance.

Be with us on this holy night as we sing the ironies of Christmas, the incomprehensible comprehended, the poetry made alive and vibrant, the helpless child who transform the world with love. We kneel before you as shepherds, innkeepers, wise men and women and travelers through life. Help us to rise bigger than we are. Amen.

## Luke 2:8-20

<sup>8</sup> And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. <sup>9</sup> An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. <sup>11</sup> Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup> This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

<sup>13</sup> Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

<sup>15</sup> When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

<sup>16</sup> So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup> When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, <sup>18</sup> and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

## Isaiah 9

The people walking in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
on those living in the land of deep darkness  
a light has dawned.

<sup>3</sup>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.

<sup>4</sup>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.

<sup>5</sup>Every warrior's boot used in battle  
and every garment rolled in blood  
will be destined for burning,  
will be fuel for the fire.

<sup>6</sup>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.

<sup>7</sup>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.