



*CHRISTMAS EVE*

Family Service with Parish Drive ~ December 24, 2024

## **Your Christmas Offering:**

Come now and kneel before the Christ child.  
Bring all that you are and all that you have.  
Offer your gifts in wonder and surprise and in joy and delight.

*We invite you, at the beginning or closing of the service, to place your Christmas Offering in the gold plates located in the back of the Sanctuary.*

**GATHERING MUSIC**      *God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen*      *Parish Drive*

## **WELCOME**

All during the last four Sundays—the Season of Advent—we have been traveling to famous places “On the Way to Bethlehem.” Tonight, we will retrace our steps, finally arriving at Bethlehem to see what we find there!

## **CALL TO WORSHIP AND THE LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE**

Leader: You are invited to rise in body and/or spirit and sing together “We’re on our Way”.

**See Insert** – “*We’re On Our Way*” substituting the word “light” for the word “hope”.

Leader: The journey of life requires the light of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love shining out into the world.

**All: On our way to Bethlehem, we search for the star that lights the path.**

Leader: The road can be difficult, and the search for home can be elusive.

**All: We are a people who look for Good News for all people.**

Leader: There are milestones—signs and markers—that can guide us to a better day.

**All: God’s light goes before us, we are not alone.**

*Light the Christ Candle*

**See Insert** – “*We’re On Our Way*” substituting the word “light” for the word “hope”.

## **OPENING PRAYER**

Holy and Living God, we pray for more hope, peace, joy, and love in our world. Too often we throw up our hands in frustration, thinking there is little we can do.

Show us that much can be done in the most unlikely of places, including a small town like Bethlehem.

Call us to offer stability in times that feel difficult.

Call us to be “stables of care” so that we can show others that you are present with us, Emmanuel.

We pray this in the name of your Son, Jesus, the Christ, the Center of Our Lives.  
**Amen.**

\* **HYMN**    *Joy to the World (Unspeakable Joy)*                      *See p7 of this bulletin*

**SCRIPTURE**    *Isaiah 9:2, 6-7*

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders, and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Great will be his authority, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

**SONG**    *O Come All Ye Faithful*                      *Parish Drive*

**THE CHILDREN SHOW US THE WAY**

**See insert: Little donkey, little donkey**

**HYMN**    *O Little Town of Bethlehem*                      *UMH #230*

**THE STORY CONTINUES**

**Luke 2: 8-20** Nearby shepherds were living in the fields, guarding their sheep at night. The Lord’s angel stood before them, the Lord’s glory shone around them, and they were terrified. The angel said, “Don’t be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people. Your savior is born today in David’s city. He is Christ the Lord. This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger.” Suddenly a great assembly of the heavenly forces was with the angel praising God. They said, “Glory to God in heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors.”

When the angels returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, “Let’s go right now to Bethlehem and see what’s happened. Let’s confirm what the Lord has revealed to us.” They went quickly and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger.

When they saw this, they reported what they had been told about this child. Everyone who heard it was amazed at what the shepherds told them. Mary committed these things to memory and considered them carefully. The shepherds returned home, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. Everything happened just as they had been told.

**SONG**

*Do You Hear What I Hear*

*Parish Drive*

### **GUIDED BY PRAYER**

God of Hope, we come to you today longing for your presence in our lives and with all those who suffer—in body, mind, or spirit. We pray this day for...

God of Joy, we come to you today so deeply grateful for celebrations, triumphs, and even small steps toward the lives we seek and the world we desire. We pray this day for...

Holy God of Peace and Love, we know you are near. We know that every step along the way to Bethlehem in this Advent season is a step closer to renewed life in Jesus, the Christ. We know that your Spirit resides within us, growing day by day into the fullness of your Kingdom. In this moment, we pause in silence, marking your presence with awe and asking you to fill us, guide us, along our journey.

*Moments of Silence*

### **The Lord’s Prayer**

**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.**

**SONG**

*Winter Snow*

*Parish Drive*

## **RECEIVING AND SHARING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST**

We have checked the signs and markers to make sure we are moving in a faithful direction. We have arrived at Bethlehem, knowing that the Light of Christ has come to shine in our deepest night. We are not alone. Receive the light that comes to you: it comes from the Christ candle, but it reaches you only through your neighbors. Receive the light from a brother or sister in Christ. Hold the light, enjoy the light, and be thankful.

### **SILENT NIGHT**

**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! Shepherds quake at the sight.  
Glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing: "Alleluia!  
Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born!"**

**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! 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."**

## **BENEDICTION**

And now as you go forth from this place into the night, know that all the places you encounter in the world will contain signs and markers of God's work among us. So keep your senses alert, your perception wide, and your heart open to new discoveries along the way. For Christ is being born within you and among you.

