



## *Christmas Eve*

**WHITNEY  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
December 24, 2020      4:00 p.m.**

**Rev. Christina Thompson**

**SPECIAL MUSIC**

*Svetlana Maddox*

**Silent Night**

**WELCOME AND LIGHTING OF THE CHRISTMAS  
CANDLE**

Welcome to our Christmas Eve service on this silent and holy night. I am Rev. Christina Thompson, pastor here at Whitney UMC and I am so grateful you have joined us to worship tonight the Christ Child who has come to bring light into our world.

On this Christmas Eve, we are telling and entering the story again so that we might hear it anew.

We have been lighting the Candles on our Advent wreath one candle a week to help us get ready for Christmas. Tonight, we now light the Christ candle rejoicing that Christmas has come.

Many advent wreaths do not have this fifth white candle. So, you can light another candle if you have it, or just light all four candles on your advent wreath. Also remember to have another candle available for later in this service when we light our candles singing Silent Night.

## **CALL TO WORSHIP**

Time to turn off the cell phones. It's even time to put a piece of duct tape on the face of your watch. It's Christmas Eve and time is standing still for a moment.

It is the time, maybe the only time of the year, when here and now drift away and we fall under the spell of story-time.

Tonight, we are both here, AND on a lonely hillside outside of Bethlehem.

Tonight, we in our homes with most of us not traveling for this Christmas AND we are also with the Magi, on a journey and such a hard time for journey.

Tonight, we listen to our musicians, AND we listen to choirs of angels, a whole heavenly host of angels we have heard on high.

Tonight, like every night, is new, a never happening before moment in onrushing time, AND yet, we have been here before, done this before, told this story before, and heard it before.

There is a way that the story we tell tonight is always happening: birth and death and taxes, weary travelers with no place to stay, babies born, sudden signs of grace and glory and surprising generosity.

The past and the present are closely woven tonight, and we sense the presence of our own eternal selves, our souls perhaps, with our everyday selves tonight.

And when, at this evening’s end, we pass a visible sign of grace, the light of a candle, from visual hand to hand, we will see the radiance and beauty of one another, as seen through the eyes of a timeless love.

Come, it is Christmas Eve, let us worship together.

— written by Tom Schade, on [the lively tradition](#) blog

Like all stories, this story starts “in the beginning.” “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us.” John 1:1,14

Let us sing about this word that became flesh and lived among us as we open worship singing Hark the Herald Angels Sing.

## OPENING CAROL

*Andy & Svetlana Maddox*

### *Hark! the Herald Angels Sing 240 v. 1, 2*

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#### Verse 1

Hark the herald angels sing  
Peace on earth and mercy mild  
Joyful all ye nations rise  
With th'angelic hosts proclaim  
Hark the herald angels sing

Glory to the newborn King  
God and sinners reconciled  
Join the triumph of the skies  
Christ is born in Bethlehem  
Glory to the newborn King

#### Verse 2

Christ by highest heav'n adored  
Late in time behold Him come  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see  
Pleased with us in flesh to dwell  
Hark the herald angels sing

Christ the everlasting Lord  
Offspring of the Virgin's womb  
Hail th'incarnate Deity  
Jesus our Emmanuel  
Glory to the newborn King

## OPENING PRAYER

O Holy God, great storyteller and life giver, you have brought us to the stable where we hear again the story of how you came down to be one of us. As we enter this story, help us to hear it anew. May we feel how tired and worn Mary and Joseph must have been. May we hear the words of hope, “there is room in my stable”. May we experience the joy of new birth and the wonder of a baby sleeping in a manger. May we too hear the voices of those angels who come to announce the good news of great

joy and remember that this good news is for us too. May we know the wonder the Shepherds had in seeing this child lying in a manger and may we on this holy story-telling night, treasure in our hearts all that is God is doing. We pray in the name of the God who comes, Amen

(written by Rev. Christina)

Let us continue entering this story together as we hear the story as told by the gospel of Luke.

