

Lake Merritt United Methodist Church

An Inclusive Christian Community of Oakland



LAKE PARK

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

IN JOINT FELLOWSHIP

*Sustaining a vibrant and growing congregation through Christian spiritual transformation,
making our work and the church relevant and visible.*

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Angels Among Us: #Do Not Be Afraid



Christmas Eve

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December 24, 2021
Christmas Eve
Celebration of Divine Worship

PRELUDE “Angels, We Have Heard on High / Peace, Peace” LMUMC Choir

WELCOME to a night of Carols & Lessons Rev. Pamela Kurtz, *Pastor*

INTROIT “O Holy Night” Rev. Stephanie Gamos, *Soprano*

OPENING PRAYER Hush

Sssh. Can you hear it?
An expectant silence,
a hushed anticipation,
as if the very galaxy
is holding its breath.
There are some truths
even the stars know,
like darkness,
like loneliness
and how the night
can be a living thing.
And how once, long ago,
the night waited in wonder
along with the darkness
and the loneliness,
for the sound of a baby's cry,
for the miraculous
to come down
to the earth mundane.

By Lucinda Hynett

Sung Response O Come All Ye Faithful UMH 234

1. O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem.
Come and behold him, born the King of angels;
*O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*
2. True God of true God, Light from Light Eternal,
lo, he shuns not the Virgin's womb;
Son of the Father, begotten not created;
*O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*
3. Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation;
O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest;
*O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

LESSON

Micah 5:2-5a (CEB)

As for you, Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
though you are the least significant of Judah's forces,
one who is to be a ruler in Israel on my behalf will come out from you.
His origin is from remote times, from ancient days.
Therefore, he will give them up
until the time when she who is in labor gives birth.
The rest of his kin will return to the people of Israel.
He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord,
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.
They will dwell secure,
because he will surely become great throughout the earth;
he will become one of peace.
When Assyria invades our land and treads down our fortresses,
then we will raise up against him seven shepherds and eight human princes.

CAROL

O Little Town of Bethlehem UMH 230

*1. O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie;
above thy deep and dreamless sleep, the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.*

*2. For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars together, proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the king, and peace to all on earth!*

*4. O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell;
o come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!*

LESSON

Isaiah 9:2-7 (CEB)

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.
On those living in a pitch-dark land, light has dawned.
You have made the nation great; you have increased its joy.
They rejoiced before you as with joy at the harvest,
as those who divide plunder rejoice.
As on the day of Midian, you've shattered the yoke that burdened them,
the staff on their shoulders, and the rod of their oppressor.
Because every boot of the thundering warriors,
and every garment rolled in blood will be burned, fuel for the fire.
A child is born to us, a son is given to us,
and authority will be on his shoulders. He will be named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

There will be vast authority and endless peace
for David's throne and for his kingdom, establishing and sustaining it
with justice and righteousness now and forever.

CAROL

Toda la Tierra (All Earth is Waiting) UMH 210

- 1. All earth is waiting to see the Promised One,
and open furrows the sowing of the Lord.
All the world, bound and struggling, seeks true liberty;
it cries out for justice and searches for the truth.*
- 2. Thus says the prophet to those of Israel,
"A virgin mother will bear Emmanuel,"
for his name is "God with us" our brother shall be,
with him hope will blossom once more within our hearts.*
- 4. In lowly stable the Promised One appeared,
yet, feel his presence throughout the earth today,
for he lives in all Christians and is with us now;
again, with his coming he brings us liberty.*

LESSON

Luke 2:1-7 (CEB)

In those days Caesar Augustus declared that everyone throughout the empire should be enrolled in the tax lists. This first enrollment occurred when Quirinius governed Syria. Everyone went to their own cities to be enrolled. Since Joseph belonged to David's house and family line, he went up from the city of Nazareth in Galilee to David's city, called Bethlehem, in Judea. He went to be enrolled together with Mary, who was promised to him in marriage and who was pregnant. While they were there, the time came for Mary to have her baby. She gave birth to her firstborn child, a son, wrapped him snugly, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the guestroom.

