

JOY TO THE WORLD!



Christmas Eve
December 24 11:00pm

Christmas prologue

Welcome to all: happy or sad, rejoicing or grieving, seeking or believing.

Welcome to all, here is good news: to you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

His name is Jesus, which means, “Liberator,” Rescuer,” “Deliverer.”

His life changed the world. His living presence changes us today.

Lift up your hearts. Rejoice! Give thanks to God!

***Christmas Carol O Come, All Ye Faithful vs 1, 3, 6**

UMH 234

***Call to Worship**

God of peace, you hold the nations in your hand,

Yet know and love us all.

By your Spirit, you gather us:

In Christ, you make us one.

As we come together show us who we are,

What we can be,

And where we should go,

Through Jesus Christ our Rescuer, Partner and Friend!

Lighting the Advent Wreath and Christ Candle

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

**O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.**

We light the Christ candle, thankful that God has come to us, not as a conquering hero but as a child, whose faithful, peaceful life will follow God's way of love.

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.**

Unison Prayer:

Living God, come to our world, may the love of Christ shine brightly, at the center of our lives, spreading warmth and light, in us, in this congregation, and everywhere. Amen.

Lesson 1 *Acts 17:22-34a God revealed in Creation*

Our first reading tells of God, spreading time and space, and of ourselves, needing God, in a world gone wrong...Hear now the words of the Apostle Paul, who visits the Greek city of Athens, debates with philosophers, and proclaims the one true God.

Christmas Carol O Little Town of Bethlehem verses 1 and 4 UMH 230

Lesson 2 Psalm 146

Long before Jesus was born, God's Holy Name was revealed to the people of Israel. As descendants of Abraham, Christians, Muslims, and Jews worship One God but each have different stories. Our story as Christians is founded on the story of the Jews because Jesus expressed what his people already knew about God.

From the Psalms - songs of ancient Israel, we learn that God is not only awesome but also active 'not neutral, but involved' not a detached creator, but God among us, longing to see justice done and the humble lifted high.

Christmas Carol Hark! The Herald Angels Sing verses 1 and 3 UMH 240

Lesson 3 Luke 2:1-8

We believe that in Jesus of Nazareth, the Great Holy One, creator of the universe, came to be with us, as one of us, not just to be seen and touched and known, but to do something, to make a difference: to us and to the whole world.

So we shall hear how Jesus was born, what kind of person he became, and what his life reveals to us.

Christmas Carol Away in A Manger UMH 217

Luke continued

Luke 2:8-20

Luke continues the story with a great celebration – the whole heavenly host turned out to celebrate his birth, while his mother committed everything to memory.

All: Glory to God in the Highest!

We give thanks this night for the birth of the Messiah!

Word for Children

Invitation to Sharing Tithes and Offering

***Doxology**

What Child is this verse 3

UMH 219

**So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh, come, peasant, king, to own Him.
The King of Kings salvation brings. Let loving hearts enthrone Him.
This, this is Christ the King whom shepherds guard and angels sing.
Haste, haste to bring him laud the Babe, the Son of Mary.**

Lesson 4

Matthew 14:13b-21

Jesus' story would be a mere blip in history, forgotten long since if it weren't for the great things he did as an adult. Many thought that Jesus' way was not easy, but because he was faithful Jesus ushered in a new way of being...a way based on compassion, justice and love.

Special Music

Seasons of Love

Prayer of Confession and Pardon

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.

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 Sacrament of Holy Communion

You will be invited by the ushers to move to one of the communion stations to receive a piece of bread which you will then dip in the cup and partake. As you come forward for communion, you're invited to bring a strip of cloth to lay in the manger, to make room for Emmanuel, God with us.

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.**

Prayer after Receiving Communion

**May the Christ who by his Incarnation gathered into One
all things both earthly and heavenly, fill us with the sweetness
of inward peace and goodwill. Amen**

Candlelight and Silent Night

UMH 239

Closing Prayer

Benediction

**By the tender mercy of our God
love has broken upon us!
Light is given where once there was darkness
and hope where there was only death.
We go into this season knowing
that God will guide our feet into the way of peace.
And for this reason we are able to repeat the sounding Joy!**

***Closing Hymn**

Joy to the World!

UMH 246

Poinsettia's given to the glory of God by:

Deb Brastrom in memory of Ike and Ruthie Vande Weerd

Denise Vierling and Dawn & Darcy Vande Weerd.

Debbie Carter and Family in memory of Jim Carter.

Deborah Coble in memory of Jay and Elinor-Ann L. Coble,
Elinor Jo Davis and Alan Wise.



Thank you to all who shared their gifts today!

Learn more about us online: NLFirstUMChurch