

## Music to Prepare Our Hearts

## Lighting of the Altar Candles

### Lighting the Advent Candles and Christ Candle

**Reader 1:** Tonight, we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ—the One who brings hope to the hopeless, peace to the troubled, joy to the sorrowful, and love to the world.

**Reader 2:** Over the past four weeks, we have lit the candles of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. Each flame reminded us of the light Christ brings into our darkness. Now we light the Christ Candle, the center candle, to signify that the Light of the World has come.

*[Light All Four Candles and then, the Christ Candle]*

**Reader 1:** The Gospel of John declares, “The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God.” (John 1:9–12)

**Reader 2:** This night, we remember that God’s promise has been fulfilled. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

**Many Voices:** **God of light and life, thank you for the gift of your Son, Jesus Christ. Shine in our hearts and in our world, so that we may reflect your love to all people. Fill us with your hope, peace, joy, and love, as we welcome Christ—the Light of the World—into our lives. Amen.**

## Hymn

“Away in a Manger”

UMH #217

## Welcome

### \*Call to Worship

**Wally:** Beloved, on this night, we gather to enliven the story once again of God who came to dwell among us as a vulnerable baby.

**Many Voices:** **We rejoice in the day that all the earth awaits.**

**Wally:** We remember the stable, the animals, and the manger that witnessed the arrival of Emmanuel, God with us.

**Many Voices:** **We rejoice in the day that all the earth awaits.**

**Wally:** We recall the angels who announced the Messiah’s birth to the shepherds, those most unlikely witnesses of God’s glory.

**Many Voices:** **We rejoice in the day that all the earth awaits.**

**Wally:** In our remembering and enlivening, we gather today as people of God’s promise, witnesses to God’s glorious presence among us in the vulnerable, forgotten, and tucked away places of the world.

**Many Voices:** **We gather to rejoice in the day that all the earth awaits, the day that has already come and will yet be. Thanks be to God! Amen.**

### \*Opening Hymn

“The First Noel”

UMH #245

## **\*Passing the Peace**

### **Opening Prayer**

**Wally:** We have waited for a long time for your hope, your joy, your love to shine in the darkness of this world, Almighty God. Even now, in our gathering here, we await you. In our hearts, we still hope that your light will blaze forth, banishing the shadows of this world and guiding all the people back to you.

**Many Voices:** Yet you did not come into this world in a show of power and glory. You did not shine forth for all of creation to behold. A tiny spark – a newborn baby, visible to parents and curious animals. A host of angels – away from the populated areas, singing to migrant workers. A sparkling star – guiding foreigners to see what neighbors could not.

**Wally:** Open our hearts, merciful God, to the sparks of your presence still in this world. Open our eyes, that we might behold your presence in the least likely of places, and among the least likely of people.

**Many Voices:** God with us, kindle your spark within us, that together we may shine forth your light, we might banish the shadows of this world, we might be the continuation of the Christmas miracle: Emmanuel is in this world, God is with us, now and evermore. Amen.

### **Offering Ourselves**

Special Music

Reid & Jaidyn Spears

\*Doxology

\*Offering Prayer

**All:** Radiant God of holy interruptions, in the stillness of night and the chaos of our days, you slip into our world with glory wrapped in swaddling cloth. Like the shepherds, we come breathless, humbled, and hoping—to offer what we have. Receive these gifts as signs of our gratitude and trust. May they help announce your peace on earth, not with trumpets and headlines, but with justice, compassion, and shared burdens. Let the offering we place here be the beginning of the offering we make with our lives in response to the child who changes everything. In Jesus' name, Emmanuel, we pray. Amen.

### **Scripture Readings**

New Testament Lesson

Titus 2:11-14 (*NRSVue*)

Gospel Lesson

Luke 2:1-20 (*NRSVue*)

**Wally:** The Word of God for the People of God.

**Many Voices:** Thanks be to God.

### **Christmas Reflection**

Pastor Dave

### **Special Music**

"We are the Reason"

Pastor Dave

### **Holy Communion**

Communion Prayer

**Pastor Dave:** God of justice and bounty, in your new day, the world is filled with good things. Bless these gifts of bread and wine, fruit of the vine and work of human hands, that they may nourish us as we await your coming, in the name of Christ, who lived and died so that we might live.

**Many Voices:** Amen.

## The Great Thanksgiving

**Pastor Dave:** Christ be with you.

**Many Voices:** And also with you.

**Pastor Dave:** Lift up your hearts.

**Many Voices:** We lift them up to the Lord.

**Pastor Dave:** Let us give our thanks to the Holy One, our God.

**Many Voices:** It is right to give our thanks and praise.

**Pastor Dave:** It is a right, good, and a joyful thing, always and everywhere, to give you thanks, O God, Creator of heaven and earth. You lead us in paths of righteousness and peace. In the words of the prophet Isaiah, and the cry of John the Baptizer, you have spoken of your great love for your people and have promised to heal all that is broken and forsaken, to redeem all who are lost and alone.

And so, with your people on earth, and all the great cloud of witnesses in heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Many Voices:** Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

**Pastor Dave:** Holy are you, and holy is your child, Jesus Christ, who came to the river to be baptized, and taught us of the Holy Spirit, living in us and around us and among us.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you." Do this in remembrance of me.

When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many, for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

And so, in remembrance of your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

**Many Voices:** Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

**Pastor Dave:** Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and juice. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may become one with Christ, who lived and died and rose to bring healing to a broken world. By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until we feast together at the heavenly banquet in your eternal kin-dom. Maker of justice and mercy, Spirit of compassion and grace, Lover of all creation, we give you thanks and praise.

**Many Voices:** Amen.

## Lord's Prayer

### Sharing the Bread and Cup

## The Light of Christ Fills Our Hearts

*[While "Silent Night" is playing, Pastor Dave will light a candle from the Christ Candle. Pastor Dave and liturgist will pass the flames to the first worshipper at the end of the aisle, and that person will pass it to the next, and so on. May we all take care to ensure that we do this safely.]*

**\*Singing**

"Silent Night, Holy Night"

UMH #239

*[Please, raise your candle carefully during the third stanza as a tribute to God's Wondrous Light, Jesus Christ, shining in our lives and through us to the world.]*

**\*Dismissal with Blessing**

**\*Hymn of Sending Forth**

"Joy to the World"

UMH #246

**Going Forth to the World**