

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP

Prelude “Christmas Declaration” Wesleyan Band
 “O Magnum Mysterium” The Highlanders

Welcome & Invocation, Rev. Joel Allen

Holy Christ, in the wonder of this place, we celebrate your birth. In the mystery of the Incarnation, we celebrate your grace. In the holiness of this time, we proclaim your hope. We gather to worship, to remember, and to praise! Amen.

Call to Worship, Rev. Joel Allen

L: As the town of Bethlehem lay asleep, a gift was born in a stable bare.

P: Bless us with your presence, O God.

L: The light of God’s Son came to bring joy and hope to a darkened world.

P: Shine your light into our hearts, Lord Jesus.

L: God blessed human hearts with his love and joy and wrapped his gift up in a manger.

P: We receive the gift of Jesus, born to save us from our sins.

L: To all who welcome Christ into their hearts, Jesus promises to enter in.

P: Come, Holy Spirit, and abide with us forever. Come, our Lord, Emmanuel!

Carol *When Will My Heart Arise* Traditional Carol/arr. Emerson
 DWU Women’s Choir

Pastoral Prayer, Rev. Denise VanMeter

The joy of discovery- that moment when hope and expectation were gloriously met by the illumination of one bright star. We cannot imagine what words were spoken by visitors or if first impressions left them somewhat confused. Messiah, Savior, a King – born in the barest of palaces. Yet they saw and fell down on their knees in adoration. Lord, they saw you and knew whom they had met. As we meet around crib, candle or advent wreath, draw us into that stable in our imagination. In the quiet moments of prayer this Christmas, that brief oasis from the bustle of the world, bring alive to us the smell of the hay, the sound of the animals, the cry of a baby. Draw us close to our Savior, Messiah and King as we bring not Gold, Myrrh, or Frankincense, but the gift of our lives, the only offering we can bring. Amen.

Advent Wreath Candle Lighting, Revs. Rebecca and Steve Trefz and Family

From the Gospel of John, chapter 8, verse 12 – *Again Jesus spoke to them saying, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.*

Throughout a lifetime, our hopes and wishes for Christmas change as we enter different seasons in life. As we mature, so does our faith and outlook. We no longer wish for a tree surrounded by gifts to open. Instead, we wish for the presence of our loved ones.

God gave us the greatest gift of all in the birth of his Son Jesus. Through him, we are given the everlasting gift of eternal life with him in heaven. Jesus is our guiding light and hope. His presence and love are always with us, now and through eternity. **As the Christ candle is lit** on the Advent wreath, may we reflect his love to those we meet and share the good news of his saving grace!

Let us pray: Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of your Son Jesus. May we all remember the blessings You graciously give us. Amen.

Scripture Reading, Jamie McGowen, Jr.

From the Gospel of John, chapter 1, verses 1 through 5, and 10 through 14 . . .

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

From the Gospel of Luke, chapter 1, verses 26 through 38 . . .

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her,

“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.” Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

Carol *In the Bleak Midwinter* arr. Cynthia Dobrinski Wesleyan Bells

Scripture Reading, Joahanna Allen

From the Gospel of Luke, chapter 2, verses 1-20

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!” (continued)

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Scripture Reading, by Mckenna Rogers

From the Old Testament book of Isaiah, chapter 9, verses 2, and 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. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace on 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.

From the New Testament book of Hebrews, chapter 1, verses 1 through 3 . . .

In the past, God spoke through the prophets to our ancestors in many times and many ways. In these final days, though, he spoke to us through a Son. God made his Son the heir of everything and created the world through him. The Son is the light of God’s glory and the imprint of God’s being. He maintains everything with his powerful message.

Message “The In-Person God” Bishop Ough

Carol *There is Faint Music* by Dan Forrest DWU Choir

Special Reading, Rev. Laurie Kidd

The First Christmas Night (by Kathy Hardee)

‘Twas the night before Christmas and all through the town,
not a creature was stirring – not a bed to be found.
So Mary reclined on a blanket of hay,
tired from the journey she traveled that day.
As Joseph lay sleeping on cushions of earth,
Mary grew restless, for soon she’d give birth.
She cried out in pain, then delivered a Son;
to that musty old cave, the Christ Child had come.
It was quiet and still, just a regular night,
‘till all of a sudden, there shone a bright light.
The angel proclaimed on that star-studded eve,
“A Savior is born to all who believe.”

The shepherds rejoiced as they eagerly ran
to see if this Baby was part of God's plan.
They came to the manger and found Jesus there,
then reverently bowed to whisper a prayer.
Then all through the town they declared with delight,
"Happy tidings to all and to all a good night!"

Unison Prayer, by Rev. Laurie Kidd

On this holy night, O God, we turn our hearts to you.
You are our hope, our light, and our salvation.
On this holy night, O God, we celebrate the joy of your coming,
and yearn to be born anew.
On this holy night, O God we celebrate the mystery of your coming,
awed at how you humbled yourself to be one with us.
On this holy night, O God, we welcome the Christ Child:
born in a barn among animals, wrapped in bands of cloth,
and laid in a feeding trough.
On this holy night, O God, we rejoice in your Son, Jesus, our Savior.
Amen.

Carol *Silent Night, Holy Night* (arranger: Schaffer)

Benediction Bishop Ough

Go now in wonder. Go to bring light to those in darkness, joy to those who can find no joy,
magic to a world steeped in realism. Go with the songs of angels in your ears, and the love of
God in your hearts. Go and spread the world – the baby of Bethlehem is born for all.

Sending Forth Carol *Hope was Born this Night* (arranger: Frey) (DWU praise team)

Postlude	<i>Carol of the Bells</i>	Leontovich/arr. Moglebust	Wesleyan Bells
	<i>He Is Born</i>	Traditional/arr. Goeller	LyricWood
	<i>Tiny King</i>	Joyce Elaine Eilers	DWU Men's Chorus