

**SERVICE OF WORD AND TABLE**  
**CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE**  
First United Methodist Church, Houston | Sanctuary (Downtown Campus)  
December 24, 2023 | 7:00 and 11:00 pm

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PRELUDE Christmas Time is Here *by Vince Guaraldi*

CHORAL PRELUDE Do You Hear What I Hear *by Harry Simeone*  
Sanctuary Choir

Said the night wind to the little lamb, "Do you see what I see?  
'Way up in the sky, little lamb. Do you see what I see?  
A star, a star, dancing in the night, with a tail as big as a kite."  
Said the little lamb to the shepherd boy, "Do you hear what I hear?  
Ringing through the sky, shepherd boy, do you hear what I hear?  
A song, a song high above the tree with a voice as big as the sea."  
Said the shepherd boy to the mighty king, "Do you know what I know?  
In your palace warm, mighty king. Do you know what I know?  
A Child, a Child shivers in the cold, let us bring him silver and gold."  
Said the king to the people everywhere, "Listen to what I say:  
Pray for peace, people everywhere! Listen to what I say:  
The Child, the Child sleeping in the night, he will bring us goodness and light,  
He will bring us goodness and light. Bring us light."

\*CALL TO WORSHIP O Come, All Ye Faithful (vs. 1, 3, & 6) UMH 234

**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;**

*Refrain:* **O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**

**Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation; O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God, all glory in the highest; (*sing refrain*)**

**Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning, Jesus, to thee be all glory given.  
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing: (*sing refrain*)**

\*WELCOME Rev. Amanda Davis

\*CAROL OF WELCOME Hark! the Herald Angels Sing UMH 240

**Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King;  
peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"  
Joyful, all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies;  
with th'angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"**

*Refrain:* **Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"**

**Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord;  
late in time behold him come, offspring of a virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail th'incarnate Deity,  
pleased with us in flesh to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel. (*sing refrain*)**

**Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings  
Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,  
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth. (*sing refrain*)**

LIFE OF THE CHURCH Celebration of 2023 Ministry & Christmas Offering Rev. Lance Richards

OFFERING PRAYER Rev. Amanda Davis

MINISTRY IN MUSIC

While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night  
Sanctuary Choir

by Dan Forrest

Kammi Estelle, Soloist (7 p.m.) | Bridget Warren, Soloist (11 p.m.)

While shepherds watched their flocks by night all seated on the ground  
The angel of the Lord came down And glory shone around, and glory shone around.  
"Fear not," said he, for mighty dread Had seized their troubled minds,  
"glad tidings of great joy I bring to you and all mankind. To you, in Bethlehem this day  
is born of David's line, a Savior who is Christ the Lord and this shall be the sign:"  
"The heavenly Babe there you shall find, to human view displayed.  
All simply wrapped in swaddling clothes, and in a manger laid.  
"All glory be to God on high and to the earth be peace.  
To those on whom his favor rests, goodwill shall never cease, begin and never cease."

\*OFFERING RESPONSE

In the Bleak Midwinter (vs. 4)

UMH 221

**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.**

\*INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE

Rev. Lance Richards

\*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Rev. Lance Richards

**Lord of Christmas Peace, we have done wrong. We have tarnished the gift you gave freely. We have buried you  
so deeply in our hearts, the world doesn't see you. We have not followed Christ, we have ignored your teachings,  
we have lived lives of apathy against your love, we have built fences and fortresses to push people away, and we  
have silenced the cries of those in need. Forgive us, we pray. Free us from our sin, free us from our captivity, free  
us to a life lived in joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

\*ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Rev. Lance Richards

Hear the good news: Christ died for us while we were yet sinners; that proves God's love toward us.  
In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

**In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven! Glory to God. Amen.**

\*GLORIA

Angels We Have Heard On High (Refrain)

UMH 238

*Refrain: Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!*

\*CAROL OF PREPARATION

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear (vs. 1, 2, & 4)

UMH 218

ALL:

**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.**

MEN:

**Still through the cloven skies they come with peaceful wings unfurled,  
and still their heavenly music floats o'er all the weary world;**

WOMEN:

**Above its sad and lowly plains they bend on hovering wing,  
and ever o'er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.**

ALL:

**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.**

\*SCRIPTURE

Luke 2:1-20

Rev. Lance Richards

MESSAGE

Good News Causes Great Joy for All People!

Rev. Lance Richards

PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev. Lance Richards

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Rev. Amanda Davis and Rev. Lance Richards

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts! **We lift them up to the Lord!**

Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God! **It is right to give our thanks and praise!**

...we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!**

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

**Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.**

,...all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and for ever. **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

UMH895 (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.**

GIVING OF THE BREAD AND CUP

Congregation

COMMUNION MUSIC

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

*arr. by Craig Courtney*

Sanctuary Choir

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 descending comes our 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 descending from the realms of endless day,

comes, the powers of hell to vanquish, 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!

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

7:00 The Sipes Family

11:00 David Linn & Leena Soo

\*CANDLELIGHT CAROL

Silent Night

*arr. by Mark Hayes*

*Choir only as candlelight is passed.*

**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.**

**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.**

**Silent night, holy night, fill our hearts with thy light. In the darkness may we shine  
with the promise of love divine; light of heaven on earth, light of heaven on earth.**

**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!**

CHOIR ONLY

The Savior is born.

\*BENEDICTION

Rev. Lance Richards

\*CAROL OF JOY

Joy to the World (vs. 1 & 4)

UMH 246

**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.**

**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

Hallelujah Chorus

*by G. F. Handel*

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**SERVICE PARTICIPANTS:**

ORGANIST

Paul Butt

EXECUTIVE PASTOR

Rev. Amanda Davis

DIRECTOR OF TRADITIONAL MUSIC

Dr. Terry Morris

SENIOR PASTOR

Rev. Lance Richards

PIANIST

Jeremy Wood

**STRING QUARTET:**

Violin

Viola

Cello

Boson Mo

Christine Elston

Louis Marie Fardet

Samuel Park

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