

THE PASSING OF THE LIGHT

HYMN *“Silent Night”* UMH 239

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 stream 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.

Silent night, holy night, wondrous star, lend thy light;
with the angels let us sing,
Alleluia to our King;
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born!

BENEDICTION Rev. Billy Kurtz

POSTLUDE *“There’s a Song in the Air”* William Elliott



First United Methodist Church
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
December 24, 2023

*PRELUDE *“What Child is This”* William Elliott

*CALL TO WORSHIP
Rejoice, for God is with us - Emmanuel.
In the darkness of our world shines God's holy light.
Now there is reason to hope, to love, to laugh, to live.
God is truly with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God!

* HYMN *“O Come, All Ye Faithful”* (vss 1-4 & 6) UMH 234

*THE LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE William and Cindy Elliott
Reader: 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.
Congregation: 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.
Reader: 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.

(People are seated - all lights are dimmed - DARKNESS)

THE PROPHECY OF THE MESSIAH

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7 & John 1:1-2, 4-5
"Mary Did You Know?" Jacob Stowers

THE BIRTH OF JESUS ANNOUNCED TO MARY AND JOSEPH

Luke 1:26-38 & Matthew 1:18-25
(During the music, Gabriel candle and Mary and Joseph candles are lighted.)
"Holy Is His Name" Pam Rose

THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE BIRTH OF JESUS Luke 2:1-5

HYMN "O Little Town of Bethlehem" UMH 230
O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie;
above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

JESUS IS BORN! Luke 2:6-7
(During the music, the baby Jesus candle is lighted.)
"Heaven's Child" Peg Scott

JESUS' BIRTH ANNOUNCED TO THE SHEPHERDS Luke 2:9-14
(While congregation sings, angel candles are lighted.)

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.

THE SHEPHERDS FIND THE BABY JESUS Luke 2:15-18
(While congregation sings, shepherd candles are lighted.)

HYMN "Angels We Have Heard on High" UMH 238
Come to Bethlehem and see Christ whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee, Christ the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

THE WISE MEN BRING THEIR GIFTS TO JESUS Matthew 2:1-11
(During the music, king candles are lighted.)

HYMN "Mary Sweet Mary" Karla Kurtz

WE OFFER OUR GIFTS TO GOD

OFFERTORY "O Holy Night" The Trio

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE

PRAYER OF CONFESSION and PARDON ALL
Merciful God, we confess that often we find darkness more comfortable than light.
We confess that we find Your good news frightening and unsettling,
especially when we consider its demands as well as its promises.
We confess that Christmas has become more to us than the birthday of the Christ,
partly because we do not want a Christ-child in our lives or in our world.
Forgive us, break us, bend us, remake us.
Give us the courage to lay ourselves open to the wonder and healing of your coming.
Be born again into our world; be born again into our hearts and lives.
Hear now our silent and personal confessions as we prepare ourselves for your nativity.
(All pray in silence.)

PARDON Rev. Billy Kurtz
The true light that enlightens all has come into the world.
That light shines on in the darkness, and the darkness has never been able to put it out.
This is the good news: God has heard our confession. God has forgiven our sin.
Thanks be to God!

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING UMH 12
THE LORD'S PRAYER

BREAKING THE BREAD
GIVING THE BREAD AND CUP

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION All
We are filled with joy
for we have heard good news of great joy.
We are filled with love
for we have tasted the sign of God's great love.
We are filled with hope
for the angels still sing in our world and there is a Light for us to follow.
(All lights are dimmed)