

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 Joy"

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December 31, 2023
First Sunday after Christmas Day
CELEBRATION OF WORSHIP

Welcome

Lighting Of The Advent Candle

The Koroma Family

Today we celebrate the gift of Emmanuel, God with us. We celebrate the birth of Christ who is the Light and Joy of the world - a light no darkness can extinguish.

“And the word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory of the Father’s only son, full of grace and truth and joy”

As we light this candle, we are reminded that Christ came to bring us out of the darkness to which we had fallen and into God’s joyful and eternal light.

Loving God, we thank you for the mystery of Emmanuel, God with us.

Help us receive the Light and Joy of Christ into our hearts and share it.

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

Manger Melody

arr. Mark Hayes

Prayer

Leader: A tiny spark -

**People: a newborn baby,
visible to parents and curious animals.**

Leader: A host of angels -

**People: away from the populated areas,
singing to migrant workers.**

Leader: A sparkling star -

People: guiding foreigners to see what neighbors could not.

Leader: Open our hearts, merciful God,

People: to the sparks of your presence still in this world.

Leader: Open our eyes,

**People: that we might behold your presence in the least likely of places,
and among the least likely of people.**

All: Open our voices, that we might sing our songs of praise. Amen.

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!

4. We rejoice in the light,
and we echo the song
that comes down through the night
from the heavenly throng.
Ay! we shout to the lovely
evangel they bring,
and we greet in his cradle
our Savior and King!

Children's Moment

Away in a Manger

UMH 217

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.

Sing We Now of Christmas

UMH 237 v. 1,2,3

1. Sing we now of Christmas,
Noel, sing we here!
Hear our grateful praises
to the babe so dear.
Sing we Noel, the King is born, Noel!
Sing we now of Christmas, sing we now Noel!

2. Angels called to shepherds,
"Leave your flocks at rest,
journey forth to Bethlehem,
find the child so blest."
Sing we Noel, the King is born, Noel!
Sing we now of Christmas, sing we now Noel!

3. In Bethlehem they found him;
Joseph and Mary mild,
seated by the manger,
watching the holy child.
Sing we Noel, the King is born, Noel!
Sing we now of Christmas, sing we now Noel!

Matthew 2: 1-12 (NIV)

Therefore, After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

"But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for out of you will come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel."

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

We Three Kings

UMH 254

1. We three kings of Orient are;
bearing gifts we traverse afar,
field and fountain, moor and mountain,
following yonder star.

O star of wonder, star of light,
star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light.

2. Born a King on Bethlehem's plain,
gold I bring to crown him again,
King forever, ceasing never,
over us all to reign.

O star of wonder, star of light,
star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light.

3. Frankincense to offer have I;
incense owns a Deity nigh;
prayer and praising, voices raising,
worshiping God on high.

O star of wonder, star of light,
star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light.

4. Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume
breathes a life of gathering gloom;
sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,
sealed in the stone-cold tomb.

O star of wonder, star of light,
star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light.

5. Glorious now behold him arise;
King and God and sacrifice:
Alleluia, Alleluia,
sounds through the earth and skies.

O star of wonder, star of light,
star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light.

The First Noel

UMH 245 v. 1,2,3

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.

3. And by the light of that same star
three Wise Men came from country far;
to seek for a king was their intent,
and to follow the star wherever it went.

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,
born is the King of Israel.

In the Bleak Midwinter

UMH 221

1. In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
in the bleak midwinter, long ago.

2. Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;
heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign.
In the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed
the Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

Prayers and Offerings

3. Angels and archangels may have gathered there,
cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;
but his mother only, in her maiden bliss,
worshiped the beloved with a kiss.

4. What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
if I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;
yet what I can I give him: give my heart.

O Come, All Ye Faithful

UMH 234 vs 1,2,3

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.

What was it in that natal star,
pre-eminent in the night-time sky,
that stirred the hearts and imaginations
of those magi from the east.

Was it color? brightness? conjunction? or something more...

A small voice whispering in the darkness of the world:

"This is the sign that will proceed the birth
of he who fulfills the prophets' words."

That small voice which whispers still,
to our conscience and soul,
still leads

if we will but follow to the stable door.

Angels from the Realms of Glory

UMH 220

1. Angels from the realms of glory,
wing your flight o'er all the earth;
ye who sang creation's story
now proclaim Messiah's birth:
Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn King.

2. Shepherds, in the field abiding,
watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing;
yonder shines the infant light:
Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn King.

3. Sages, leave your contemplations,
brighter visions beam afar;
seek the great Desire of nations;
ye have seen his natal star:
Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn King.

4. Saints, before the altar bending,
watching long in hope and fear;
suddenly the Lord, descending,
in his temple shall appear:
Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn King.

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

UMH 251

Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills, and ev'rywhere;
go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born.

1. While shepherds kept their watching
o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens
there shone a holy light.

Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills, and ev'rywhere;
go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born.

2. The shepherds feared and trembled
when lo! above the earth,
rang out the angel chorus
that hailed the Savior's birth.

Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills, and ev'rywhere;
go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born.

3. Down in a lowly manger
the humble Christ was born,
and God sent us salvation
that blessed Christmas morn.

Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills, and ev'rywhere;
go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born.

The Virgin Mary Had a Baby Boy

TFWS 2098

1. The virgin Mary had a baby boy,
the virgin Mary had a baby boy,
the virgin Mary had a baby boy,
and they say that his name is Jesus.

He come from the glory,
he come from the glorious kingdom.
He come from the glory,
he come from the glorious kingdom.
Oh, yes! believer!
Oh, yes! believer!
He come from the glory,
he come from the glorious kingdom.

2. The angels sang when the baby was born,
the angels sang when the baby was born,
the angels sang when the baby was born,
and they say that his name is Jesus.

He come from the glory,
he come from the glorious kingdom.
He come from the glory,
he come from the glorious kingdom.
Oh, yes! believer!
Oh, yes! believer!
He come from the glory,
he come from the glorious kingdom.

3. The shepherds came where the baby was born,
the shepherds came where the baby was born,
the shepherds came where the baby was born,
and they say that his name is Jesus.

He come from the glory,
he come from the glorious kingdom.

He come from the glory,
he come from the glorious kingdom.

Oh, yes! believer!

Oh, yes! believer!

He come from the glory,
he come from the glorious kingdom.

4. The Wise Men came where the baby was born,
the Wise Men came where the baby was born,
the Wise Men came where the baby was born,
and they say that his name is Jesus.

He come from the glory,
he come from the glorious kingdom.

He come from the glory,
he come from the glorious kingdom.

Oh, yes! believer!

Oh, yes! believer!

He come from the glory,
he come from the glorious kingdom.

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.

3. No more let sins and sorrows grow,
nor thorns infest the ground;
he comes to make his blessings flow
far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found,
far as, far as the curse is found.

**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.**

Prayer

Leader: It has been done!
The news has been shared!

**People: A young maiden has borne a child,
and she has called him Jesus.**

Leader: But that is just the beginning of the story,
a story that has not yet ended.

**People: A story that includes us,
a story of which we are a part.**

Leader: So we go out to live the story,

**People: to tell of the Hope
that has been born among us this Christmas,
to share the Love of the season with the world,
to be agents of Peace in times of trouble,
to sing songs of deep and abiding Joy.**

Leader: As we go, may God go with us,
challenging us to respond to God's call
in ways that are new, unexpected, and a little unsettling.

And as Tiny Tim said so very well...

All: God Bless Us Every One. Amen.

Rev. Gord (adapt)

Joy to the World

Lowell Mason, arr. Melody Barber

Thank you to our guest pianist, Ellen St. Thomas