

PEOPLE: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are opened, all desires known and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts, through the presence of the Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

HOLY COMMUNION

(As you come forward, receive the bread and dip it into the cup continuing to the altar for prayer.)

***CONGREGATIONAL CANDLE LIGHTING**

Pastor: "[Christ] gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it" (John 1: 4-5).
(Pastor lights his candle from the Christ candle)

Pastor: The light which has entered our darkness cannot be extinguished! Receive the Light and Live for Him: Shine on as His disciples!

PEOPLE: The Christ child—we welcome. The Light—we receive. We will shine on as His disciples.

(When all have lit candles we will sing "Silent Night" followed by on verse of "Joy to the World")

***HYMN** *"Silent Night"* No. 239

(As we begin singing, follow the ministers outside to the sidewalks in front of the church)

"Joy to the World" (1st vs.) No. 246

***BENEDICTION**

Pastor: The One who is God, who was born as a Babe that long-ago night, reflects the light of His Father's love to you now. Receive the love—and pass it on! And may God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, bless you all with a very Merry Christmas.



December 24, 2017

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

December 24, 2017

Bethlehem United Methodist Church---6:00 pm

Rev. Michael Swofford and Rev. Melissa Swofford, Pastors

PRELUDE

INVOCATION

Our glorious God, you sent your Son into our world to show us who you are. In Christ we find love, forgiveness, peace and hope; we are grateful for this reflection of you. May we encounter the Christ Child in this time of worship, and in doing so, experience more of you, our holy Creator God. We pray in our Savior's name. Amen.

*HYMN "Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus" No. 196

We greet you with the warmest of welcomes this evening and trust this will be a very special Christmas Eve service meeting your spiritual needs.

THE CHRISTMAS STORY IN SCRIPTURE & SONG

SCRIPTURE Micah 5: 2-5a

CAROL "Angels We Have Heard on High" No. 238

SCRIPTURE Luke 1:26b-35, 38 and Matthew 1:18b-23

*CAROL "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" (vss. 1, 2, 3) No. 211

SCRIPTURE Luke 2:1-5 and Matthew 2: 3-6

CAROL "O Little Town of Bethlehem" No. 230

SCRIPTURE Luke 2: 6-7

ANTHEM "Do you Hear What I Hear" Chancel Choir

SCRIPTURE Luke 2:8-20

HYMN "O Come, All Ye Faithful" (vss. 1, 3, 4) No. 234

SCRIPTURE Luke 2:21, 39-40

SOLO "O Holy Night" Gail Williams, Soloist

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING: Christ Candle

Pastor: Most Holy God, this is the night of all nights!

People: The great light has come! Deep darkness no longer reigns! Joy beyond measure is here to stay!

Pastor: Angels illuminated the night sky and sang this glorious news to the shepherds. Then they told the shepherds what sign to look for.

People: Lord, we need to be told what signs to look for too!

Pastor: So often our thoughts are dominated by: strained travel schedules, over-indulgent appetites, and the frenzy of decorating and baking, shopping and entertaining.

People: The mother of our Lord had the right idea. When she heard the report of the shepherds, she pondered what it meant in her heart.

Pray in Unison:

Lord, help us to realize that the pace we maintain in life often erodes our ability to ponder, to reflect. Restore our ability to pause and reflect. Show us where to look for signs of your grace. Teach us to act upon the faith we have. Amen.

(Light the Christ Candle)

*CAROL "There's a Song in the Air" No. 249

MESSAGE: "For Unto You" Pastor Michael

HOLY COMMUNION

Pastor: Let us bow our heads for a moment of silent prayer and self-examination
(Silent Personal Confession of Sin)