

CELEBRATION ON CHRISTMAS EVE, 2022

GATHERING

WELCOME

PRELUDE

We bring in the light of Christ.

CALL TO WORSHIP

The impossible is about to happen in a stable.

**The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
Those who lived in a land of deep darkness, on them has the
light shined!**

This is the evening when creation stood still and held its breath,
for God was doing the most unbelievable, dangerous thing.

This is the evening when God embraced humanity
from the inside, as one of us, from birth to death.

**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.**

**And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace
and truth.¹**

Tonight we light candles...

God of peace, of joy, of love and hope. We remember your promise.
You are God with Us, Emmanuel. We open ourselves to you
this night, to become those who help to shine that light of Christ
wherever we are— in our lives, our families, our communities, and
our world.

**Fill us with your peace and light, make the world so calm and
bright.² Amen**

OPENING HYMN *O Come, All Ye Faithful, vs 1* #234

WE HEAR THE STORY

THE STORY BEGINS

Isaiah 11:6-9

and verses from Luke 1:26-38, Matthew 1: 18-25

SUNG RESPONSE *Emmanuel* #204

ON THAT NIGHT

Luke 2:1-5

SUNG RESPONSE *O Little Town of Bethlehem, vs 1,4* #230

Luke 2:6-7

SUNG RESPONSE *Away in a Manger, vs 1* #217

SHEPHERDS AND ANGELS³

Luke 2:8-14

SUNG RESPONSE *Angels We Have Heard, vs 1-2* #238

Luke 2:15-18

SUNG RESPONSE *What Child is This, vs 1* #219

REFLECTIONS ON THIS NIGHT⁴

Pastor Alaire Willits

WE RESPOND

PRAYERS AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Holy God of Love, there is light in our lives because of the
abundance of your steadfast love. A love so vast, so deep, so
real, that you became one of us. May we live within the power
of this love. And may we share its light with a world where too
many dwell in darkness. Amen.⁵

GIVING OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS

COME TO THE TABLE²

*All who desire to follow Christ are invited to the Lord's Table.
Come via the center aisle, and return by the side aisle. There
will be baskets for your Christmas offerings at the front. Come
with open hands, to receive. A gluten-free option is available, if
you wish; the elements can also be brought to you where you sit.
Let the usher know.*

SHARING THE LIGHT

Silent Night

#239

BENEDICTION ⁶

WE'RE SENT FORTH *Joy to the World* #246

POSTLUDE We take Christ's light out into the world.
Christmas Blessings to you all!

Special thanks to Ann Shriver for sharing her gift of music tonight and to the Alt family and Melody Amonson for reading, and the Johnston family for greeting and ushering.

Credit to all the following writers (pastor's personal favorites!)

¹ Bruce Prewer ² Marcia McFee, Worship Design Studio ³ Eugene Peterson, *My First Message* ⁴ J. Barrie Shepherd and Madeleine L'Engle, "First Coming", ⁵ Joanna Harader, Spacious Faith ⁶ Howard Thurman, "The Work of Christmas"

On **Christmas Day** worship will be online only. The link will be on the Eagle Grove UMC Facebook page, or you can connect directly from [iaumc.org](https://www.iaumc.org) (link is on the homepage) or type <https://www.iaumc.org/cabinetchristmas2022>

New Year's Day we will NOT gather in person – Pastor Alaire will post a short thought on our Facebook page.

Sunday, January 8, we'll gather again in person for a Wesley Covenant Service and begin 2023 with Communion.

The church office will be closed until Tue, Jan 3. Amy is on vacation until that time. Pastor Alaire is also on vacation, returning Friday, January 6. Pastoral Care has been arranged. Contact Pat Manues, 515-570-6268 for information.



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