Christmas Eve

DECEMBER 24, 2019
6:00, 8:00, AND 11:00 P.M.

First United Methodist Church
A U S T I N
Transformation Happens Here

www.fumcaustin.org
GATHERING AS THE CHURCH
Asterisks (*) indicate an invitation to stand as you are able.

OPENING MUSIC

INTROIT

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

Good Christian friends,
rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
give ye heed to what we say:
News, news! Jesus Christ is born today!
Ox and ass before him bow,
and he is in the manger now.
Christ is born today!
Good Christian friends,
rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
now ye hear of endless bliss:
News, news! Jesus Christ was born for this!
He hath opened heaven’s door,
and ye are blest forevermore.
Christ was born for this!

14th cent. Latin; trans. by John Mason Neale

*CALL TO WORSHIP*

If you are like Joseph,
and you are seeking truth,
there is room here for you.
If you are like Mary,
and you are seeking rest,
there is a seat here for you.
If you are like the wise men,
and you are looking for a sign,
these candles are here for you.
If you are like the angels,
and you cannot help but sing,
there is a melody here for you.
Come in.
You are in God’s house.
Love was born tonight,
and there is love here for you.
Let us worship the God of love.
OPENING CAROL

O Come, All Ye Faithful

Words: John Francis Wade; translation by Frederick Oakeley and others
Music: ADESTE FIDELES; present form of melody attributed to John Francis Wade; harmonization The English Hymnal, 1906

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES

OPENING PRAYER

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.

Shine, O Light, in the darkness of our world.

Sing, O angels, in the stillness of our hearts,

“Glory to God in the highest,

and on earth peace among those God favors.”

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

Amen.
O holy night! the stars are brightly shining,  
it is the night of the dear Savior’s birth.  
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,  
till he appeared, and the soul felt its worth.  
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices,  
for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.  
Fall on your knees! Oh, hear the angel voices!  
O night divine! O night when Christ was born!  
Truly he taught us to love one another;  
his law is love and his gospel is peace.  
Chains shall he break, for the slave is our brother,  
and in his name all oppression shall cease.  
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we,  
let all within us praise his holy name.  
Christ is the Lord, then ever, ever praise we.  
His power and glory evermore proclaim.  

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THE CHRISTMAS STORY

LUKE 2:1-5  
In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.

All sing:  
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.

LUKE 2:6-7  
While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

All sing:  
Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,  
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.  
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay,  
the little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

LUKE 2:8-12  
In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see— I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.”
All sing:
The first Noel the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,
born is the King of Israel.

LUKE 2:13-14
And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God
and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom
he favors!”

All sing:
Angels we have heard on high
sweetly singing o’er the plains,
and the mountains in reply
echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

LUKE 2:15-20
When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another,
“Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has
made known to us.” So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying
in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this
child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured
all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and
praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

All sing, standing:
Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing.
No more let sins and sorrows grow,
nor thorns infest the ground;
he comes to make his blessings flow
far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found.

WELCOME

SERMON

God Can’t Wait
INVITATION TO THE TABLE

Tonight you are invited to meet the Christ Child in this Holy Feast and therein to have your deepest hunger satisfied. Everyone, without exception, is invited to come to the Lord’s Table. You don’t have to be a member of a church to come; all are welcome!

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of kings and shepherds,
   God of teenage mothers and step-parents,
   God of angel choruses and starlight—
   we confess to waiting.
We have waited to extend grace.
We have waited to say, “I love you.”
We have waited to apologize.
We have waited to seek justice,
   choosing comfort and convenience over the needs of our neighbors.
We have waited—
   waited for someone else to make a move,
   waited for a sign,
   waited until it was our issue.
You ask us to be the body of Christ,
   but in many ways, we have waited.
Forgive us.
Change us.
Remind us of your love for this world, which can’t wait.
In your name we pray.
Amen.

