

**SERVICE OF WORD AND TABLE**  
**First Methodist Church, Houston | Downtown Campus Traditional Service**  
**Second Sunday of Advent | December 3, 2023 | 11:00 am**

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PRELUDE Carol Medley *Lani Smith*

\*CALL TO WORSHIP Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus UMH 196

**Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;  
from our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee.  
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;  
dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.**

**Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a King,  
born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.  
By thine own eternal spirit rule in all our hearts alone;  
by thine all sufficient merit, raise us to thy glorious throne.**

\*WELCOME Rev. Amanda Davis

\*CAROL OF WELCOME Hail to the Lord's Anointed UMH 203

**Hail to the Lord's Anointed, great David's greater Son!  
Hail in the time appointed, his reign on earth begun!  
He comes to break oppression, to set the captive free;  
to take away transgression, and rule in equity.**

**He comes with succor speedy to those who suffer wrong;  
to help the poor and needy, and bid the weak be strong;  
to give them songs for sighing, their darkness turn to light,  
whose souls, condemned and dying, are precious in his sight.**

**He shall come down like showers upon the fruitful earth;  
love, joy, and hope, like flowers, spring in his path to birth.  
Before him on the mountains, shall peace, the herald, go,  
and righteousness, in fountains, from hill to valley flow.**

**To him shall prayer unceasing and daily vows ascend;  
his kingdom still increasing, a kingdom without end.  
The tide of time shall never his covenant remove;  
his name shall stand forever; that name to us is love.**

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE Krause Family

SUNG RESPONSE O Come, O Come Emmanuel (refrain) UMH211  
*(Refrain) "Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel."*

LIFE OF THE CHURCH Unspeakable Joy in Action Rev. Amanda Davis

OFFERING PRAYER Rev. Amanda Davis

OFFERING OUR GIFTS TO GOD Congregation

MINISTRY IN MUSIC Hacia Belen va un Borrigo *by Alice Parker*

Sanctuary Choir; Cairee Mayfield, Soloist

Towards Bethlehem goes a donkey. I remember, laden with chocolate.

It carries its chocolate pot, I remember, yet I forget, its chocolate mill and its stove. Mary  
come here, come running because they are eating up the chocolate.

At the gate of Bethlehem I remember, Gypsies have entered; I remember,  
and from the child who is in the cradle I remember, yet I forget.

They have taken the swaddling clothes. Mary come here running,  
they have taken the swaddling clothes, with a hat of straw I remember.

A Galician arrives at the gate; while he worshipped the Child

I remember, yet I forget, the ox ate his hat.

Mary, come here running and comfort the Galician who is crying now.

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\*OFFERING RESPONSE O Little Town of Bethlehem (verse 3) UMH 230  
**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.**

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE

Rev. Lance Richards

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Rev. Lance Richards

*People:* **Merciful God, we confess that we have not always loved you with our whole hearts. We have failed to be an obedient church. We have not done your will; we have broken your law; we have rebelled against your love; we have not loved our neighbors, and we have not heard the cry of the needy. Forgive us, we pray. Free us for joyful obedience, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Rev. Lance Richards

*Leader:* Hear the good news... ...in the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

*People:* **In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!**

*Leader and People:* Glory to God. Amen.

SUNG RESPONSE Angels We Have Heard on High (refrain)

UMH 238

**Gloria, in excelsis deo! Gloria, in excelsis deo!**

TIME FOR CHILDREN (Live)

Courtney Hutchins

\*CAROL OF PREPARATION Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates (Vs. 1-3) UMH 213

**Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates; behold, the King of glory waits;  
the King of kings is drawing near; the Savior of the world is here!**

**Fling wide the portals of your heart; make it a temple, set apart  
from earthly use for heaven's employ, adorned with prayer and love and joy.**

**Redeemer, come, with us abide; our hearts to thee we open wide;  
let us thy inner presence feel; thy grace and love in us reveal.**

\*SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 35:1-10

Rev. Lance Richards

The word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God!**

MESSAGE

Joy Heals and Transforms

Rev. Lance Richards

PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev. Lance Richards

\*CAROL OF HOPE AND REMEMBRANCE Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence UMH 626

**Let all mortal flesh keep silence, and with fear and trembling stand;  
ponder nothing earthly minded, for with blessing in his hand,  
Christ our God to earth descendeth, our full homage to demand.**

**King of kings, yet born of Mary, as of old on earth he stood,  
Lord of lords, in human vesture, in the body and the blood;  
he will give to all the faithful his own self for heavenly food.**

**Rank on rank the host of heaven spreads its vanguard on the way,  
as the Light of light descendeth from the realms of endless day,  
that the powers of hell may vanish as the darkness clears away.**

**At his feet the six-winged seraph, cherubim, with sleepless eye,  
veil their faces to the presence, as with ceaseless voice they cry:  
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Lord Most High!**

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Rev. Lance Richards and Rev. Amanda Davis

*Leader:* The Lord be with you.

*People:* **And also with you.**

*Leader:* Lift up your hearts!

*People:* **We lift them up to the Lord!**

*Leader:* Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God!

*People:* **It is right to give our thanks and praise!**

*Leader* ...and so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

*Leader and People:* **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!**

*Leader:*...as we proclaim the mystery of the faith:

*Leader and People:* **Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.**

*Leader:* ...all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and forever.

*Leader and People:* **Amen.**

COMMUNION MUSIC            O Little Town of Bethlehem            *by Dan Forrest*

Sanctuary Choir; Forrest Peugnet, Clarinet

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.

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 men on earth;

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.

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.

\*THE LORD'S PRAYER IN SONG

*by Albert Hay Malotte*

**Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.**

**Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread.**

**And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.**

**And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:**

**For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

STEP FORWARD IN FAITH

Rev. Amanda Davis

\*BENEDICTION

Rev. Lance Richards

\*BENEDICTION RESPONSE Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates (verse 4)

UMH 213

**Thy Holy Spirit lead us on until our glorious goal is won;**

**eternal praise, eternal fame be offered, Savior, to thy name!**

POSTLUDE

Swiss Noel

*by Louis D'Aquin*

\*Please stand as you are able.

#### ALTAR FLOWERS

The flowers on the altar today are given  
in memory of Doris Hervey, by her family.

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#### SERVICE PARTICIPANTS:

ORGANIST

Paul Butt

EXECUTIVE PASTOR

Rev. Amanda Davis

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES DOWNTOWN

Courtney Hutchins

DIRECTOR OF TRADITIONAL MUSIC

Dr. Terry Morris

SENIOR PASTOR

Rev. Lance Richards

PIANIST

Jeremy Wood