



As you gather with family, friends, or neighbors on Christmas Day, no matter where you may be around the world, you are invited to share in the following worship service. The readings may be read responsively or led by one individual.

ORDER FOR WORSHIP

Call to Worship

Our King and Savior draws near!

O come, let us adore him!

Opening Hymn

O Come, All Ye Faithful (Vs. 1 & 6)

UMH 234

O Come, all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.
Come and behold Him,
Born the King of Angels;
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.

Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
Born this happy morning,
Jesus, to thee be all glory given.
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing.
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.

Scripture Lesson

Luke 2:15-21

Christmas Message

The shepherds had been to the stable in Bethlehem; they had seen the infant Jesus, and had shared the promise of Good News, which the angels had proclaimed to them. The inclusion of the shepherds in this birth story is significant. It is often highlighted how the shepherds represented the low rung on the cultural ladder. The least and left-out were the first to be invited to share in the joy of Christ's birth.

But there's something else that is just as important about the shepherds as the Christmas story ends. Luke writes, "The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen." The shepherds did not become something more than shepherds that day. They did not move up a rung on the proverbial ladder of societal acceptance. They did not trade in their crook for a clergy collar. They were still shepherds, who left the stable and went back to the fields to tend the flock. Their job, their title, and their status among society had not changed – but their outlook on life and their hope for the future was transformed.

The Christmas story does not carry the expectation that you become something you are not. It is a reminder that you are included in the story, whoever you may be. Whether a shepherd or a magi, the promise of God's love in the incarnation of Christ welcomes you. So hear the good news and go forth this day glorifying and praising God, for Christ is born. Hallelujah! Amen.

Community Prayer

Loving God, moved by the coming of Christ to our lives, we seek to be your people. Help us to live in faithful covenant with you and with one another. Let the peace of Christ guide us, and let Christ's message in all its richness live in our hearts, that we may praise you without ceasing. Amen.

Closing Hymn

Hark the Herald Angels Sing (Vs. 1 & 3)

UMH 240

Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King;
peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies;
with th'angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new born King."

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Son of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lay his glory by, born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new born King."

Christmas Benediction

Behold the Lord proclaims to all the earth, "Your salvation has come! You are my holy people, the redeemed, whom I have sought out, never to be forsaken." As God delights and rejoices over you, go in peace, rejoicing in the Lord. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you now and always. Amen.

Have a wonderful and Merry Christmas!
We will join in worship on New Year's Day at 11:00am.

