



Christmas Eve Service



December 24, 2022

Rev. Lura Kidner-Miesen, Pastor
Eric McKirdy, Organist & Music Director
Jason Caffarella, Choir Director

Worship Notes: Unison responses are in bold type. An asterisk (*) shows where you may stand if you wish.

Welcome!

Prelude

Fantasia on 'Veni, Veni Emmanuel'
—Leo Sowerby

Call to Worship

Lisa Bjornstad

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.

As the innkeeper of old, let us also make room in our hearts for the gifts of peace, light and love.

Thanks be to God!

***Hymn:** *O Come, All Ye Faithful*

UMH #234

Prayer

Pastor Lura

Gracious God,

With joy and thanksgiving we gather as your people.

We have come to hear again the timeless story of Christ's birth.

In the excitement of this night, quiet our hearts

that we may know the peace and fullness of this holy time.

Tonight we open our hearts and minds to make room for the Christ child.

Throughout our lives, O God, help us keep the Christ child in our hearts. Sing, O angels, in the stillness of our hearts,

"Glory to God in the highest, and peace to all on earth."

This we pray in the name of the Child of Bethlehem. Amen.

Anthem: *On This Christmas Night*

Chancel Choir

Lighting of the Candles

Tonight, on the eve of Christmas, we rekindle the candles of expectation, preparation, joy, and also the candle of Christ's presence. And after weeks of expectation and preparation, tonight we light the Christ candle at last. All people on earth who once walked in darkness now see a great light!

The Light of God shines on us tonight.

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

The Light of God shines on us tonight.

His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David

and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore.

The Light of God shines on us tonight.

Anthem: *Come, Redeemer of the Nation*

Chancel Choir

Scripture:

Luke 2:1-7

Anthem: *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

Chancel Choir

Scripture:

Luke 2:8-14

Anthem: *Cold the Winter*

Chancel Choir

Message: "Making Room for the Christ Child"

Pastor Lura

***Hymn:** *The First Noel*

UMH #245

Prayer

Pastor: Let us pray. Good and gracious God, on this holy night you gave us your Son, the Lord of the universe, wrapped in swaddling clothes, the Savior of all, lying in a manger. We now open the rooms in our hearts to Christlike love as we pray.

Liturgist: On this holy night draw us into the mystery of your love. Join our voices with the heavenly host, that we may sing your glory on high. Give us a place among the shepherds, that we may find the one for whom we have waited, Jesus Christ, your Word made flesh, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, in the splendor of eternal light, God forever and ever.

Pastor: On this holy night in which God joins heaven and earth, let us make room in our lives for the church, the world, and all those in need. Let us create room in our lives to be the hands of Christ to those around us. Bless all those who are entrusted with Christian ministry that your Word might be proclaimed with truth and courage across our world.

Liturgist: Bestow your wisdom on all who govern, that in honoring the earth and its diverse races, cultures, and religions, we may celebrate the light of this holy night.

Pastor: Grant reconciliation to those facing conflict and violence, that they may live in the peace of this holy night. Let us pray for all who are cold, hungry, or alone this night. Embrace with your tender care all who wander alone or have no place to lay their head, that they may experience the hope of this holy night.

Liturgist: Let us pray for all who are anxious, depressed, or ill. Draw near to those who find this season a source of pain or grief, and to all who are suffering or sick, especially those we remember in our own hearts . . . that they may feel the comfort of this holy night.

Pastor: Let us pray for parents, families, and newborn infants. Strengthen all families of all descriptions in the bonds of love and commitment, that they may delight in the joy of this holy night.

Liturgist: Let us pray for ourselves and for the blessings of Christmas. Open our hearts to your presence, that we may be transformed by the new birth of this holy night.

Pastor: All these things and whatever else you see that we need, grant us, O God, for the sake of him who died and rose again, and now lives and reigns within the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

The Passing of the Light

At Christmas we make room for Christ to come into our lives. The flame represents the light of Christ who comes to you. When you pass the flame, you symbolize how the light of Christ is passed from person to person. When passing the flame, hold the lit candle upright and tilt the unlit candle into the flame. At the conclusion of the service please extinguish your candle in a safe manner and place it in the basket as you leave.

***Hymn:** *Silent Night*

UMH #239

Closing Blessing

Pastor Lura

The true light that enlightens all has come into the world. Let us now open our hearts to receive Him. Let earth receive her king! Amen.

Postlude



Announcements:

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

We extend a warm welcome to our visitors and invite you to join us for worship online through Facebook, YouTube or in-person on Sundays at 10:30 a.m. On December 25 there will be no morning service. Instead, we will meet at 7 p.m. for *Richer by One Christmas*, a radio theater presentation that was first presented on December 24, 1955.

Christmas Eve Offering

Our Christmas Eve offering will go to Fish of Albany. Each year Fish helps thousands of people in need. You may donate through our website at albanymethodist.org, make your check out to the church and note that it is for Fish, or place your offering in the plate as you leave the in-person service.

