



CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

with UCC Westerly

December 24, 2021 @ 7pm

In-person &

Broadcast live from our sanctuary

CCLI Streaming License #21022154

~ ~ ~ ~

Gathering Music – *Go Tell It on the Mountain* [©Public Domain] –
Tone Chimes Choir

PASTOR'S WELCOME

Prelude – "Still, Still, Still"

by Franklin Ritter, based on a traditional Austrian carol, ©2001 Lorenz Publishing Company, CCLI# 3645770. Used by Permission. CCLI Copyright License 21022161.

DEACON'S GREETING

INVITATION TO WORSHIP –

[Copyright 2007 Amy C. Wake. Published by The General Board of Discipleship of The United Methodist Church, PO Box 340003, Nashville, TN 37203-0003. Web site www.umcworship.org. Used by permission.]

One: "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."
(Luke 2:6-7)

Tonight, angels far and near sing tender lullabies; well-worn fabric full of years holds in the warmth of parental love; animals and shepherds crowd in tight, glowing with adoration, while a muffled cry squeezes out to greet the world.

All: **Tonight we give thanks for every child among us. Each new birth – regardless of circumstances – reminds us of the preciousness of new life, the potential of tomorrow, the promise of God.**

One: On this Christmas Eve, we light the Christ candle for the child-King, the infant-Redeemer, the lowly-Lord. And now we know – He is born and nothing will ever be the same! [Light the Christ candle in the center.]

OPENING CAROL – "O Come All Ye Faithful"

W&R#182

[WORDS & MUSIC: John F. Wade with contributions by others. ©Public Domain]

If you have not already done so, please come forward during this carol to place your creche piece from home on the altar among the others.

UNISON PRAYER OF REFLECTION

Always Surprising God, you greet us once more as we gather at the manger this Christmas Eve. We confess it is easy to forget the poverty into which this child of refugee parents was born. We focus instead on singing angels, awestruck shepherds, and kings bringing lavish gifts. May we see beyond all that obscures our vision of the miracle of Your abiding love made flesh in this tiny baby. Help us release our grasp of all that we fear, of all that we worry about, of all that

keeps us at a distance from you. Open our hearts, Holy One, to the possibilities of Christmas so that we may reclaim who it is you need us to be at this moment in your history. This we ask in the powerful name of Jesus, Mary’s precious son, and yours Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC – “*Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming*” [©Public Domain] Erin Blake, Soloist

A SIMPLE CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

Words of Invitation, Explanation and Consecration

Prayer of Thanksgiving and the Lord’s Prayer:

We thank you, God, for embracing us at this, Christ’s table, on this holy night. May our encounter with the presence of Christ in these elements of bread and cup strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and empower us to make visible your truth in our lives. We pray this and every prayer in the name of Jesus who taught us to pray saying... *Our Father...*

CAROL – *Away in a Manger* *W&R#203, v. 1-2*
[WORDS: Anonymous Luke 2:7 & MUSIC: James R. Murray. ©Public Domain]

A MESSAGE FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

Scripture Reading: Luke 2:1-20

Message – Fear Not!

Joann Spurley, Deacon
Rev. Ruth

OUR RESPONSE TO GOD

Acknowledgement of Gifts & Offerings*

Offertory Anthem – *Glory Hallelujah*

The Vocal Choir

MUSIC by Mark. R. Kellner, WORDS by Isaac Watts and Mark R. Kellner, ©1993, 1994 by PsalmSinger Music/BMI, CCLI# 1609911

Doxology “*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Christ all creatures here below; Praise Holy Spirit, Comforter; One God, Triune,
whom we adore. Amen.*” [©Public Domain]

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER AND THE BLESSING OF THE CRECHES

CAROL with Candle-lighting -- *Silent Night* *W&R#186*
[WORDS: Joseph Mohr & MUSIC: Franz Gruber. ©Public Domain]

A PRAYER OF BENEDICTION

[adapted from *Touch Holiness*, Duck & Tirabassi, ©1990, The Pilgrim Press, p. 240]

On this holy night, hold on to the truth that God is in our future calling us; that God is in our past forgiving us; that God is in the present loving us. There is no greater gift, no greater blessing. Go out and be God’s blessing to the world so hurting and broken. Be as Christ to everyone you meet. Amen.

CLOSING CAROL – *Joy to the World* *W&R#179*
[WORDS: Isaac Watts & MUSIC: George Frederic Handel, arr. Lowell Mason © Public Domain]

**Please join us in ringing bells to welcome the Christ Child into our hearts once more!*

~~~~~

---

**Luke 2:1-20**

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. 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.

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.’ 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!’

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.