

Merry Christmas from Elizabethtown UMC

Sunday, December 24, 2023

**indicates to stand, if able*

Prelude:

Away in a Manger - Bass Recorder

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear - Bass Recorder

Gesu Bambino - Euphonium

Coventry Carol - Wind Trio

Greeting

Centering Words

***Call to Worship¹ (Leader, People)**

The night was dark.

A baby lay in a manger.

The night was still.

Angels sang to shepherds.

The night was expectant.

God's glory shone brightly.

On this night,

let us rejoice in the gift of love.

Special Music

Still, Still, Still - Vocal Solo

Opening Prayer

***Hymn:** *O Come, All Ye Faithful*

Lighting of Advent Candle

(Leader, People)

Reader 1: To a people longing for hope and yearning for deliverance, the prophet Isaiah declared,
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.

Reader 2: Tonight, we come seeking hope, peace, joy, and love, and we find these things in a child. God made flesh as a baby in a manger. A baby who is both the beginning and the end of our salvation, who dwells with us even now, our Emmanuel, God with us.

Congregation: We live as people in the in-between who celebrate the arrival of the Light that shines in lost and broken places as we wait for the day when we will live in the fullness of God's kingdom.

Reader 1: We light these candles as signs of our shocking hope, our just peace, our fierce joy, the love that transforms us, and Jesus Christ, our wondrous Light. May the Light burning in our hearts guide us, comfort us, protect us, and tend us in all seasons and circumstances, reminding us that day and night, in the light and in the darkness, God is with us. Our salvation has come! Amen.

Special Music:

Mary Did You Know

- Alto Sax Solo

Reading #1:

Isaiah 9:2-7 To Us a Child is Born

***Hymn:** *What Child Is This?*

Reading #2:

Luke 2:1-7 · The Birth of Jesus

***Hymn:** *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

Reading # 3:

Luke 2:8-14 · The Shepherds and the Angels - Part 1

***Hymn:** *Hark! the Herald Angels Sing*
(with Wind Trio)

Reading #4:

Luke 2:15-20 The Shepherds and the Angels - Part 2

Special Music: *God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen -*
Wind Trio

Meditation

Special Music: *Joy to the World - Piano solo*

Offering:

Invitation to Offering

Special Music: *O Holy Night - Piano solo*

*Doxology

*Prayer

***Closing Hymn:** *Silent Night*

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.

2. 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!
3. Silent night, holy night,
Son of God, love's pure light;
radiant beams from thy holy face
with the fawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.
4. Silent night, holy night,
wondrous star, lend they light;
with the angels let us sing,
Alleluia to our King;
Christ the Savior is born,
Christ the Savior is born!

***Benediction**

¹ From *The Abingdon Worship Annual 2023*.
Copyright ©2022 by Abingdon Press. Used by permission

Thank you to our musicians!
Mya Banks - Bass Clarinet
Henry Folke - Piano
Nick Gesell - Vocal, Euphonium
Layne Lackman - Piano
Denny Simpson - Organ, Bass Recorder,
Bass Clarinet, Contrabass Clarinet