

**Macon United Methodist Church**  
**190 W Bell Street, Macon, IL 62544; (217) 764-5133**  
**Pastor Terry McDorman; 630-390-0414; accesstogodshouse@gmail.com**  
**December 24, 2023** **Christmas Eve**

### **THOUGHT FOR THE DAY**

*Tonight, we remember the presents that we have opened during Advent; the gifts of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. Accept them. Use them. Wear them out, they shall be renewed by the Holy Spirit as needed.*

### **PRELUDE**

### **RINGING OF THE CHURCH BELL**

### **GATHERING**

Words of welcome



### **\*SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

*The light of God's love shines brightly!*

### **CALL TO WORSHIP (responsively)**

L: He's coming! He's coming! The Savior of the World is coming!

P: Let us prepare our hearts to greet him!

L: He comes to each one of us, healing and restoring our lives!

P: Praise be to God for God's mighty gift to us.

L: O Come, Prince of Peace, bring your light to us!

P: We are ready to receive you in our lives! Amen.

### **\*OPENING HYMN      "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing"      (UMH # 240)**

1. Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King; peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!" Joyful, all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies; with th' angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!" Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

2. Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord; late in time behold him come, offspring of a virgin's womb. Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail th' incarnate Deity, pleased with us in flesh to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel. Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

3. Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness! Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings. Mild he lays his glory by, born

that we no more may die, born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth. Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

## **LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES**

**(Mike and Connie Baker)**

**Reader 1:** We light the first Advent Candle: the candle of watching and waiting for we have searched and waited for our Savior to come to us.

**Reader 2:** We light the second Advent Candle: the candle of preparation as we have prepared our hearts to receive the Savior.

**Reader 1:** We light the third Advent Candle: the candle of beholding and believing because we have seen the mighty power and love of God in our lives.

**Reader 2:** We light the fourth Advent Candle: the candle of rejoicing because we have been blessed with the good news of God's love for all God's people!

### **Lighting of the Christ candle**

**Pastor:**

Now the time is near! The One who will save us, brings God's light into our world. We light this Christ Candle in celebration of God's most precious gift to us--our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen

\*(While the Advent candles are being lit, please rise as you are able and sing out so that all the heavenly hosts shall hear you!

***"Angels We Have Heard on High"***

**(UMH # 238)**

## **INVOCATION (unison)**

**Glorious God, who presents us with the most precious of gifts, we praise you for all your blessings in our lives. Tonight, we have come to this place, in the midst of a busy time. We might not even have everything ready at home, yet we have come, because we ourselves need to be ready. Work in our hearts this night, preparing us for your presence. Work in our lives that we may reach out to others in comfort and compassion; work in our world that the darkness that has encompassed it may be dispelled by the brightness of your love and your Gift. In faith and expectation, we pray. Amen.**

## **COMMUNITY PRAYERS**

### **SILENT PRAYER**

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

## SCRIPTURE READING

### Luke 2:1-20: The Story of the Nativity

In those days Caesar Augustus declared that everyone throughout the empire should be enrolled in the tax lists. This first enrollment occurred when Quirinius governed Syria. Everyone went to their own cities to be enrolled. 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 guestroom.

Nearby shepherds were living in the fields, guarding their sheep at night. The Lord's angel stood before them, the Lord's glory shone around them, and they were terrified. The angel said, "Don't be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people. Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord. This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great assembly of the heavenly forces was with the angel praising God. They said, "Glory to God in heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors."

When the angels returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go right now to Bethlehem and see what's happened. Let's confirm what the Lord has revealed to us." They went quickly and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. When they saw this, they reported what they had been told about this child. Everyone who heard it was amazed at what the shepherds told them. Mary committed these things to memory and considered them carefully. The shepherds returned home, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. Everything happened just as they had been told.

## MESSAGE

**"Way to Go Clarence!"**  
**Rev. Terry McDorman**

## HYMN

*"Angels from the Realms of Glory"*

(UMH # 220)

1. Angels from the realms of glory, wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
ye who sang creation's story now proclaim Messiah's birth:  
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn king.
2. Shepherds, in the field abiding, watching o'er your flocks by night,  
God with us is now residing; yonder shines the infant light:  
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn king.
3. Sages, leave your contemplations, brighter visions beam afar;  
seek the great Desire of nations; ye have seen his natal star:

Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn king.

4. Saints, before the altar bending, watching long in hope and fear;  
suddenly the Lord, descending, in his temple shall appear:  
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn king.

### **INVITATION TO SHARE**

*Tonight we come with our hopes and our dreams. We come as little children. We come because for some of us it is tradition for the whole family to go to church on Christmas Eve. Some have come out of curiosity. Some come because of loneliness. We are here in this place, waiting on tiptoes for something to happen. We come offering our lives and bringing our gifts. In the spirit of this night, let us receive our Christmas offering.*

### **OFFERTORY**

#### **PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS:**

#### **\*DOXOLOGY**

**(UMH # 94)**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God, all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Praise God, the source of all our gifts!  
Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!  
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

#### **\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

**There are so many things to be thankful for tonight, God. Receive these tokens of our gratitude for your love incarnate in the babe of Bethlehem. May they become God-with-us for all the world. May they breathe magic back into a world that needs a sense of wonder and joy.**

### **MUSICAL REFLECTION**

#### **CLOSING PRAYER: (unison)**

**God, we see your light shining in the darkness. We hear the Christmas Angels. We behold your promises fulfill in the birth of this wondrous child. May this magical story become real in our lives.**

#### **CLOSING HYMN**

**“Silent Night”**

**(UMH # 239)**

*During the singing of this hymn, the lights shall be dimmed and candles shall be lit.  
Please carefully hold your unlit candle over a lit one as the flame is passed.*

**1. 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.**

**2. Silent night, holy night, shepherd quake at the sight;  
Glories stream from heaven a-far, heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!  
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born!**

**3. Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light;  
Radiant beams from thy holy face with the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus Lord, at thy birth.**

**4. Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light;  
With the angels let us sing, Alleluia to our King;  
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born!**

**(The lights will be turned on)**

**\*BENEDICTION**

## **POSTLUDE**

***A very special thank you to all that have contributed in ways small and big to  
making this a memorable worship experience.***



Merry Christmas!