CAROL

There's a Song in the Air UMH 249

- 1. There's a song in the air! There's a star in the sky!
There's a mother's deep prayer and a baby's low cry!
And the star rains its fire while the beautiful sing,
for the manger of Bethlehem cradles a King!**
- 2. There's a tumult of joy o'er the wonderful birth,
for the virgin's sweet boy is the Lord of the earth.
Ay! the star rains its fire while the beautiful sing,
for the manger of Bethlehem cradles a King!**
- 3. In the light of that star lie the ages impearled;
and that song from afar has swept over the world.
Every hearth is aflame, and the beautiful sing
in the homes of the nations that Jesus is King!**

LESSON

Luke 2:8-20 (CEB)

Nearby shepherds were living in the fields, guarding their sheep at night. The Lord's angel stood before them, the Lord's glory shone around them, and they were terrified.

The angel said, "Don't be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you – wonderful, joyous news for all people. Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord. This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great assembly of the heavenly forces was with the angel praising God. They said, "Glory to God in heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors."

When the angels returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go right now to Bethlehem and see what's happened. Let's confirm what the Lord has revealed to us." They went quickly and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. When they saw this, they reported what they had been told about this child. Everyone who heard it was amazed at what the shepherds told them. Mary committed these things to memory and considered them carefully. The shepherds returned home, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. Everything happened just as they had been told.

CAROL

The First Noel UMH 245

**1. The first Noel the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.
*Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.***

**2. They looked up and saw a star
shining in the east, beyond them far;
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night.
*Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.***

**4. This star drew nigh to the northwest,
o'er Bethlehem it took its rest;
and there it did both stop and stay,
right over the place where Jesus lay.
*Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.***

LESSON

Luke 2:25-38 (CEB)

A man named Simeon was in Jerusalem. He was righteous and devout. He eagerly anticipated the restoration of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. The Holy Spirit revealed to him that he wouldn't die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. Led by the Spirit, he went into the temple area. Meanwhile, Jesus' parents brought the child to the temple so that they could do what was customary under the Law. Simeon took Jesus in his arms and praised God. He said,

“Now, master, let your servant go in peace according to your word, because my eyes have seen your salvation. You prepared this salvation in the presence of all peoples. It’s a light for revelation to the Gentiles and a glory for your people Israel.”

His father and mother were amazed by what was said about him. Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “This boy is assigned to be the cause of the falling and rising of many in Israel and to be a sign that generates opposition so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your innermost being too.”

There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, who belonged to the tribe of Asher. She was very old. After she married, she lived with her husband for seven years. She was now an 84-year-old widow. She never left the temple area but worshipped God with fasting and prayer night and day. She approached at that very moment and began to praise God and to speak about Jesus to everyone who was looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

CAROL

On Christmas Night All Christians Sing

W&S 3064

- 1. On Christmas night all Christians sing, to hear the news the angels bring.
On Christmas night all Christians sing, to hear the news the angels bring:
News of great joy, news of great mirth, news of our merciful King's birth.*
- 2. Then why would we on earth be sad, since our Redeemer made us glad.
Then why would we on earth be sad, since our Redeemer made us glad;
When from our sin he set us free, all for to gain our liberty?*
- 3. When sin departs before is grace, then life and health come in its place.
When sin departs before is grace, then life and health come in its place;
Heaven and earth with joy may sing, all for to see the newborn King.*
- 4. All out of darkness we have light, which made the angels sing this night.
All out of darkness we have light, which made the angels sing this night.
"Glory to God, on earth be peace, goodwill to all shall never cease."*

MESSAGE

“Imagine on Christmas Eve”

Rev. Pamela L. Kurtz, *Pastor*

CAROL

“Silent Night, Holy Night”

UMH 239

- 1. Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child. Holy infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.*
- 3. Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light;
radiant beams from thy holy face with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.*
- 4. Silent night, holy night, wondrous star, lend thy light;
with the angels let us sing, Alleluia to our King;
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born!*

CLOSING PRAYER

Go now in wonder.

Go to bring light to those in darkness,

joy to those who can find no joy,

magic to a world steeped in realism.

Go with the songs of angels in your ears,

and the love of God in your hearts.

Go and spread the word-

the babe of Bethlehem is born for all.

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CLOSING CAROL

Joy to the World UMH 246

*1. Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King;
let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.*

*2. Joy to the world, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ;
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.*

*4. He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness, and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love;
and wonders, wonders of his love.*

POSTLUDE

Antioch

arr. David Cherwien

*We pray that our siblings in the farthest of lands have peace this night. We pray for
your joy and comfort. We pray that the Hope of Christ blooms in the hearts of all
persons, however they may know the God of All.
Blessings, shalom, and salaam to you all.*

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