Prayerfully sing:

Words: Phillips Brooks
Music: ST. LOUIS - Lewis H. Redner
OFFERING OUR GIFTS TO GOD

To our guests: Your presence today is itself a gift to God and to this church. Please do not feel obligated to make an offering. We believe that all we have and all we are is a gift from God, and so we give joyfully to participate in God’s good work in the world. If you would like to support the ongoing ministry of First United Methodist Church, simply place your offering in the plate as it is passed. If you would like to join our Christmas Offering to support a full renovation of our Family Life Center Kitchen, be sure to write “Christmas Offering” on your gift.

OFFERTORY

Christmas Day

Gustav Holst

Good Christian friends, rejoice, with heart, and soul, and voice;
give ye heed to what we say:
  News, news! Jesus Christ is born today!
Ox and ass before him bow, and he is in the manger now.
Christ is born today!
In joy and adoration we sing of Jesus’ birth!
For Christ our Holy Savior was born upon this day,
  to save us all from woe and sin, when we were gone astray.
O tidings of comfort and joy.
In Bethlehem, in Judea, this blessed babe was born,
  and laid within a manger, upon that holy morn;
  the which his mother Mary, did nothing take in scorn.
O tidings of comfort and joy.
Good Christian friends, rejoice, with heart, and soul, and voice;
  now ye hear of endless bliss: Joy! Jesus Christ was born for this!
He hath opened the heavenly door, and we are blessed evermore.
Christ was born for this!
Now to the Lord sing praises, all you within this place,
  and with true love and charity each other now embrace;
this holy tide of Christmas doth bring redeeming grace.
O tidings of comfort and joy.
  Good Christian friends, rejoice, with heart, and soul, and voice;
  now ye need not fear the grave: Peace! Peace!
Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one, and calls you all, to gain his everlasting hall:
Christ was born to save!

God Rest You Merry: 18th cent. London carol
PRESENTATION SONG  Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

Words: Thomas Ken and William C. Dix, alt.
Music: GREENSLEEVES - 16th cent. English melody

* THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The pastor gives thanks for the gift of the Christ Child and the mystery of the Incarnation.

And so,

we bow before the wonder of your incarnation
and join with the heavenly host in their unending hymn,
praising and glorifying you, singing:
Words: Unknown origin, revised by Daniel Benedict and Dean McIntyre

Music: GLORIA - French carol melody

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The congregation may be seated. The pastor gives thanks for the Lord’s Supper, invokes the Holy Spirit upon this meal, and concludes:

Through your Son Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church,
all honor and glory is yours, Almighty God,
now and forever.

Amen.

All sing:
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.

GIVING THE BREAD AND CUP

We will commune by “intinction,” i.e., the minister will place the bread in your open hand, saying, “The body of Christ given for you,” to which you respond, “Amen.” You will then move to the server with the cup, dip the bread lightly in the cup, and eat.

There will be four serving stations at the front. Those in the two center sections will come forward by the center aisle and return by the side aisles. Those in the far right and left sections will come by the side aisle and return to their seats by the aisle along the windows. You may kneel for prayer at the altar rail or return to your seat. Those unable to come to the front may have the Sacrament brought to them. Please signify this desire to an usher.

COMMUNION HYMNS

240       Hark! the Herald Angels Sing
228       He Is Born
219       What Child Is This
229       Infant Holy, Infant Lowly
221       In the Bleak Midwinter
SPREADING THE LIGHT

* CLOSING PRAYER

O God,

you have made this night radiant
with the splendor of the true Light, Jesus Christ.

May the Light of Him who was born the Prince of Peace
shine in our lives and keep us in his perfect peace,
tonight and always. Amen.

* CLOSING CAROL

Silent Night, Holy Night

Words: Joseph Mohr, alt. stanzas 1, 2, 3, translated by John F. Young; stanza 4 translated unknown
Music: STILLE NACHT - Franz Gruber

After the pastors carry the light out, the congregation may leave quietly. As we leave tonight, we carry the light of Christ into the world with songs of faith on our lips and love of God in our hearts.
WORSHIP LEADERS

Preacher
Reverend Taylor Fuerst

Liturgists
Reverend Cathy Stone
Dr. Brad King

Music Director/Organist
Scott Davis

6:00 and 8:00 p.m. Soloists
Mario Contreras
Christina Whitford

11:00 p.m. Cantor
Christina Whitford