

WORSHIP HANDOUT

December 24th
Christmas Eve



Welcome

Prelude

Lighting of the Christ Candle

*Opening Hymn UMH 234 O Come, All Ye Faithful
vs. 1,2,3

*Call to Confession:

As a kid I used to think the prayer of confession was scary. I thought it was a moment designed to make me feel guilty, intended for eyes cast down and shoulders hung low. But that's not it at all. The prayer of confession is an invitation. It's an opportunity to say, "This is who I've been, and this is who I long to be." So let us pray together. Let us be truth tellers. Let us hold our heads high and speak honestly before God and one another. This is easy to do when we are surrounded by a God who delights in us. Friends, let us pray:

Prayer of Confession

Holy God, we admit—we don't fully understand the Christmas story.

We are not familiar with angel choruses.

We have not walked many miles to be counted in a census,

and we don't always hear your voice in our dreams.

We don't fully understand this story, so we admit, sometimes we hesitate to tell it. Instead of running out into the streets to shout that there is a love bigger than we could imagine,

we whisper this good news.

Instead of throwing open the doors and inviting people in,

we simply leave them unlocked, hoping folks will figure it out.

Instead of telling the next generation why this night matters so much,

we stay quiet, afraid of creating pressure.

Forgive us for our silence.

Forgive us for our hesitation.

Forgive us for the moments when we fail to share your good news.

Plant this story of love so deep in our bones that we cannot help but share it from generation to generation. Amen.

Words of Forgiveness

Friends, repeat after me: No matter where we go,

No matter where we go,

No matter what we say,

No matter what we say,

No matter what we do,

No matter what we do,

We belong to God.

We belong to God.

We are held.

We are held.

We are loved.

We are loved.

We are forgiven.

We are forgiven.

Amen!

Opening prayer

O Holy God, we need this story—this Christmas story. We need this story of ordinary people who were brave. We need this story of love that changed the world. We need this story of angel choruses that give reason to hope, and starlight that reminds us to look up. In a battered and bruised world, we gather around your Word like people gather around a fire to warm themselves. So we are here, gathered together to warm ourselves by your light, because we need this story. We need the truth that lies deep in these holy words. So today we pray: scoop out space in us to truly listen. Quiet our minds. Open our hearts. Kindle the fire.

Amen.

The First Lesson:		Isaiah 9:2,6-7
Hymn	UMH 219	What Child Is This v 1
Second Lesson:		Luke 2:1-5
Hymn	UMH 230	O Little Town of Bethlehem vs. 1,2
The Third Lesson:		Luke 2:6-7
Hymn	UMH 217	Away in a Manger
Children's Moment		PA
The Fourth Lesson:		Luke 2:8-14
Hymn	UMH 238	Angels We Have Heard on High vs. 1-3
Sacrament of Communion		
The Fifth Lesson:		Luke 2:15-20
Sacrament of Communion (Cont.)		
Anthem		Who Comes this Night?
The Sixth Lesson:		Matthew 2:1-11
Christmas Eve Prayer		
*The Seventh Lesson:		John 1:1-14
Hymn	UMH 240	Hark! the Herald Angels Sing
Offering		
Offertory		
Doxology		
Message		
Lighting of Candles		
Hymn	UMH 239	Silent Night, Holy Night

Affirmation of Faith

We believe that for generations people have gathered together on this holy night, because there is something about this story that speaks to the deepest parts of us. We believe in bundling up this hope, this good news, and passing it on— to our children, to our neighbors, to the world around us. I believe my voice can make a difference, just like I believe this story can make a difference, so I will not stay quiet. I will tell this story—of a love that makes room for all. I will sing this story—of a love that knows our name. I will live this story—because love has come again. I believe that words have power. I will not stay quiet.

Amen.

Closing Hymn

UMH 246

Joy to the World

*Benediction

*Postlude

(Please be seated for the lighting of the candles. Candle lighters will light the Candles of persons sitting at the ends of the pews. The person sitting next to them tips their unlit candle over the upright burning candle, and this is repeated until all have lighted candles. Glowsticks are available for Children who might not be comfortable with a candle.)

(On the last verse, raise your candles to fully illuminate the sanctuary.)

(Please extinguish your candle as the lights come back up and return them to the box as you leave.)