

BETHESDA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
6:00 p.m. Sunday 24 December 2020
Christmas Eve

ENTRANCE

Lighting of Candles and Prelude

Selected Carols

Announcements

Las Posadas (Service of Shelter for the Holy Family)**:
In the Hispanic tradition of Latin American countries, especially in Mexico, one of the oldest celebrations is Las Posadas. It was created by the Augustinian Father Diego de Soria about 1587 to introduce Christianity to the New World, and now it is revised by United Methodists Carlos Avendano, Raquel M. Martinez, and Roberto Escamilla... Las Posadas is a Christian, biblical, and evangelistic service out of the Hispanic culture.

*Joseph and Mary stand outside the sanctuary, accompanied by youths and children. One member of the group outside knocks on the sanctuary door and says:

**Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking;
if you hear my voice and open the door,**

I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me.
(Revelation 3:20)

*People outside the sanctuary say:

**Who will give lodging to these pilgrims
who are weary of traveling the roads?
We have come exhausted from Nazareth.
I'm a carpenter, by the name of Joseph.
In the name of the heavens, I beg you for lodging,
my beloved wife can no longer travel.**

(2)

People inside the sanctuary say:

**Although you tell us that you are weary,
we do not give lodging to strangers.
We don't care what your name is; let us sleep.
We are telling you that we will not let you enter.**

*People outside say:

**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. (John 1:10, 12)**

People inside say:

Who are the children of God?

*People outside say:

All who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.
(Romans 8:14)

People inside say:

To what does the Spirit of God guide us?

*People outside say:

**You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
and with all your soul, and with all your mind.
You shall love your neighbor as yourself. (Matthew 22:37, 39)**

**The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness,
generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.**
(Galatians 5:22-23a)

People inside say:

How do we know we love the Lord and have faith?

⋮

(3)

People outside say:

**What good is it, my brothers and sisters,
if you say you have faith but do not have works?
Can faith save you?
If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food,
and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm
and eat your fill,"
and yet you do not supply their bodily needs,
what is the good of that?
So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. (James 2:14-17)**

People inside switch on all the lights and say:

**Lodging we will give you with much happiness;
enter, good Joseph; enter with Mary.**

*People outside enter. All sit together and pray:

**God all-powerful,
grant that we may rid ourselves of the works of darkness,
and that we may invest ourselves with the weapons of light
in this life to which your Son, Jesus Christ,
with great humility came to visit us;
so that in the final day,
when he returns in majestic glory to judge
the living and the dead,
we shall rise to eternal life with you and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever. Amen.**

*All sing: 229 "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly"

PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

Lighting of ALL the Advent candles

Response: 2090 (*Verse 5 only*) "Light the Advent Candle"

First Lesson: Isaiah 9:2-7

Psalter: 815 (*Sung response: Joy to the world,
the Lord is come*) Psalm 96

(4)

Second Lesson: Titus 2:11-14

*Carol: 238 "Angels We Have Heard on High"

*Gospel Lesson: Luke 2:1-20

Reflection: "Now."

Joys, Concerns

Congregational Prayer:

**O heavenly Father,
as we prepare ourselves for the coming of your Son,
fill our hearts and lives with praise,
Grant that we may be just and merciful,
ready to help in the needs of our neighbor
and conscious of your great love for all the world.
Fill the Christian family with your spiritual gifts
of forgiveness, patience, mutual love, and unending joy.
All this we ask in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

THANKSGIVING AND COMMUNION ((Page 12ff)

(All are welcome)

SENDING FORTH

*Closing Carol: 239 "Silent Night"

*Dismissal with Blessing**:

God bless you, brothers and sisters.
May Christ keep us in the faith
until the day we shall appear before his presence.
Amen.

*Extinguishing of Candles and Postlude

*Indicates the people standing, if able and willing.

**THE UNITED METHODIST BOOK OF WORSHIP Copyright
(C) 1992 The United Methodist Publishing House