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# AN ORDER OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

Christmas Eve | December 24, 2020

First United Methodist Church

601 North Cedar, Abilene, Kansas 67410 | 785-263-2623 | [www.AbileneFirstUMC.org](http://www.AbileneFirstUMC.org)

A Church of Open Hearts, Open Minds, and Open Doors.

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## GATHERING

Gathering of the Congregation

Greeting and Announcements

Prelude

### CALL TO WORSHIP

Christ is here on this night of nights.

**Christ is here indeed.**

Christ's love has called us here.

**Christ's love has bathed us in holy light.**

Let's sing with the angels and celebrate with joy.

**For Christmas arrives this night.**

— From *The Abingdon Worship Annual 2020*. Copyright © 2019 by Abingdon Press. Used by permission.

Opening Prayer

**HYMN\*** — *Hark! the Herald Angels Sing*, UMH-240

1. 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!"

2. Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord; late in time behold him come,  
offspring of a virgin's womb. Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail th' incarnate Deity,  
pleased with us in flesh to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.  
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King!"

3. Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness! Light and life to all he brings,  
risen with healing in his wings. Mild he lays 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!"

— Words: Charles Wesley, 1739; alt. George Whitefield, 1753.

# PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

Scripture Reading — Isaiah 9:2-7 (NRSV)

<sup>2</sup>The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—  
on them light has shined.

<sup>3</sup>You have multiplied the nation,  
you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you  
as with joy at the harvest,  
as people exult when dividing plunder.

<sup>4</sup>For the yoke of their burden,  
and the bar across their shoulders,  
the rod of their oppressor,  
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

<sup>5</sup>For all the boots of the tramping warriors  
and all the garments rolled in blood  
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

<sup>6</sup>For a child has been born for us,  
a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders;  
and he is named

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

<sup>7</sup>His authority shall grow continually,  
and there shall be endless peace  
for the throne of David and his kingdom.  
He will establish and uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time onward and forevermore.  
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

**HYMN\*** — *Joy to the World*, UMH-246

1. Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King; let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and heaven and nature sing.
2. Joy to the world, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ; while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
3. No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground; he comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found, far as. far as the curse is found.
4. He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove the glories of his righteousness, and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love, and wonder, wonders of his love.

— Words: Isaac Watts, 1719.

Children's Message

## Special Music — *O Holy Night*

### Scripture Reading — Luke 2:1-20 (NRSV)

<sup>1</sup> In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup> This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup> All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup> Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. <sup>5</sup> He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup> And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

<sup>8</sup> In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: <sup>11</sup> to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup> This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

<sup>15</sup> When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." <sup>16</sup> So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup> When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; <sup>18</sup> and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

### **HYMN\*** — *Away In a Manger*, UMH-217

1. Away in a manger, no crib for a bed, the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.  
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay, the little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.
2. The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes, but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes;  
I love thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.
3. Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask thee to stay close by me forever, and love me, I pray;  
bless all the dear children in thy tender care, and fit us for heaven to live with thee there.

— Words: Anonymous

### Scripture Reading — John 1:1-5, 10-14, 16-18 (NRSV)

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup> in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. ...

<sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup> He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. <sup>12</sup> But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. ... <sup>16</sup> From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. <sup>17</sup> The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

Sermon

## **A STATEMENT OF FAITH**

We are not alone,  
we live in God's world.

We believe in God:  
who has created and is creating,  
who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh,  
to reconcile and make new,  
who works in us and others by the Spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the church:  
to celebrate God's presence,  
to love and serve others,  
to seek justice and resist evil,  
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,  
our judge and our hope.

In life, in death, in life beyond death,  
God is with us.

We are not alone.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

## **RESPONSE\*** — *Glory Be To The Father, 71*

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

— Lesser Doxology, 3rd-4th cent.

## **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

God of Love Incarnate,  
we confess that, with the shepherds, we are terrified of your glory;  
for in glory's light we see plainly all that is wrong in the world:  
how oppression still enslaves;  
how the garments of war are still stained with blood;  
how those seeking refuge still find no place of safety.

We also see what is wrong with us:  
how passionately we pursue the things of this world,  
but forget to ponder the mystery of faith;

how we do not practice the peace you intend in our relationships,  
our community or even in the church.

Forgive us, we pray, and help us to not be afraid.  
Like the shepherds, we want to follow and find you.  
In the Savior's name we pray. **Amen.**

(A time of silent prayers of confession.)

## **WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

Good news! Great joy!  
In Jesus Christ the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all.  
Glory to God in heaven, and on earth, peace. **Amen.**

Prayer of Confession and Words of Assurance Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press  
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Invitation to the Offering

Special Music — *Silent Night*

**RESPONSE** — *Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow*, 95

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise God, all creatures here below; praise God above ye  
heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

— Thomas Ken, 1674

# **THANKSGIVING**

Prayer of Thanksgiving

## **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, [Meaning save us from the time of trial.]  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.  
Amen.**

## GOING FORTH

*Those who have candles available are encouraged to light them for the final hymn.*

**HYMN\*** — *Silent Night*, UMH-239

1. Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright round yon virgin mother and child.  
Holy infant, so tender and mild, sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.
2. Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight; glories stream from heaven afar,  
heavenly hosts sing Alleluia! Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born!
3. Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light; radiant beams from thy holy face  
with the dawn of redeeming grace, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.
4. Silent night, holy night, wondrous star, lend thy light; with the angels let us sing,  
Alleluia to our King; Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born!

