



December 24, 2023 ★ 10:00am
First United Methodist Church, Duluth, MN

*At the end of the service, the lights will be dimmed and candles will be lit.
 Both battery-operated and wax candles are available at the entrance to the Sanctuary.
 Pastor Jeanine will give instructions on how to "pass the flame."*

Prelude *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* arr. Molly Ijames
 Appalachian Carol arr. Molly Ijames
 Rebecca Peterson, cello; Velda Graham Bell, piano

Greeting Pastor Jeanine Alexander

*** Call to Worship** *Christmas Eve Affirmation*

*** Carol** *Joy to the World* UM Hymnal #246; v. 1, 2, 4

Lighting of the Christ Candle Carla and Rick Egge
 Today is the Eve of Christ's birth! Our time of waiting and preparing has brought us here. We relight the candles of HOPE, LOVE, JOY, and PEACE. Today we light the CHRIST CANDLE as we sing together:

Angels we have heard on high sweetly singing o'er the plains (UM Hymnal #238; v. 1)
And the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Children's Message

Children will remain in worship this morning. Activity bags are available in the back of the Sanctuary. A nursery is available for children 5 and under.

Unison Prayer

Pastor Jeanine Alexander

O God, you have brought us again to this very special time when we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Let the words of Scripture tell us the old, yet ever new, story. Let the carols take us back to see again the wonder and mystery of your coming. Enable our human minds to comprehend some of the glory of the divine event. In the name of our Savior, we pray. Amen!

Special Music *Welcome to Our World*

Chris Rice

Tapestry; Leah and Corey Hulst, directors

Scripture Readings

Carla Egge

Isaiah 9:6-7

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. Of the increase 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.

Luke 2:1-19

One: And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria.

All: **So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.**

One: Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. So it was that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered.

All: **And she brought forth her firstborn Son, wrapped Him in swaddling cloths and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.**

One: Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them:

All: **"Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."**

One: And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

All: **"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill to all people!"**

One: So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another:

All: **"Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us."**

One: They came with haste and found Mary, Joseph and the Babe lying in a manger.

All: **When they had seen the Babe, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child.**

One: And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.

Christmas Prayer

Offering

Special Music *See Amid the Winter Snow* arr. Larry Sue
Libby Gaalaas and Derek Bromme, handbell duet

Meditation *LO...God is Here with Us* Pastor Jeanine Alexander

*** Carol** *O Little Town of Bethlehem* UM Hymnal #230; v. 1, 4

Unison Prayer

Strong and tender God, one candle can pierce a thousand darknesses, one flickering light can kindle new vision, one voice on fire can set our hearts ablaze. Passionate and gentle God, you are the source of light, and we are your many candles, each uniquely burning for you. Touch us. Light us. Warm us. Purify us. May a flame rise in us and burn bright in us this holy and fiery night. In the name of Jesus, the newborn king, we pray. Amen.

*** Carol of Blessing** *Silent Night, Holy Night* UM Hymnal #239

* Benediction

Postlude *I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day* Casting Crowns
Tapestry; Leah and Corey Hulst, directors

* Please stand as you are comfortable



Thank you to:

usher: Allen Anway

ushers/candle stewards: Lynn Bode; Karen, Jeremy, Jacob and Nik Jeannette

online host: Maryjane Burdge

nursery: Jamie Ehresman

Upcoming Worship Services:

Sunday, December 31 – New Year's Eve service at 10:00am (in person, livestreamed or on YouTube afterwards). Sermon: "Dear 8-pound, 6-ounce Baby Jesus" by guest preacher: Brandon Veale.

Sunday, January 7 - 10:00am (in person, livestreamed or on YouTube afterwards). Sermon: "The Lion King."

Guest WIFI Network: FirstUnitedPublic. Password: Public2022.

Thank you to Alex Flinner, Tommy Kishida and the Livestream Team for making the online service possible.

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