## **GOING FORTH MUSIC**

*We're On Our Way*

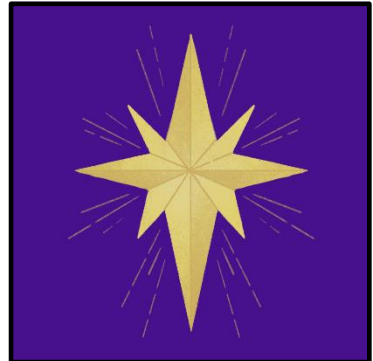
**We are grateful to our guest musicians and vocalists:**

*Eddie Easse  
Rachel Fikslin  
Joey Tible*

**And Parish Drive**

*Paul Fikslin  
Michael Michel  
Cathy Nalesnik  
Dave Philip*

*We wish you a Christmas full of  
hope,  
steeped in joy,  
abounding in peace,  
and overflowing with love!*



**Thank you for financially supporting our ministry.  
We offer many ways to give:**

*In the sanctuary or by mail.*

Online at [www.umcwayne.org](http://www.umcwayne.org)

<https://giving.ncsservices.org/app/giving/umcwgiving>

Text "GIVING" to 973-447-3223

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## Joy To The World (Unspeakable Joy)

### Verse 1

Joy to the world the Lord is come  
Let earth receive her King  
Let ev'ry 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 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

### Chorus

Joy, unspeakable joy  
An overflowing well  
No tongue can tell  
Joy, unspeakable joy  
It rises in my soul  
Never lets me go

### Verse 3

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

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Sunday December 29<sup>th</sup> @ 10am our journey continues as the Children show us the way to Persia: A Place of Return**

On this last day of our series, we ask ourselves, "What are we seeking? Where is our attention focused? What new stars may be calling to us? Will we just go back into routines of life or will we take this moment to understand more deeply how we can 'return anew?'"

**Our office will be closed this week.**

If you need assistance, please call Pastor Ninabeth at 908-391-2561.



***"When the song of the angels is stilled,  
when the star in the sky is gone,  
when the kings and princes are home,  
when the shepherds are back with their flock,  
the work of Christmas begins:***

***To find the lost,  
to heal the broken,  
to feed the hungry,  
to release the prisoner,  
to rebuild the nations,  
to bring peace among others,  
to make music in the heart ~ Howard Thurman***





**To Brighten our Sanctuary at Christmas!**

**In Honor of our Grandsons, Sean & Aidan**

**In Memory of our parents Jim & Dot Creamer and Paul & Dottie Atherton  
Don & Marilyn Creamer – 4**

**In Honor of my 14 nieces. In Honor of Michael, Robert and Debra Devos  
John & Dianne DeVos – 2**

**In Honor of our Sons, Hunter, Logan and Chase  
Nicole and Shane Force -3**

**In Memory of Esther Fredericks-Domes,  
Joseph Fredericks, & Henry Domes  
Jan Fredericks - 1**

**In Memory of Charles Mougalian, David B. Ingerman and Our Parents  
Lois Mougalian – 3**

**In Memory of Charles G. Mougalian, beloved Bapa and Father  
In Memory of David B. Ingerman, beloved Husband and Father  
Lori, Alex and Dylan Ingerman -2**

**In Memory of Loved Ones  
Robert & Nancy Kinch – 2**

**In Memory of Jesse Krum  
In Memory of Etta & John Smith  
Margaret Krum – 2**

**In Memory of Charlie Lehner  
Barbara Lehner – 1**

**In Memory of Our Loved Ones and Mom  
Liz Slevin- 2**



**In Memory of Loved Ones**

Janet Melone – 1

**In Memory and Honor of Family and Friends**

Jennifer Schiffrin-4

**In Memory of Santos and Dorothea Penin**

**In Memory of Gladys Jacobus**

Linda M. Penin – 2

**In Memory of our Granny - Evelyn Stephens and Nancy Wagner**

The Flores Family – 1

**In Memory of Our Parents and Beloved Sister in- Law, Jane**

Joe & Liz Tible – 1

**In Honor of The Monroe Family**

**In Memory of Mackenzie Jennings**

Bruce and Dawn Monroe-2

**In Memory of our Loved Ones**

Paul and Gail Papadopoulos-1

**In Memory of Jane and Wayne Shortman and Ralph and Millie Jackson**

Richard Jackson-2

**In Memory of Our Parents, Grandparents and Aunt**

Pastor Ninabeth and Family-2

**In Honor of Our Parents and Dear Friends**

**In Memory of Family and Friends**

Paul Jenny and Linda Faulkner- 2



### **THE LEGEND AND SYMBOLISM OF THE POINSETTA**

How the poinsettia and Christmas became linked centers around a bit of Mexican folklore involving a poor girl named Pepita. In the legend, Pepita had no present to offer baby Jesus at the Christmas Eve service. As she walked to church, she noticed weeds growing alongside the road. She gathered a bouquet of weeds (some accounts say she did this at the urging of an angel). When Pepita laid her bouquet at the feet of the Christ Child, the weeds burst into bright red flowers. From that night on, the poinsettia was known as “Flores de Noche Buena,” or “Flowers of the Holy Night.”

Symbolically, we have Jesus’ life story in one plant. The leaves symbolize the star that led the Wise Men to the newborn Jesus, the red leaves are a reminder of the blood of Christ shed during His crucifixion and the white leaves represent Christ’s purity.



Our Christmas poinsettias are given to the glory of God!  
You are welcome to take your poinsettia home with you at the conclusion  
of the 7pm Christmas Eve Service.

**UMC Wayne Ministers**

All the members of UMC in Wayne  
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