

Outdoor Christmas Eve

4:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 24, 2020

This Christmas Eve we gather together in whatever ways are prudent in these pandemic times, to affirm what we believe, and to fill the night with music and light, as we celebrate the coming of Emmanuel: God with us in Jesus Christ.

O Come, All Ye Faithful (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;
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;
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Isaiah 9:2

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light. On those living in a pitch-dark land, light has dawned.

Prayer: Holy One, we thank you for the glimpses of heaven on earth in the faces and the light of those around us. Even in the midst of fear, of challenge, of struggle—even when our view is obscured by clouds of doubt, you ignite the flame of hope, love, joy, and peace within us. And so, on this Christmas Eve, we light our four Advent candles and the Christ Candle, to celebrate the light of love, born to live with us . . .

[Lighting the Candles of Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace, and the Christ Candle]

All Respond: Let us glow with its brilliance from the inside out. Amen.

The First Noel (UMH 245)

The first noel the angel did say was to certain poor shepherds
in fields as they lay; in fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Noel, noel, noel, noel, born is the King of Israel!

They look-ed up and saw a star shining in the east,
beyond them far; and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night.
Noel, noel, noel, noel, born is the King of Israel!

A Sharing of God's Light

Name for us all where you long to see God's light shining ...

*And we will affirm together after each person speaks: **Thank God for Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, born to us in the darkest of days.***

Luke 2:4-7

Since Joseph belonged to David's house and family line, he went up from the city of Nazareth in Galilee to David's city, called Bethlehem, in Judea. He went to be enrolled together with Mary, who was promised to him in marriage and who was pregnant. While they were there, the time came for Mary to have her baby. She gave birth to her firstborn child, a son, wrapped him snugly, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Silent Night, Holy Night (UMH 239)

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.

John 1:5, 14

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness doesn't extinguish the light.
The Word became flesh and made his home among us. We have seen God's
glory, glory like that of a father's only child, full of grace and truth.

Joy to the World (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.

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.

Blessing

And so, my friends, may we all let our God-graced lights shine as we continue to sing out the news that Jesus Christ is born, God with us now and forever. And may each of you be filled to overflowing with God's Spirit of hope, love, joy and peace, *this* Christmas!