

Christmas Eve 2020 “Filling the Night with Music and Light”
Memorial United Methodist Church – Dec. 24, 2020, Worship Guide
(On-line Worship premieres at 9 p.m. and remains available at www.gladstonechurch.org)

Gathering in the Light of God

Music to Center Ourselves: “Still, Still, Still” Mary Bastian

Lighting the Advent Wreath with Prayer Praise Team

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 have ignited the flame of hope, love, joy, and peace within us. Let us glow with its brilliance from the inside out. Amen.

Now is the time, where you are, to light the four candles of your Advent wreath—candles of Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace—and tonight, the Candle of Christ at the center.

Opening Hymn: “O Little Town of Bethlehem” UMH 230

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie; above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by. Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light; the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

Words: Phillips Brooks, ca. 1868. Public Domain

A Reading: “When the World Was Dark” Jeanne Wescott
(from *Cloth for the Cradle*, Iona Community)

Musical Reflection: “Bethlehem Night” Debbie Hubbard

Illuminated by God’s Word

Gospel Reading: Luke 2:1-7 Wilma Vanderdonck

Musical Response: “O Holy Night/Hallelujah” Drew Fase

Gospel Reading: Luke 2:8-15 Susan Lagina

Sung Response: “Angels We Have Heard on High” UMH 238

Angels we have heard on high sweetly singing o’er the plains, and the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains. Glo—ri-a, in excelsis Deo! Glo---ri-a, in excelsis Deo!

Trad. French carol. Public Domain

Gospel Reading: Luke 2:16-19 James Marohnic

Musical Response: “The Best Christmas Medley Ever” Jubilee Ringers

Gospel Reading: Luke 2:20 Nannette Martin

Musical Response: “Ukrainian Bell Carol” Kathy Young & Debbie Hubbard

Gospel Reading: John 1:1-5 Laurie De la Garza

Reflecting God's Light with Our Lives

Musical Reflection: *"I Believe"*

Jim and Jean Strathdee video

I believe in the sun, I believe in the sun even when, even when it's not shining.

I believe in love, I believe in love even when, even when I don't feel it.

I believe in God, I believe in God even when, even when God is silent.

Lyrics attributed to a poem found on a wall during the Holocaust.

Pastoral Reflection: **"I Will Light Candles this Christmas"**

I will light candles this Christmas:

Candles of joy, despite all sadness;

Candles of hope, when despair keeps watch;

Candles of courage, for fears ever present;

Candles of peace for tempest tossed days;

Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens;

Candles of love to inspire all my living;

Candles that will burn all the year long.

Howard Thurman

Sung Response: *"Silent Night, Holy Night"* UMH 239, vv. 1-3

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.

Words: Joseph Mohr, 1818. Public Domain.

Blessing for Christmas

Musical Blessing: *"Joy to the World"*

Kathy Young