

BETHESDA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

6:00 p.m. Saturday, 24 December 2022

Christmas Eve

ENTRANCE

Lighting of Candles and Prelude

Selected Carols

Announcements: (*To help us connect, please sign the attendance pad in your pew*)

Call to worship**:

Leader: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock."

People: **How do those words of scripture call us to worship?**

Leader: They are words that declare that God is always seeking us.

People: **But has God found us?**

Leader: God only fully finds us when we want to open ourselves to God. God does not force us; we must respond.

People: **The first step, then, is from God, and the response is our responsibility.**

Leader: Yes! And that's what worship is all about. Through worship we open doors through which the Spirit may move and we can respond.

People: **Let us open the door and begin our response to worship. And let our response continue in the world.**

Leader: So be it.

*Opening Hymn: 234 UMH "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

Call to confession**:

Leader: God will hear us.

People: **If we say what's on our minds, what's in our hearts, what's going on in our world,**

Leader: God will hear us.

People: **Let us put our lives before God.**

Leader: Let us pray.

(2)

Corporate prayer of confession**:

People: **We come trusting in you, O God. We also come confessing that we are not always sure of you, not sure what you are, and sometimes not sure if you are. Forgive us, God, when we look around at the senseless violence and other injustices and lose all hope. Open our eyes to your continued love and to the mystery of your presence. Help us to be kind to one another, to be forgiving of one another and to live in love, just as Christ loved us. Amen.**

Words of Assurance**:

Leader: God hears our prayers.

People: **And God responds.**

Leader: Our assurance is that even when we forget, God remembers.

People: **God never gives up. We are invited to begin again.**

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

Second Lesson: Titus 2:11-14

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

*Gospel Lesson: Luke 2:1-20

(3)

Reflection: “*Surprise, surprise!*”

Joys, Concerns

The Peace: Let us offer one another signs of reconciliation and love. The peace of Christ be with you.
And also with you.

THANKSGIVING AND COMMUNION

All are welcome

The Invitation: As forgiven and reconciled people,
Let us offer ourselves and our gifts to God.

The Offering/Offertory

*The Doxology: (Page 95) “Praise God, from Whom
All Blessings Flow”

The Prayer of Dedication**:

Leader: These are our gifts, O God.

People: **They are not all that we have,
but they represent all that we are.**

Leader: Receive them in the spirit that we give them.

People: **Receive us in the spirit that we give ourselves.**

Leader: And let us find life in giving and being received.

People: **So be it.**

The Great Thanksgiving: (Page 15ff, UMC)

SENDING FORTH

*Closing Carol: 239 "Silent Night"

(4)

*The Benediction**:

Leader: Go forth into a new year.

People: **We go forth renewed by God’s Word.**

Leader: May you know and experience the hope that Christ offers us.

People: **We go forth with the knowledge that a new heaven and a new earth are always possible. There is a time for everything under heaven.**

Leader: Peace be with you, in the name of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

***Extinguishing of Candles and Postlude/Going Forth**

*Indicates the people standing, if able and willing.

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