

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLE LIGHTING SERVICE: "LIGHTING THE WAY"

(For the online service, attendees may bring bread and juice/drink, a candle, and a noisemaker. If in person: all receive a candle with the bulletin as they enter)

PRELUDE "God So Loved the World"

John Stainer

Sung by the Cathedral of St. John the Divine choir & chorale: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YerO2OXm0Ik>

CHRISTMAS PROCLAMATION

Today, God's love is revealed to the world as the prophet Isaiah promises:

"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:2,6)

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

(Advent candles may be lit with readings for each candle)

LEADER: The Lord be with you.

ALL: And also with you.

We gather to celebrate the birth of the One who is the light of the world.

We are here to worship and celebrate the birth of the Christ.

We light the Christ candle to remind us that the light has come into our world.

For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given;

He is called Emmanuel, which means "God is with us."

(Light the center candle in the Advent wreath)

PRAYER OF APPROACH

**Almighty God, you have made this night holy by the gift of your Son,
born of the Holy Spirit and of Mary.**

Upon him rested all your grace, through him has come all your mercy.

Let his light shine within our hearts tonight,

even more brightly than it shines from our candles.

Help us to hear your word, and to celebrate your everlasting love. Amen

SCRIPTURE John 3:16-17

SERMON "Mitakuye Oyasin" [Lakota for "all my relations/we are all related"]

Rev Cara Stultz-Costello

received her MDiv from Wesley Theological Seminary. An elder in the East Ohio Conference, she serves as District Superintendent of Tuscarawas District.

HYMN "Blessed be the God of Israel"

UMH 209

Sung by Ayo Ogunmekan, Fairview UMC, Dayton, OH, <https://youtu.be/4HdPBSYLbJA>

CELEBRATION OF COS GRADUATION – PART II

INTRODUCTION from Rev. Dr. Rebeka Maples

GRADUATE REFLECTIONS from:

Beverly Hurlburt, West Ohio
Laurie Koivula, Michigan
Kathy Mihoerck, Western Pennsylvania
Jim Westermann, Jr., East Ohio

Also graduating:

Bruce Keen, Western Pennsylvania
Penny Nunn, Michigan
Linda Ward, West Ohio

GRADUATES recognized at Sept 25 worship service: Brad Bloomster, Terry Burkhardt, Bob Carson, Jr., Dan Colthorp, Will Council, Bill Eckert, Dawn Hargraves, and Ken Hundley

WORDS from Rev. Dr. Joon-Sik Park, Director of COSSO

Director: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

ALL: And also with you.

Director: Let us pray together:

Eternal God, by your grace you have brought us together in your Church, which is the body of Christ. Grant your continuing grace to all who are called to leadership in your Church, that they may with diligence and faithfulness fulfill their ministries; and grant that we your people may follow where you lead, and serve you faithfully in the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Director: Who are presented for graduation?

Coordinator: Today we recognize these students for graduation from the Course of Study: Beverly Hurlburt, Bruce Keen, Laurie Koivula, Kathy Mihoerck, Penny Nunn, Linda Ward, and Jim Westermann, Jr.

Director: Let us offer our blessings for each graduate:

(blessing each graduate):

Director: (name) In the name of Almighty God, our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, we celebrate your graduation from the Course of Study. We commend you to your ministry as a Local Pastor in The United Methodist Church and pledge our continued prayers.

Spiritual Director: (name) May the Holy Spirit strengthen and guide you, that in all things you may do God's will in service to the church, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

(Service continues after blessing each graduate)

COS Coordinator: Our congratulations and prayers go with you. Your certificate and gift for graduation will be sent to you.

Director: I invite everyone to offer your prayers and blessings for our graduates - you may type your prayers in the Chat box and we will share them with the graduates afterwards...

COS Coordinator: Let us pray together,

Gracious God, we thank you for calling faithful servants to be Local Pastors in your Church. We humbly place these graduates in your care. Give them courage, patience, and vision, and bless them with caring communities; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Director: And now, remember your call. Preach the Good News. Shepherd the flock of Christ. And in all things, give God the glory, now and always.

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I declare that you have graduated from the Course of Study.

Everyone unmutes themselves to cheer with gusto.

HYMN

"Here I Am, Lord"

UMH 593

Sung by St. Mark's UMC, Houston, TX: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kk3LCQ5pWzI>

HOLY COMMUNION FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

(adapted *The Soft Petals of Grace*, by Thom M Shuman, Glasgow UK: Wild Goose, 2016)

GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

LEADER: On this silent night, God is with you.

ALL: And also with you.

On this holy night, God's grace comes to us.

Our hearts rejoice in him becoming one of us.

On this night of nights, the shadows melt away.

We join the choir of angels singing, joy to the world, Good News is born.

God of holy nights, this is the night you come to us to make all things new.

You made light out of shadows and shaped life out of emptiness.

Your love never failed.

You brought us out of slavery, and sent prophets to lead us.

You sent your only Son to become one of us.

Your love never failed.

So on this night when heaven touches earth with healing,

we join the angel choirs who sing of your glory,

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the One born for us this night.

Hosanna in the highest.

Holiness is who you are, God of Christmas,
sending blessings of love from the Christ Child.

By his death and resurrection, you have given new life to all creation.

So, as we gather on this holiest of nights,

we proclaim that mystery we call faith:

Christ is our light. Christ is our life. Christ is our hope. Christ is our promise.

BLESSING & COMMUNION

Pour out your Spirit upon us,
and on the gifts you have given us.

We lift the bread of life,

praying for the world to be One with you. *(break bread and eat)*

We drink from the cup of forgiveness,

praying for our lives to be One with Christ. *(lift cup and drink)*

PRAYER

**ALL: As your joy flows through us and we taste the promise of your heavenly feast,
may we live to love you and serve others, as we have been served by the Star-Child of Christmas,
Jesus Christ, Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty and Everlasting God, Prince of Peace. Amen.**

LIGHTING THE CHRISTMAS CANDLES

As we light the candles of Christmas may the Lord of Light open our minds and hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit, that we may hear and rejoice in Jesus Christ, the Light of the world, this night and all nights.

(the light is passed around to light each candle)

PASTORAL PRAYER FOR CHRISTMAS

Leader 1: O God of Christ and Christmas Light, you came into our world as a little helpless child, and you relied on a human family to care for you. In the midst of our Christmas excitement, we stop to thank you for this miracle and mystery. As the child Christ you cried because you were hungry, because you were homeless, because you were a stranger far away from home.

Leader 2: You still cry with hunger, in the voices of the many starving; your tears still flow, for the homeless, the lonely and the forgotten; and you still rely on us to use our skills and our knowledge to care for all you have created. Help us discover you as we care for one another, help us love what you love. For this is how we know the joy and mystery of this night. In your holy name we pray. Amen.

HYMN

“Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne”

TFWS 2100

Sung by hymncharts.com: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vspb7xpWdw>

BLESSING

May the love that made the stars be your guiding light.

May the love revealed in Jesus be our hope for the world.

Go in peace and carry your candle with you

reminding you that you are God’s prayer for the world -

this night and all nights. Amen

POSTLUDE

“Silent Night”

UMH 239

Sung by Northern Sky Theater artists: <https://youtu.be/gMeWoykkyuM>