

HOLLYWOOD UMC



CHRISTMAS

A CHRISTMAS SERVICE OF PEACE

DECEMBER 16, 2024

WELCOME

PRELUDE

“It Came Upon the Midnight Clear”

Mary Jane Seanor

OPENING LITANY

Pastor: Jesus Christ, you are the light of the world.

People: **The Light no darkness can overcome.**

Pastor: Stay with us now for it is evening.

People: **And the day is almost over.**

Pastor: Let your Light scatter the darkness.

People: **And shine within your people here.**

HYMN

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

UMH #211

RESPONSIVE READING

Leader: When the world was dark and the city was quiet, you came. You crept in beside us. And no one knew. Only the few who dared to believe that God might do something different.

People: **Will you do the same this Christmas, Lord?**

Leader: Will you come into the darkness of tonight’s world; not the friendly darkness as when sleep rescues us from tiredness, but the fearful darkness, in which people have stopped believing that war will end or that food will come or that a government will change or that the Church cares?

People: **Will you come into that darkness and do something different to save your people from death and despair?**

Leader: We ask this not because we are guilt-ridden or want to be, but because the fullness our lives long for depends upon us being as open and vulnerable to you as you were to us, when you came, wearing no more than diapers, and trusting human hands to hold their makers.

People: **Will you come into our lives, if we open them to you and do something different?**

Leader: When the world was dark and the city was quiet, you came.
You crept beside us.

People: Do the same this Christmas, Lord. Do the same this Christmas.

PRAYER TIME

People: Holy and Gracious God, you have searched us and known us, and so you know how difficult it is for us to be whole-hearted in our celebration of the birth of your Son. There are parts of us that cannot hear the angel's song. We believe their tidings of great joy are for some people, but not for us. We grieve, O God. Continue to love us, we pray, through our grief. Help us finally hear your promise that you travel beside us, and you will help us carry our burdens. AMEN.

LIGHTING OF THE 1ST ADVENT CANDLE

Leader: The first candle we light to remember those persons whom we have loved and lost. We pause to remember their name, their voice, their face, the memory that binds them to us in this season. We hold them before God, giving thanks for their lives in ours.

Please take a moment to remember those who have died. I invite you to name them, aloud or in the silence of your hearts . . .

People: Lord, each of us takes our loved one by the hand and leads them to you, the God of love. Here we present them to you. Accept our love and thanksgiving as we entrust them to your loving care. We want our loved ones to be free at home with you. We ask that you save a place for us beside them. We ask that you fill us with motivation and energy in the days ahead when we feel like giving up; remind us often of our true homeland where we are caught up in the desolation of the journey. Help us to find joy in the people, events, and the beauty of nature which surrounds us.

Thank you for the gift each of these people has been in our lives. We want to believe that we will celebrate the treasure of love with them again, when we are all in your presence forever. May this truth sustain us in the days to come. Take our sad and aching hearts and comfort us. Comfort us, when we only feel hollowness and emptiness. God of sorrowing, draw near!
Amen.

HYMN

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” v2

UMH #211

SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 40:1, 25-31

LIGHTING OF THE 2ND ADVENT CANDLE

Leader: The second candle we light is to redeem the pain of loss; the loss of joy and peace in our lives from the stresses which surround us, the loss of relationships, the loss of jobs with the security they bring, the loss of health in ourselves and in family members, the loss and loneliness we experience when our loved ones do not share our faith. As we gather up the pain of the past we offer it to you, O God, asking that into our open hands you will place the gift of peace.

Please take a moment to remember the losses. I invite you to name them, aloud or in the silence of your hearts . . .

People: God of mystery, we turn our hearts to you. We come before you in need of peace, grateful for the mystery of life and ever keenly aware of your promises of guidance and protection, we want to place our trust in you, but our hearts grow fearful and anxious. We forget so easily that you will be with us in all that we experience. Teach us to be patient with the transformation of our lives and to be open to the changes which we are now going through! Amen.

HYMN

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” v3

UMH #211

READING

Into this silent night as we make our weary way we know not where, just when the night be-comes its darkest and we cannot see our path, just then is when the angels rush in, their hands full of stars.

LIGHTING OF THE 3RD ADVENT CANDLE

Leader: The third candle we light for those who experience a loss of direction in their lives. For ourselves and those we love who experience grief, sadness and hurt. We remember that the darkness ends at the dawn.

