

AN ORDER OF CELEBRATION FOR THE GATHERED COMMUNITY

Woodridge United Methodist Church

Sunday, December 29th, 2024

1st Sunday in Christmas

Prelude

Lighting of the Altar Candles

Welcome and Announcements

***Call to Worship**

Gwenn Edman: We worship the Lord with gladness; we come before God with joyful songs. Let us sing and praise the Lord our God together!

"When in Our Music God Is Glorified" (*verses 1 & 5*)

UMH #68

Opening Prayer

Gwenn Edman: Eternal God, by the birth of Jesus Christ you gave yourself to the world. Grant that, being born in our hearts, he may save us from all our sins, and restore within us the image and likeness of our Creator, to whom be everlasting praise and glory, world without end.

All: Amen!

Sung Prayers of Confession

Gwenn Edman: Lord, we confess that we grow weary on the journey of faith. We lose sight of your love for us and flag in showing love to others. Today, we take refuge in the promise of your forgiving love.

"There Is a Balm in Gilead" (*verse 1*)

UMH #375

Gwenn Edman: Lord, we come confessing what we have done and left undone. Our hearts have wandered; we have given our praise to idols. Forgive us, heal us, and make us whole.

"Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing" (*verses 1 & 3*)

UMH #400

Assurance of Pardon

Gwenn Edman: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; God's mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning, even for us. We rest in the pardon and provision of our gracious God. Friends, know that we are forgiven and be at peace.

"Great Is Thy Faithfulness" (*verses 1 & 3*)

UMH #140

***Passing the Peace**

Gwenn Edman: Called to put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, let us greet one another with words of mercy, love, and peace.

Invitation to the Offering

Gwenn Edman: Bring your gifts and bring your love to honor the King of love.

Many Voices: Bring your worship and bring your praise to pay homage to Christ Jesus, our King.

*Doxology

*Offering Prayer

All: God of Generosity, may your peace and your love seep into our hearts and our offerings, that we might become shining examples of your light in a dark and hurting world. Thank you for your many gifts – this gift of community, the enthusiasm for learning, the power of generosity, and the gift of love. May our gifts and our very lives bring your blessings to the world. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Sermon in Songs

Opening Our Hearts to God

Psalm 86:11 (*NRSVue*): "Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart to revere your name."

"Be Thou My Vision" (*verses 1 & 2*)

UMH #451

Giving Thanks for God's Steadfast Love and Provision

John 6:35 (*NRSVue*): "Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

Hebrews 13:5-6 (*NRSVue*): "Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have, for he himself has said, "I will never leave you or forsake you." So we can say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?"

"Give Thanks"

TFWS #2036

Praising God

Psalm 100:1-5 (*NRSVue*): "Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness; come into the Lord's presence with singing. Know that the Lord is God. It is the Lord, who made us, and we are God's; we are God's people, and the sheep of the Lord's pasture. Enter the gates of the Lord with thanksgiving, and God's courts with praise. Give thanks to God, bless the name of the Lord. For the Lord is good; God's steadfast love endures forever, and God's faithfulness to all generations."

"Every Time I Feel the Spirit"

UMH #404

Hearing God's Call to Share Good News

Ephesians 2:8-10 (*NRSVue*): "By grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what God has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we may walk in them."

"Shine, Jesus, Shine" (*verses 1 & 2*)

TFWS #2173

Joys & Concerns

"What a Friend We Have in Jesus" (*verses 1 & 2*)

UMH #526

Lord's Prayer

Going into the World

Isaiah 61:1-2 (*NRSVue*): "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me; God has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn."

"Together We Serve" (*verses 1 & 4*)

TFWS #2175

Litany of Thanksgiving

Gwenn Edman: O God, You have been gracious to us through all the years of our lives. We thank you for your loving care, which has filled our days and brought us to this time and place.

Many Voices: We praise your holy name, O God.

Gwenn Edman: You have given us life and reason and set us in a world filled with your glory and grace. You have comforted us with family and friends and ministered to us through the hands of our siblings in Christ Jesus.

Many Voices: We praise your holy name, O God.

Gwenn Edman: You have filled our hearts with a hunger after you and have given us your peace. You have redeemed us and called us to a high calling in Christ Jesus. You have given us a place in the fellowship of your Spirit and the witness of your Church.

Many Voices: We praise your holy name, O God.

Gwenn Edman: You have been our light in darkness and a rock of strength in adversity and temptation. You have been the very Spirit of joy in our joys and the all-sufficient reward in all our labors.

Many Voices: We praise your holy name, O God.

Gwenn Edman: You remembered us when we forgot you. You followed us even when we tried to flee from you. You met us with forgiveness when we returned to you. For all your patience and overflowing grace.

Many Voices: We praise your holy name and give thanks, O God. Amen.

Benediction

Gwenn Edman: As you leave this sacred space, go with an excitement to share all you have learned at the feet of Jesus. Go in peace and love.

Many Voices: Amen!

Postlude