



# Christmas Eve 2020

Thursday, December 24, 10:00 A.M.

## **“Light Shines in the Darkness”**

This year I am really glad that Christmas comes at the end of the year. We need to be reminded again of the “good news of great joy for all people.” “The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it.” It seems this has been a year of relentless tragedy in our world. From a pandemic, natural disaster, floods, hurricanes, fires, and earthquakes, to a frightening anger fueled by political division and social injustice. As tragic as this year has been, the reality is that it’s probably no different than the world into which Jesus was born. Suffering, fear, anger, sickness, violence, and injustice are not new. We need to be reminded again that there is a light that still shines in the darkness. That light is Jesus the savior of the world, the gift of the Father’s love for us. It is Emmanuel, God with us and for us. This is a season of incarnation and the world still needs the love of God to be manifest in bodily form. It is up to us to bring the love of God into the world today. As the mystic Meister Eckhart wrote, “We are all meant to be mothers of God, for God is always needing to be born.” Or as Paul reminded the church, “You are the body of Christ.”

Today we gather for worship on Christmas Eve to remember that “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son...” We gather to remember with humble and thankful hearts that the baby born in Bethlehem whose birth changed history, grew up to be the Savior who gave his life as a ransom for sin. As we gather for worship in this season of gifts, I am always reminded of the final verse of the carol, “In the Bleak Midwinter”; *“What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb; if I were a wise man, I would do my part; yet what can I give him: give my heart.”* To give Him my heart, maybe I first need to ask Him to give me something. In the words of the Psalmist, “give me an undivided heart, that I may revere your name.” We pray this Christmas will bring peace, hope, joy, and love to each of you. Merry Christmas from your staff at Wesley Monumental UMC, you are a gift to us.

**Christmas Eve 2020**  
**Thursday, December 24, 10:00 A.M.**

**WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ben Martin

*Thank you for joining us. Please remember to silence your cell phones and refrain from flash photography during the service.*

*Nursery: If needed, the nursery for infants to 3 years old is located on the first floor.*

*Please register your attendance: If you are a Wesley member or regular attendee, text @wmumc316 to phone number 81010 to join the Worship Service Attendance thread. If you have already joined, you will receive a text message reminding you to text the total number of household members worshipping and the service you are attending or if viewing online. If this is your first time using Remind, you may be asked to complete your name, phone number, and select "parent.") If you are visiting, please text your name and total number of attendees to Rev. Ben Martin, 912-547-1835.*

*Communion Offering: Today's Communion Offering is designated for the Christmas Mission Fund which will help people in the community who have been affected by the pandemic. If you would like to give, please place in the offering/tithe boxes located in the Sanctuary or you can donate online. [pushpay.com/g/wesleymonumental](https://pushpay.com/g/wesleymonumental) Select "Give One Time" then "Christmas Mission Offering."*

*Prayer Requests: Please email your prayer requests to Rev. Ben Martin, [ben@wesleymonumental.org](mailto:ben@wesleymonumental.org).*

**OPENING VOLUNTARY**

Daniel Berghout

Toccata Brevis on Joy to the World

\* **GREETING**

James P. Owens

**Pastor:** Do not be afraid; for see I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people:

**All:** to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

\* **LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE**

Luke 2:1-20  
Peter and Bonnie Delters

**CAROL**

Beautiful Star of Bethlehem

Hannah Dasher

**PASTORAL PRAYER**

James P. Owens

**SERMON**

Ben Martin

"A COVID Christmas Part 4: Blessings in Disguise"

**CAROL**

Sweet, Little Jesus Boy

Hannah Dasher

**INVITATION AND CONFESSION**

**Pastor:** Christ our Lord invites to his table all who love him, who earnestly repent of their sin and seek to live in peace with one another. Therefore, let us confess our sin before God and one another.

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**All:** We do not presume to come to this thy table,  
O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness,  
but in thy manifold and great mercies.  
We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs  
under thy table.  
But thou art the same Lord, whose property is always  
to have mercy.  
Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to partake of this  
Sacrament of thy Son Jesus Christ,  
that we may walk in newness of life, may grow into his  
likeness, and may evermore dwell in him,  
and he in us. O Lamb of God who takes away the sins  
of the world, have mercy on us. Amen.

