

Christmas Eve

December 24, 2023

Order of Worship

Prelude People Look East arr. Jason Krug
Handbell Ensemble
A Savior From On High Stephen Paulus
Chancel Choir

Welcome

***Hymn** Joy to the World UM Hymnal, No. 246

Prayer for Christmas (unison)

*Gracious God, we pray this night for all who have come with us to Bethlehem.
We pray for those who are poor and cold and hungry like the shepherds, that they may
hear the good news. We pray for those who are wandering and searching like the
magi, that they may find the place to leave their gifts and their burdens.
We pray for those who are busy, hurried and preoccupied like the innkeeper, that they may
know the peace that comes from a genuine act of hospitality. We pray for ourselves
– we who each need comfort and peace, even joy, in this starlit season and all the
days of our lives. Amen.*

***Hymn** O Come, All Ye Faithful UM Hymnal, No. 234
(vs. 1-4, 6)

First Lesson Isaiah 9:2-7
Minister: The word of God for the people of God.
People: *Thanks be to God.*

Pastoral Prayer and 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.*

Offertory O Come All Ye Faithful arr. Jason Krug
Handbell Ensemble

***Doxology** UM Hymnal, No. 95

***Hymn of Affirmation** Angels We Have Heard on High UM Hymnal, No. 238

*Gospel Lesson

Luke 2:1-20

Leader: The word of God for the people of God.
People: *Thanks be to God.*

Anthem A Babe is Born William Mathias
Chancel Choir

Sermon "A Love Story" Rev. Michael Ritter

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

Breaking of the Bread and the Sharing of the Cup

Prayer of Thanksgiving after Receiving

Lighting of the Christ Candle

Leader: The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

People: *And also with you.*

Leader: Jesus Christ, the son of Mary, the son of God is born this night.

People: *God's word has been made flesh among us.*

Leader: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

People: *Those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness - on them a light has shined.*

Leader: You, O Lord, have multiplied the nation. You have increased its joy.
For to us a child is born, to us a son is given,
and the government shall be upon his shoulder.

People: *His name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

Leader: He is also called Emmanuel, for in him God is with us.

Unison Prayer

Leader: Let us Pray...

People: *Eternal God, this holy night is radiant with the brilliance
of your one true light. May that light illuminate our hearts
and shine in our words and deeds. May the hope, the peace,
the joy, and the love represented by the birth in Bethlehem this night fill our
lives and become part of all that we say and do.
May we share the divine life of your son Jesus Christ,
even as he humbled himself to share our humanity. Amen.*

***Hymns**

Silent Night, Holy Night
(First verse sung in German by Chancel Choir)
Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

UM Hymnal, No. 239

UM Hymnal, No. 240

***Blessing and Dismissal**

***Postlude**

Joy to the World

arr. Don Hustad

*Congregation stands

Candlelight Service

A small candle or glow stick will be given to each person as you enter.

After the singing of "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" – please extinguish your candle.

After the service, as you exit, please place your candles in the boxes provided. Children may keep their glow sticks.

*The altar greens are given to the glory of God and in loving memory
of Julie Nicole Jett by Bob, Pat and Brad Jett.*



Rev. Michael Ritter, Senior Pastor
Rev. Mark Barnes, Minister of Congregational Care
Rev. James Alewine, Pastor Emeritus
Dr. Robert Taylor, Director of Music Ministries
Mr. Michael López, Organist

Bethany United Methodist Church

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Summerville, SC 29483



Thanks be unto God
for his unspeakable gift.

2 Corinthians 9:15, KJV

December 24, 2023
7:30 PM