

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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"The Table of Grace"

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December 24, 2023
Fourth Sunday in Advent / Christmas Eve Morning
CELEBRATION OF WORSHIP

WELCOME

Rev. Sunae Cho, *Pastor*

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

Hege/Tompkins Family

On this fourth Sunday of Advent, we remember the gift of grace we have in Christ. We remember that the gift of grace is free and not earned, that we are saved by grace through faith in Jesus and not by our own efforts or works.

Christmas is a time of many gifts, but the gift of grace is not for a single season. As we light this candle, we are reminded that God, through Christ, has given each of us the gift of grace, the gift of salvation.

Loving God, we thank you for the gift of grace you give us through Jesus. Help us prepare our hearts for the Lord's coming by remembering his gift of sacrificial love.

We ask this in the name of the one born in Bethlehem, Jesus our Lord. Amen

INTROIT

Calypso Lullaby

Jester Hairston, arr. Joel Raney

LMUMC Choir [at piano]

OPENING PRAYER (*RESPONSIVE*)

Hege/Tompkins Family

Leader: We count it in mere hours now.

**People: Soon the Light will shine in the darkness,
soon the baby will be born.**

Leader: Soon God will once again break into our lives,

**People: arriving in an unusual way,
challenging our expectations
and calling us to see life differently.**

**All: God of birth, God of light,
In this time of song and prayer and silence,
reawaken in us the awe of Christmas. Amen.**

Rev. Gord (adapt)

OPENING SONG

Away in a Manger

(Please stand if able)

UMH 217 [organ]

1. Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

2. The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes;
I love thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky
and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

**3. Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask thee to stay
close by me forever, and love me, I pray;
bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
and fit us for heaven to live with thee there.**

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 9:2-7 (NIV)

Hege/Tompkins Family

The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness
a light has dawned.
You have enlarged the nation
and increased their joy;
they rejoice before you
as people rejoice at the harvest,
as warriors rejoice
when dividing the plunder.
For as in the day of Midian's defeat,
you have shattered
the yoke that burdens them,
the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor.
Every warrior's boot used in battle
and every garment rolled in blood
will be destined for burning,
will be fuel for the fire.
For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the Lord Almighty
will accomplish this.

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Susannah Wood, Director
David Tavernier, Media
Pastor Sunae Cho, Reader
Children & Church Community

Scripture - Luke 2: 1-5

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

Scripture - Luke 2: 6-7

While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

The Friendly Beasts

Soloist: I said the donkey shaggy and brown
I carried his mother up hill and down
I carried sweet Mary to Bethlehem Town
I said the donkey shaggy and brown

Soloist: I said the cow all white and red
I gave him my manger for his bed
I gave him my hay to pillow his head
I said the cow all white and red

Soloist: I said the hen with feathers white
I clucked him to sleep that starry night
I sang my best, with all my might
I said the hen with feathers white

Soloist: I said the mouse with coat of gray
I saw the baby in the hay
He came to save, the angels say
I said the mouse with coat of gray.

All: Thus every beast by some good spell
In the stable dark was glad to tell
Of the gifts they gave Emmanuel
The gifts they gave Emmanuel

Scripture - Luke 2:8-14

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

Silent Night

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.

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!

Scripture - Luke 2:15-20

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

PRAYER

ANTHEM

African Noel

Trad. African Carol, arr. Victor Johnson

LMUMC Choir [at piano]

OFFERING & THANKSGIVING

CLOSING SONG

(Please stand if able)

O Little Town of Bethlehem

UMH 230 [organ]

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!
3. How silently, how silently,
the wondrous gift is given;
so God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming,
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still
the dear Christ enters in.
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!

CLOSING PRAYER *(RESPONSIVE)*

Hege/Tompkins Family

Leader: The impossible is about to happen in a stable.

The people who walk in darkness will see a great light;

**People: Those who live in a land of deep darkness,
on them the light will shine!**

Leader: This will be the night when creation stands still and holds its breath,
for God is doing the most unbelievable thing.

**People: This will be the night when God embraces humanity
from the inside, as one of us, from birth to death.**

Leader: In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.

**All: And the word will become flesh and dwell among us,
full of grace and truth. Amen.**

Bruce Prewer (adapt)

POSTLUDE [organ]

Joy to the World

David Cherwien