SERVICE OF THE WORD

First Methodist Church, Houston | Downtown Campus Traditional Service December 10, 2023 | 11:00 am

PRELUDE Three Festive Carols arr. by Hayes and Gaspard

*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 Blessed Be the God of Israel

UMH 209

Blessed be the God of Israel, who comes to set us free, who visits and redeems us, and grants us liberty.

The prophets spoke of mercy, of freedom and release;
God shall fulfill the promise to bring our people peace.

Now from the house of David a child of grace is given; a Savior comes among us to raise us up to heaven. Before him goes the herald, forerunner in the way, the prophet of salvation, the harbinger of day.

On prisoners of darkness the sun begins to rise, the dawning of forgiveness upon the sinner's eyes, to guide the feet of pilgrims along the paths of peace; O bless our God and Savior with songs that never cease!

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

Givens Miller & Lu Wang

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

LIFE OF THE CHURCH Lifeline and NIA Christmas Party Rev. Amanda Davis

FINANCIAL UPDATE Rev. Lance Richards

OFFERING PRAYER Rev. Amanda Davis

OFFERING OUR GIFTS TO GOD

Congregation

Sanctuary Choir; Soloists: Anthony Perez, Tyler Perrine, Kim Burton, Kris Rodriguez, Wilson Cook, Jonathan Snowden, Robby Black, Tyler Surratt on Drum, Joel Morgan on Cowbell, Bridget Warren, Kammi Estelle, Taylor Surratt, David Watson Noel! Noel! Jesus has come to live with us.

If you want to know the Child, you have to come kneel.

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.

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH The Nicene Creed We believe in one God, the Father, the Almight

UMH 880

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

SUNG RESPONSE Angels We Have Heard on High (refrain) Gloria, in excelsis deo! Gloria, in excelsis deo!

UMH 238

TIME FOR CHILDREN (LIVE)

Courtney Hutchins

*CAROL OF PREPARATION O Little Town of Bethlehem (verses 1, 2, 4) UMH 230 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 all on earth!

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!

*SCRIPTURE Isaiah 61:1-4; 8-11 Rev. Lance Richards

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

MESSAGE Joy Rebuilds and Restores Rev. Lance Richards

PASTORAL PRAYER Rev. Lance Richards

THE LORD'S PRAYER (SPOKEN)

Rev. Lance Richards

Our Father who 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE ALTAR

Rev. Lance Richards

*CAROL OF BLESSING It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

UMH 218

It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old, from angels bending near the earth, to touch their harps of gold: "Peace on the earth, good will to men, from heaven's all-gracious King." The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come with peaceful wings unfurled, and still their heavenly music floats o'er all the weary world; above its sad and lowly plains, they bend on hovering wing, and ever o'er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.

And ye, beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low, who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow, look now! for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing.

O rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing!

For lo! the days are hastening on, by prophet seen of old, when with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling, and the whole world send back the song which now the angels sing.

*STEP FORWARD IN FAITH Rev. Lance Richards

*BENEDICTION Rev. Lance Richards

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates (verse 2) UMH 213
Fling wide the portals of your heart;
make it a temple, set apart
from earthly use from heaven's employ,
adorned with prayer and love and joy.

POSTLUDE

Savior of the Nations, Come, BWV 599

by J. S. Bach

SERVICE PARTICIPANTS:

ORGANIST
EXECUTIVE PASTOR
DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES DOWNTOWN
DIRECTOR OF TRADITIONAL MUSIC
SENIOR PASTOR
PIANIST

Paul Butt Rev. Amanda Davis Courtney Hutchins Dr. Terry Morris Rev. Lance Richards Jeremy Wood