**SCRIPTURE**

*Luke 2:1-7*

**CAROL**

*Six Ways to Sunday (Band)*

**What Child is This UMH #219 v. 1,2 Band**

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**Verse 1**

What Child is this who laid to rest  
On Mary's lap is sleeping  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet  
While shepherds watch are keeping  
This this is Christ the King  
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing  
Haste haste to bring Him laud  
The Babe the Son of Mary

**Verse 2**

Why lies He in such mean estate  
Where ox and ass are feeding  
Good Christian fear for sinners here  
The silent Word is pleading  
This this is Christ the King  
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing  
Haste haste to bring Him laud  
The Babe the Son of Mary

**SCRIPTURE**

*Luke 2:8-14*

**CAROL**

*Andy & Svetlana Maddox*

*Angels from the Realms of Glory 220 v. 1, 2*

### Verse 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

### Chorus

Come and worship come and worship  
Worship Christ the newborn King

### Verse 2

Shepherds in the field abiding - Watching o'er your flocks by night  
God with us is now residing - Yonder shines the infant light

### Chorus

## SCRIPTURE

*Luke 2:15-20*

## CAROL

*Andy and Svetlana Maddox*

### **O Come, All Ye Faithful #234 1, v. 4, 6**

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### Verse 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

### Chorus

O come let us adore Him O come let us adore Him  
O come let us adore Him Christ the Lord

### Verse 4

See how the shepherds - summoned to his cradle  
Leaving their flocks - Draw nigh to gaze  
We too will thither - Bend our joyful footsteps

### Chorus

### Verse 6

Yea Lord we greet Thee - Born this happy morning  
Jesus to Thee be glory given - Word of the Father  
Now in flesh appearing

## Chorus

# CHILDREN'S MOMENT

## CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

*Rev. Christina*

## SONG

### Six Ways to Sunday (Band)

### Light of the Stable

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## Verse 1

Hail, hail to the newborn King  
Let our voices sing Him our praises  
Hail, hail to the guiding Light  
that brought us tonight to our Savior

## Chorus

Halle, hallelujah (4 times)

## Verse 2

Come now, let it shine so bright  
To the knowing Light of the stable.  
Kneel close to the Child so dear  
Cast aside your fear and be thankful.

## SCRIPTURE

*John 1:1-5, 14*

In my Sunday School class on Dec 13, we looked at verse 5 and pondered that the word we tend to translate overcome could also be translated as comprehend. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not comprehend it. That change of verb offers new insight to the light that Christ brings to the world and to us. The Christ child that we celebrate tonight has brought light to the world and to our lives. But how often the world doesn't notice it. How often do we not notice it? How often in this past year, has the gloom and unknown been so overwhelming that we have not seen the light of Christ shining right in our midst? It is there. But sometimes we do not comprehend it. So tonight, as we celebrate Christmas and this coming of the light, may we comprehend this light. May we know and see and follow this

light that is lighting our way forward. May we comprehend that this light shines for all of us. All of us.

Tonight, we light our candles reminding us of this light that comes so we might comprehend it. Normally we are together in the sanctuary, the lights go dim, the music to silent night starts and I take the light from the Christ candle and take it down from the altar and give it to the ushers who then share that light with people on the ends of the rows who then share it with their neighbor, all the while singing Silent Night. Soon this light is so bright we cannot miss it!

Tonight, we will do this lighting in a different way. I will take the light from the Christ candle and light my candle. Then I invite you to light a candle that you have at home. The light might not be physically so bright, but we know that through the Holy Spirit and through the coming of the Christ Child, that light is bright. While we sing Silent Night, you will see video of some of our church members lighting their candle.

## **LIGHTING OF CANDLES AND SINGING**

### **SONG**

*Andy & Svetlana Maddox*

**Silent Night - All Verses (+1<sup>st</sup> in German, no lyrics) UMH #239**

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### **Verse 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

### **Verse 2**

Silent night holy night - Shepherds quake at the sight  
Glories stream from heaven afar - Heav'nly hosts sing alleluia  
Christ the Savior is born - Christ the Savior is born

### **Verse 3**

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

## **Verse 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

This light has come, Christ is here, we do not face the “what next?” alone. There is such hope and joy in that knowledge. So, let us close our service singing Joy to the World the Lord has come!

## **CLOSING SONG**

*Andy & Svetlana Maddox*

### **Joy to World UMH #246 v. 1, 2, 4**

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## **Verse 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

## **Verse 2**

Joy to the earth 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

## **Verse 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

## **SENDING FORTH**

Go in peace filled with the light of Christ to share that light with others. May the peace of the light of the world be with you.

**And also with you!**

We invite you to join us on Sunday Dec 27 as we continue worshipping in this season of Christmas as we meet the characters of Simeon and Anna.

If you are worshipping with us at 4:00 on Christmas Eve, we invite you to join us on ZOOM for Christmas Eve fellowship. We will start about 4:45 or so.

May God be with us until we meet again!