*All pray in silence.*

**ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

**Pastor:** Hear the good news:  
Christ died for us while we were yet sinners;  
that proves God's love toward us.  
In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

**Congregation:** In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

**All:** Glory to God! Amen!

**THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

**Pastor:** The Lord be with you.

**Congregation:** And also with you.

**Pastor:** Lift up your hearts.

**Congregation:** We lift them up to the Lord.

**Pastor:** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**Congregation:** It is right to give our thanks and praise.

**Pastor:** It is right, and a good and joyful thing,  
always and everywhere to give thanks to you,  
Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth...

And so, with your people on earth,  
and all the company of heaven  
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**All:** Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.

**Pastor:**

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ...

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in  
Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving  
as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's  
offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**All:** Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

**Pastor:**

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here...

Through your Son Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit in your holy church, all honor and  
glory is yours, almighty Father, now and for ever.

**All:** Amen

#### **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 that 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; For ever. Amen.

#### **GIVING THE BREAD AND CUP**

*We will all take communion in our pew. If you did not receive a  
cup on your way in, please raise your hand and an usher or staff  
member will bring one to you.*

**PRAYER AFTER RECEIVING**

**All:** Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery  
in which you have given yourself to us.  
Grant that we may go into the world  
in the strength of your Spirit,  
to give ourselves for others,  
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

\* **PROCESSIONAL TO CALHOUN SQUARE / CANDLE LIGHTING**

*Once dismissed by the Ushers, please proceed to Calhoun Square.  
Following the Service, please take your candle home with you.*

\* **VOLUNTARY** arr. Keith Chapman

Bring a torch, Jeanette, Isabella!  
Bring a torch, to the stable call.  
Christ is born, tell the folk of the village.  
Jesus is born and Mary's calling.  
Ah! Ah! Beautiful is the Mother!  
Ah! Ah! Beautiful is her Child.

\* **CLOSING HYMN** Silent Night STILLE NACHT

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.

Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight;  
glories stream from heaven afar,  
heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!  
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born!

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.

Silent night, holy night, wondrous star, lend thy light;  
with the angels let us sing,  
Alleluia to our King;  
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born.

\* **BENEDICTION** Ben Martin

\* *Please stand as you are able.*

*Following the service, please take your bulletins, masks, candles,  
and all belongings with you.*

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## **Staff**

Rev. Ben Martin ..... Senior Pastor  
Rev. Nelle Bordeaux..... Outreach & New Members  
Rev. Jennifer Thompson..... Congregational Life  
Dr. Monica Dekle ..... Director of Music and Organist  
James P. Owens ..... Director of Student Ministries  
Charli Weeks..... Director of Children's Ministry

## **Ushers**

Chris Donegan, Dustin Hamilton, Jim Pannell, Aaron Pederson

## **Announcements:**

### **Have You Always Wanted to Read the Entire Bible?**

What a great New Year's Resolution! Starting next Sunday, January 3, there will be a Sunday School Class in the Fellowship Hall on the entire Bible chronologically. Please sign up with Nelle, [tbordeaux@prodigy.net](mailto:tbordeaux@prodigy.net) or 912-234-9245.

### **Young Mothers' Bible Study**

Will meet this Tuesday, December 29 via Zoom at 9:00 a.m. for an overview of the Bible. Bible puppet show for children at the start. Sign up, Nelle, [tbordeaux@prodigy.net](mailto:tbordeaux@prodigy.net)

### **Family Mission Project - Desks for Urban Hope Children**

Come assemble wood desks to help children learn! Saturday, January 23 from 10:00 a.m. to noon. All ages welcome. Sign up with Nelle Bordeaux. See the prototype built by Woody Brown in the Fellowship Hall.

### **Amen, Handymen-Need a Minor Home Repair?**

Teams of members assist seniors with a to-do list. To give or receive help, call Nelle, 912-234-9245

### **2021 Wednesday Night Bible Studies for Adults**

Come join us for a great start to the new year! Wednesday night adult Bible studies will return on January 13 with two classes. Ben Martin will offer a class called *Answers to the Big Questions: A study of Genesis 1-3, Job 1-3, Ecclesiastes 1-3, Matthew 5-7*. Jennifer Thompson will lead her class through a 12-week study called *The Epic of Eden: Understanding the Old Testament*. Be on the lookout for more information or call the church office.