

CELEBRATION OF ADVENT



*Gathering as God's people
to be inspired to live as a community of Christ*
+ Those who are able are invited to stand.
UMH-United Methodist Hymnal FWS—Faith We Sing
You are invited to respond with the **Bold** responses.

THE CHURCH GATHERS TO WORSHIP

THE MOMENTS OF CENTERING

Let the stable still astonish:

Straw-dirt floor, dull eyes, Dusty flanks of donkeys,
oxen; Crumbling, crooked walls; No bed to carry that
pain, And then, the child, Rag-wrapped, laid to cry In
a trough.

Who would have chosen this?

Who would have said: “Yes, Let the God of all the
heavens and earth be born here, in this place.”?

Who but the same God Who stands in the darker,
fouler rooms of our hearts and says, “Yes, let the God
of Heaven and Earth be born here — in this place.”

“Let the Stable Still Astonish” by Leslie Leyland Fields

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

Renee Warner

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND HOSPITALITY

PRELUDE

Dan Martin

SERVICE OF LIGHT

The Acolytes

Jesus said, “I am the Light of the world.”

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Light the first three candles of the Advent wreath.

After the angel came to Mary and told her that she
would conceive the child in her womb and would call
him Jesus, Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the
Lord; let it be with me according to your word.

And Mary sings her Song of Praise:

...My soul magnifies the Lord

...he has scattered the proud

...He has brought down the powerful from their
thrones

...He has lifted up the lowly

...He has filled the hungry

...He has provided for the poor.

We marvel at Mary, the mother of the Messiah, herself
a single, teenaged mother, herself poor and powerless.
But she understood that the baby she would call Jesus
was sent, not just to her, but to the world...

...To the hungry

...To the weak

...To the very young and the very old

...To those who suffer or are in pain

Light the fourth candle of the Advent wreath.

We light this fourth candle to remember Mary, the
mother of Jesus. May the light of this candle also
remind us that the light of Jesus shines for everyone.

Come, Lord Jesus, come!

OPENING PRAYER

Unison

**Lord, be with us this morning as we encounter the
wondrous news. Remind us that each one of us is a
bearer of your Good News. We are called to
proclaim hope, peace, joy, and love in your name.
Open our hearts and our spirits today to receive
with great joy and through a child's eye, the love
that you have for us. For we ask this in Jesus'
Name. Amen.**

+HYMN OF PRAISE

UMH 211

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, vv. 1, 6, 7

THE CHURCH AFFIRMS ITS FAITH

GOSPEL LESSON

Luke:46-55

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Unison

**We are an Advent people, a people of hope.
For us, Advent is a time of waiting, and so we wait.
We wait for the coming of the One who is the
fulfillment of God's promise,
the fulfillment of hope, the declaration that we
have been redeemed.**

Even so, we are not naïve people.

**We know that the world in which we live will
continue to be filled with pain and sorrow.
We know that hatred and violence will continue to
exist.**

**We know that death and separation will continue
to be a part of our lives.**

**But because we are an Advent people, we know
that none of these things will win in the end.**

**The Holy One is coming, to make holy once again
all that was, is, and ever will be.**

**And in our waiting and our hoping, we work and
worship, pray and play, in all things hoping that
peace, love and joy will reign in our lives and in our
world, now and forever.**

RESPONSE

UMH 210

All Earth Is Waiting, vv. 3, 4

THE CHURCH RESPONDS WITH GIFTS

OFFERTORY INVITATION

In response to the news that she would bear God's
Son, Mary offered herself as God's servant, and then
sang a song celebrating her selection to help bring
God's realm on earth. We have been chosen to
continue to build up the kingdom of God, so we, too,
have reason to celebrate. Let us now offer these

symbols of our gratitude, confident that God's promises will be fulfilled through the ministries supported by our gifts.

PRAYER *Responsively*
Dear God, you blessed Mary by making her the mother of your only Son, Jesus Christ. You have blessed us, as well, with the gift of your Son, and indeed, with the gift of life itself. Out of all these blessings, we give you back these offerings this day.

Knowing that your promises will be fulfilled, we pledge our lives to you in anticipation of the coming of the One who brings us peace. Amen.

OFFERTORY *Dan Martin*

+DOXOLOGY *In the Bleak Midwinter, v.4. UMH 221*

**What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
if I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;
yet what I can I give him: give my heart.**

ANTHEM *Chancel Choir*



A CELEBRATION OF THE NATIVITY

FIRST UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH
CHILDREN AND
YOUTH

THANK YOU TO THE CHILDREN AND YOUTH,
PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS, AND LEADERS FOR
TELLING THE NATIVITY STORY IN YOUR OWN
SPECIAL AND TREASURED WAY.

+HYMN OF DEDICATION *UMH 246*
Joy to the World, vv. 1,3,4

+CLOSING PRAYER
Go with the love of God, who extends mercy from generation to generation.
Go with the illumination of the Holy Spirit, who prepares us for the coming of our Lord.
Go with the peace of the Christ child, who comes to partner with us to bring the kingdom that will never end. **Amen.**

+POSTLUDE *Dan Martin*

...and the worship continues.

