



WELCOME

PRELUDE Now Sing We, Now Rejoice arr. Zachau

CALL TO WORSHIP

Come, my Light, and illumine my darkness. Come, my Life, and revive me from death. Come, my Physician, and heal my wounds.

Star Child

Come, Flame of divine love, and burn up the thorns of my sins, kindling my heart with the flame of thy love. Come, my King, sit upon the throne of my heart and reign there, for thou alone art my King and my Lord. —Saint Dimitri of Rostov, 17th century,

HYMN

TFWS no. 2095

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of life, through your grace Jesus Christ has illumined our lives and all the world with his light. Yet we turn away from him, more comfortable living in our own darkness. Have mercy upon us. Forgive us for the foolishness that prevents us from leaving our familiar shadows. Help us to trust in your goodness, and empower us with your truth to live as children of light.

SILENT CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Sleeper, awake! Rise from the deadness of your sin! In Jesus Christ, the past is finished; everything has become new!

Christ's light shines upon us! Thank you, Jesus. Amen.

SIGNS OF PEACE AND UNITY IN CHRIST

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES

We light the first candle, reminding us of God's promise of peace on earth.

Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to a king's son. May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice. May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth.

In his days may righteousness flourish and peace abound, until the moon is no more.

Let us pray: O God, we remember that you sent Jesus to be a shepherd, servant, and king to the poor and

those in need. We remember that Jesus healed the sick, comforted those who mourned, and went out of his way to love little children. Lord, may the light of this second candle, as it dispels the darkness around it, help to remind us that we are to dispel the darkness of sickness and suffering all around us.

[The second candle is lit.]

Sung Response no. 218, vs. 3

And ye, beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low, who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow, Look now! For glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing. O rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing.

And we all said together the plea of the ages: Come, Lord Jesus, come. Amen.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE Matthew 2:1-12 In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet: 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah, for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.' " Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child

with Mary his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

PASSING OF THE FRIENDSHIP FOLDERS

MESSAGE FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS

MUSIC

Advent Meditation Liebergen

O holy child, blessed child, bring us Thy peace and love. Alleluia, alleluia, Lord, bring us peace; Alleluia, alleluia, Lord, bring us peace.

Emanuel, Son of God, come to the manger stall. Alleluia, alleluia, Lord, bring us peace; Alleluia, alleluia, Lord, bring us peace.

Chancel Choir

Dona nobis pacem. Pacem. Dona nobis pacem.

SCRIPTURE Matthew 2:13-18

Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son." When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the magi. Then what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."

HYMN Why, Herod, Unrelenting Foe Martin Luther (tune: no. 213)

Why, Herod, unrelenting foe, Doth the Lord's coming move thee so? He doth no earthly kingdom seek Who brings his kingdom to the meek.

Led by the star, the wise men find The Light that lightens all mankind; The threefold presents which they bring Declare him God, and Man, and King.

In Jordan's sacred waters stood The meek and heavenly Lamb of God, And he who did no sin, thereby Cleansed us from all iniquity!

All honor unto Christ be paid, Pure offspring of the holy maid, With Father and with Holy Ghost, Till time in endless time be lost. MESSAGE Herod- The Empire Strikes Back

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Holy Lord, we have pulled out the Advent wreath, the Christmas tree and the poinsettias. We are dusting off the hymns, unsung for a year, and retelling the words of your prophets and your people about the birth of your son Jesus. In the midst of all the busyness of the season, we now take this time to pause and lift up our prayers. In peace, we pray to you:

Silence

for all people in their daily life and work;

for our families, friends, and neighbors, and for those who are alone.

For this community, the nation, and the world; for all who work for justice, freedom, and peace.

For the wise use of your creation;

for those who live in troubled lands.

For all who mourn and all with health concerns, for those who care for the sick, the friendless, and the needy.

For the peace and unity of your people;

for all who proclaim the Gospel, and all who seek the Truth. For all who love Jesus and serve him in the Church. For the needs and concerns of this congregation...

Silence

Hear us, Lord; for your mercy is great. Amen.

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.

OFFERING

You may give your offering by text-Text UMCWC \$50 to 73256, by using the QR code on your screen, at <u>umcwc.org</u>, through the mail, by automated giving through Realm, or by dropping it off at our office. Thank you for your generosity. Your offering honors God and helps us bring light, justice, and peace in a dark world.

