



First United Methodist Church of Oak Ridge

December 21st, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

Welcome! We pray that worship at First United Methodist Church is a blessing for you, even as your presence blesses us. Since we remain under pandemic protocols, our time together will differ from our services in the past, but we celebrate that God's gift of grace is enough to sustain us in all circumstances. Wireless hearing aids are available from the ushers. If the last year has taught us anything, it is that being together to worship God is an enormous blessing.

WORDS OF WELCOME AND INSTRUCTION

†CALL TO WORSHIP

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by God, and without God nothing came to be. What came to be through God was life, and this life was the light of the world.

The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

†HYMN, NO. 196

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

HYFRYDOL

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus 196

1. Come, thou long - ex - spect - ed Je - sus, born to set thy
 2. Born thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child and

peo - ple free; from our fears and sins re - lease us,
 yet a King, born to reign in us for - ev - er,

let us find our rest in thee. Is - rael's strength and con - so -
 now thy gra - cious king - dom bring. By thine own e - ter - nal

la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art; dear de - sire of
 spir - it rule in all our hearts a - lone; by thine all suf -

ev - ery na - tion, joy of ev - ery long - ing heart.
 fi - cient mer - it, raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

WORDS: Charles Wesley, 1744

MUSIC: Rowland H. Prichard, 1830; harm. from *The English Hymnal*, 1906HYFRYDOL
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MEDITATION

Isolation

SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm 130

SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm 22

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, so far from the words of my groaning?

O my God, I cry by day but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest.

In you, our ancestors trusted. They trusted and you delivered them.

**It was you who brought me from the womb,
you who kept me safe on my mother's breast.**

Since my mother bore me, you have been my God. Do not be far from me,
for trouble is near and there is no one to help.

God does not despise the affliction of the afflicted. God does not hide from me.

When I cry to God, God hears me. Thanks be to God.

MEDITATION

Grief During the Pandemic

MUSICAL REFLECTION

You Are Not Alone

by: Kate Munger

SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm 38:8-21

†**HYMN, NO. 2200 (TFWS)**

O Lord, Hear My Prayer

HEAR MY PRAYER

MEDITATION

Erosion of Trust

SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm 42

MUSICAL REFLECTION

Life, Grace, Trust

by: Kate Munger

READING

excerpt from *Ladder of Light* by: Steven Charleston

GOSPEL READING

John 1 :1-5

LITANY OF REMEMBRANCE

We light this first candle to remember those whom we have loved and lost. We pause to remember clearly, their faces, their voices, their bodies. We embrace and give thanks for the memories that bind them to us in this season of expectation, when all Creation waits for the Light.

We remember them with love. May God's eternal love surround them.

Musical Response followed by silence for personal reflection

We light this second candle to remember the pain of loss: loss of relationships, loss of trust, loss of jobs, loss of health, loss of faith, the loss of joy. We acknowledge and embrace the pain of the past, O God, and we offer it to You, asking that into our wounded hearts and open hands You will place the gift of peace, shalom.

We remember that through You all things are possible.

Refresh, restore, renew us, O God, and lead us into Your future.

Musical Response followed by silence for personal reflection

We light this third candle to remember ourselves this Christmas time. We pause and remember the past weeks, months, and for some of us years, that have been heavy with our burdens. We accept and lay before you, God, the sharpness of memory, the sadness and grief, the hurt and fear, the anger and pain. We accept and lay before you the ways we feel we have fallen short, and the times we have spent blaming ourselves, and you, for all that we have suffered. We accept and lay before you the time we have walked alone, in darkness; and in knowledge of our own mortality.

We remember that though we have journeyed far, and that, while lost, we may have turned away from the light, the light itself has not failed. We remember that though winter be upon us and though the night be dark, with the turning of the Wheel the dawn will come, and dawn defeats the darkness.

Musical Response followed by silence for personal reflection

We light this fourth candle to remember faith, the gift of light and hope that God offers to us in the stories of Hanukkah and of Christmas, which both also began in abandonment, insecurity, and humbleness, in a time of war and in a poor stable. We remember that the loving God who kept the light shining in the temple and who came to share this life with us promises us comfort and peace.

We remember the One who shares our burdens, who shows us the way to the Light, and who journeys with us into all our tomorrows.

Musical Response followed by silence for personal reflection

MUSICAL REFLECTION

Be Not Afraid

by: John Michael Talbot

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

The lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

...we praise your name and join in their unending hymn:

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.

...as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

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 who 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, forever. Amen.

GIVING OF THE BREAD AND CUP

Music at Communion: *Spiegel im Spiegel*

by: Arvo Pärt

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

We thank you, God, for breaking into our world. We thank you for your constant love and for this meal of thanksgiving. Kindle our hearts and awaken hope, that we may know you as you reveal yourself in the world and in our lives. Amen.

†HYMN, NO. 230

O Little Town of Bethlehem

ST. LOUIS

†BENEDICTION

WORSHIP LEADERS

Rev. Mark Flynn, *Lead Pastor*

Rev. Jenny Caughman, *Spiritual Care Pastor*

Rev. Seth-O'Kegley Gibson, *Pastor of Worship & Music*

Rev. Annette Flynn, Rev. Caryl Griffin, & Dr. Bruce Spangler

Clayton Scarborough, *Lector & Soloist*

Josh Sumter, *Music Associate & Organist*

Lisa Muci-Eckhoff, *violinist*

Becky Szymanski & Janet Townsend, *vocalists*

(Lyrics reprinted under CCLI #1524077)

O Little Town of Bethlehem

1. O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie;
 2. For Christ is born of Ma - ry, and gath - ered all a - bove,
 3. How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly, the won - drous gift is given;
 4. O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;

a - bove thy deep and dream - less sleep the si - lent stars go by.
 while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - dering love.
 so God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heaven.
 cast out our sin, and en - ter in, be born in us to - day.

Yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light;
 O morn - ing stars to - geth - er, pro - claim the ho - ly birth,
 No ear may hear his com - ing, but in this world of sin,
 We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;

the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.
 and prais - es sing to God the King, and peace to all on earth!
 where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.
 O come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Em - man - u - el!

WORDS: Phillips Brooks, ca. 1868
 MUSIC: Lewis H. Redner, 1868

ST. LOUIS
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Alt. tune: FOREST GREEN