God of the Exodus, you led Moses and your people through the wilderness to a new land. Hear our prayer. We want so much to have a sense of direction, to know where we are and where we ought to be headed. But the darkness and the questions stay. You ask us to be full of faith, to believe deep within that you are our signpost, that you are our wisdom and our guide, and to trust in your presence. Your words to us are clear: “Do not fear, I go before you.”

People: God of our depths, we cry out to you to be our guide. Help us to have a strong sense of inner direction and grant that we may have the reassurance of knowing that we are on the right path. Take our lives and use them according to your will. Take all that is lost in us and bring it home with you. Amen.

HYMN

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” v5

UMH #211

READING

The Christmas Spirit is that hope which tenaciously clings to the hearts of the faithful and announces in the face of any Herod the world can produce and all the inn doors slammed in our faces and all the dark nights of our souls that with God all things are still possible, that even now unto us a Child is born!

LIGHTING OF THE 4TH ADVENT CANDLE

Leader: The fourth candle we light as a sign of hope, the hope that the Christmas story offers to us. We remember that God, who shares our life, promises us a place and time of no more pain and suffering.

People: O God whose spirit is known by those whose hearts are thankful, and who makes cheerfulness a companion of strength, lift up our hearts, we pray, to a joyous confidence in your care. Guide us when we cannot see the way. Teach us to know that a shadow is only a shadow, because the light of eternal goodness shines behind the object of our fears. Where there is love in life, teach us to find it; help us to trust it and enable us to grow in the power of love so may our lives bring comfort and encouragement to others. We ask it, in the name of Jesus Christ whose life is our light. Amen.

HYMN

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” v6

UMH #211

*O Come, O Come,
Emmanuel*

RESPONSIVE READING

Leader: In the spirit of this season let us now confidently ask our God for all the good things we need: For ourselves as we participate in this Christmas as special people coping with our many different losses. God, hear our prayer.

All: **And in your mercy, answer.**

Leader: For our families and friends, that they may continue to help and support us. God, hear our prayer.

All: **And in your mercy, answer.**

Leader: For any person we have loved who has died, for all the losses we know in our lives, that all may be redeemed by your Easter promise. God, hear our prayer.

All: **And in your mercy, answer.**

Leader: For our family and friends, that you may bless them with love, peace, and joy. God, hear our prayer.

All: **And in your mercy, answer.**

Leader: For peace throughout the world as proclaimed by the Christmas Angels on that faraway hillside. God, hear our prayer.

All: **And in your mercy, answer.**

Leader: For greater understanding of the lessons of love and acceptance as taught by Jesus your Christ. God, hear our prayer.

All: **And in your mercy, answer.**

MESSAGE

Pastor Matthew Tate

SPECIAL MUSIC

Tom & Jeanne Rothwell, Maggie Osborne, and Ellen Proctor
“The Hands That First Held Mary’s Child”

COMMUNION

CAROL

“Silent Night”

UMH #239

BENEDICTION

Following the blessing, you are welcome to stay as long as you like.

You are also welcome to set an appointment with Pastor Matthew.

POSTLUDE

“Joy to the World”

Mary Jane Seanor

Christmas Eve Services



ALL OF OUR CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES ARE GREAT FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!

Invite your family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers to celebrate with us!

For those who can't join us in person, all services will be livestreamed on our YouTube Channel.

- 4:00 PM **Family Service**—Your whole family will enjoy this service!
- 7:00 PM **Candlelight Service**—Bring the whole family to this service featuring carols, choral music, special music, and candles.
- 11:00 PM **Vigil**—Featuring candles, carols, prayer, and communion.

CHRISTMAS OFFERING

This year's Christmas Offering will go to the HUMC Needy Fund and Three Oaks Center. All offerings received during the Christmas Eve services will be directed to the Christmas Offering. You can also use the Christmas Offering envelope from your numbered box or [give online to the Christmas Offering all month long.](#)



Merry Christmas



12 Days of Christmas Service
Sunday, December 29
10:00 AM

A collection of festive icons including a globe, a man in a military-style uniform, a bird, a drum, and a swan.

EPIPHANY/STAR WORDS SERVICE
OUR SERVICE ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, WILL FEATURE STAR WORDS FOR YOU TO FOCUS ON IN 2025.

A large, stylized white starburst icon.

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