OFFERING VIDEO

United Methodist Beacon on Capital Hill

OFFERING RESPONSE

no. 296, vs. 5

Unto God be praise and glory: to the Father and the Son, to th'eternal Spirit honor now and evermore be done; praise and glory in the highest, while unending ages run.

OFFERING PRAYER

We offer our gifts with gratitude that you have blessed us with plenty to share with others.

As we dedicate our gifts to you, gracious God, we dedicate our lives to living as your Kingdom people. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

HYMN

BENEDICTION

May God's Holy Light lead us in the way of goodness, righteousness and truth, and send us into the world to show forth the power of the Light.

As we walk through this dark and painful world may the Lord give us strength for the journey. Amen.

POSTLUDE Hark! the Herald Angels Sing Mendelssohn/Gehrke

Bold text indicates congregational response.

The flowers on the Lord's Table are presented to the glory of God in loving memory of Kenneth "Buzz" Reid by Marion Reid.

WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS

Message: Rev. Dr. Truman Brooks Liturgists: Rev. Mercedes Case, Rev. Allen Keller Reader: Curtis Gainer Organist: Steve Campitelli Chancel Choir Director: Joe Buglio Children's Message: Kristi Largoza Acolyte: Eric Clark Lighting the Advent Candles: The Kegelman Family Live Stream Team: Tim Case, Holly Grimm, Todd Grimm, Jake Joslin, Heidi Krug, Brad Rush,

Zeke Shappell Smith, Cory Smith (leader)

Thoughts About Herod

-God did everything necessary to get Herod's attention. He sent messengers from the East and a message from the Torah. He sent wonders from the sky and words from Scripture. He sent the testimony of the heavens and the teaching of the prophets. But Herod refused to listen. He chose his puny dynasty over Christ. He died a miserable old man. -Max Lucado

Thoughts about Evil

- Fear only two: God, and the man who has no fear of God. -Hasidic Proverb

- Evil (ignorance) is like a shadow. It has no real substance of its own, it is simply a lack of light. You cannot cause a shadow to disappear by trying to fight it, stamp on it, by railing against it, or any other form of emotional or physical resistance. In order to cause a shadow to disappear, you must shine light on it. -Shakti Gawain - As human beings we have the most extraordinary capacity for evil. We can perpetrate some of the most horrendous atrocities. -Desmond Tutu - The real problem is in the hearts and minds of men. It is easier to denature plutonium than to denature the evil spirit of man. -Albert Einstein - If a man devotes himself to art, much evil is avoided that happens otherwise if one is idle. -Albrecht Durer

- When you choose the lesser of two evils, always remember that it is still an evil. -Max Lerner



Refugee by Malcolm Guite

We think of him as safe beneath the steeple, Or cozy in a crib beside the font, But he is with a million displaced people On the long road of weariness and want.

For even as we sing our final carol His family is up and on that road, Fleeing the wrath of someone else's quarrel, Glancing behind and shouldering their load.

Whilst Herod rages still from his dark tower Christ clings to Mary, fingers tightly curled, The lambs are slaughtered by the men of power, And death squads spread their curse across the world.

But every Herod dies, and comes alone To stand before the Lamb upon the throne.

5 Ways to Experience Christmas Joy When You're Unhappy

On the first Christmas, the angel who announced Jesus' birth declared: "...I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people..." (Luke 2:10). You can experience Christmas joy even in the midst of unhappiness. Here's how:

1. Learn from those who experienced the original Christmas. Listen to the Christmas story. Understand their hardships and stress. See how they trusted God and found comfort, peace, and joy.

2. Give and receive forgiveness. Carrying around bitterness in your soul will make you unhappy. Thankfully, forgiveness frees you from bitterness.

3. Do something creative. Creativity leads to joy because it points you toward the Creator who gave you the ability to be creative. Which activities help you express your God-given creativity the most? Music? Cooking? Writing? Do them.

4. Pursue wonder. Wonder enlarges your perspective so you can notice more of God's work in your life, which gives you reasons to celebrate! Stay in frequent contact with God during each day and night, through prayer. You'll discover lots of wonder this Christmas that will bring joy into your life.

5. Serve others. Turn your struggle with unhappiness into service to people in need this Christmas season. In the process, your focus will change from a preoccupation with your own problems to joy as God works through you to change the world for the better. -Crosswalk.com