— Words: Joseph Mohr, 1818

Blessing

Postlude

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## WELCOME TO WORSHIP

Please note that **bold type** indicates congregational participation. "UMH" stands for *The United Methodist Hymnal* (blue book).

## CLOSING CREDITS

Anna Gugler, Piano  
Heather Unruh, Liturgist  
Joy Clemence, Sound  
Cecelia Clemence, Slides  
Braden Adams, Video  
Jackson Welsh, Vocal Solo  
Carson Woodworth, Braden Adams, and Adam Weishaar, Instrumental Trio  
Clark Williamson, Director of Music Ministries  
Wendy Robinson, Director of Children and Youth Ministries

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# The Newsletter

December 24, 2020

First United Methodist Church, Abilene, Kansas

The mission of First United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ as we work together toward our vision of a church of open hearts, open minds, and open doors.

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## PRAYER CONCERNS

Please note: prayer concerns will be listed in the bulletin for four (4) weeks unless the church office is notified otherwise.

**MEMBERS AND FRIENDS:** Virginia Hoffman [12/6], Lillian Hoffman [12/20], Betty Cox [12/20], Bob Murnahan [12/20], Steve Crump [12/20], and those grieving the loss of Judy Hilton [12/20].

**COMMUNITY PRAYER CONCERNS:** Ethan Gustin [12/6], Aubrey Evans (friend of Rachel Gugler) [12/6], Kim Goodman [7/15/2018], doctors, nurses and other health care workers; students, teachers, administrators, school nurses, and other employees of local schools; restaurant and retail employees, postal workers and other delivery personnel; and all others working in essential industries, Employees and Owners of Small Businesses [12/20]

**THOSE WORSHIPING FROM HOME:** Gary Donley, Evelyn York, Velma Becker, Joe Clemence, Steve Crump, Walt Hartman, Ray Power, Marla Rutz, Bob Murnahan, Donna Smith, Martha Zutavern, Donna Richards, Dorothy Veach, Darlene Sexton, Melvin Leckron, Dorothy Snider, Linda Chase, Barb Hawk, Verl Eckman and many of us!

**THOSE SERVING IN THE ARMED FORCES:** Greg Austin, Tim Barns, Kayla Berven, Billy Brockman, Matthew Brinker, Ross Covington, Jessica and James Green, Christopher Griffith, Gavin Hanna, Cameron Hoskins, David Hoskins, Ryan Kriesch, Colby Miller, Samuel Miller, and James L. Wise, Jr.

**THOSE IN AUTHORITY:** The President, the Governor, the Mayor, the County Health Officer, County Commissioners, the County Attorney, and other elected officials and the judiciary (1 Timothy 2:1-4).

**DISTRICT PRAYER CALENDAR:** Today we pray for the Hope United Methodist Church and their pastor, Timothy Clevenger.

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# GENERAL NEWS

**END OF YEAR GIVING** — In order for your giving to be credited to your statement for 2020, we must receive your check in the church office by Monday, December 28, 2020. If you are mailing in a check, please send it as soon as possible for it to be delivered in time. Thank you and Happy New Year!

—Staff, 12/24/20

**WORSHIP WITH THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE** — I'm excited to announce that, since most United Methodists in Kansas and Nebraska are participating in worship services online at the moment, the Great Plains Annual Conference has put together a worship service featuring people from different congregations that we can stream, and broadcast, and watch in the sanctuary for December 27, 2020.

—Staff, 12/24/20

**CHRISMON TREE HISTORY** — The Christmas tree in the Sanctuary has a unique history. The decorations on the tree are called Chrismons, from "Monogram of Christ". In 1957, the Chrismons were first developed by Frances Spencer and the women of The Ascension Lutheran Church in Danville, VA.

The Chrismons on our tree were hand made by Dorothy Snider, a long time member of our congregation. Dorothy was a member of the United Methodist Women and she served as a District Officer for 11 years. In Kansas City, Dorothy saw Chrismons on a tree that were made of styrofoam. She asked for a pattern and in 2008, she went to Ben Franklin, in Abilene, and bought white felt and white beads. She began to make the Chrismons you see on our tree today. There are numerous Chrismons such as stars, crosses, fish, crowns, mangers, the Alpha and Omega, sheep, doves, Angels, and various symbols of Christ. The Chrismons are the focus of the decorated tree along with white lights.

Take the time to look carefully at the beautiful gift of art Dorothy created for our church. She currently resides at Countryside Home, north of Abilene.

—Pam Jackson, 12/20/20

**CONTINUED IMPROVEMENTS IN ONLINE WORSHIP** — We continue to improve the quality of our online and radio worship services. The quilts on the pews have cut down on the echos in a mostly empty sanctuary. This week (thanks to a special donation) we're adding an additional Mevo video camera to allow those watching online a better view of the liturgist. Stick with us, it's going to keep getting better.

—John Collins, 11/29/20

**I ENCOURAGE YOU TO WORSHIP FROM HOME** — I urge everyone who can watch online or listen on the radio instead of coming in-person to do so. I know that worship is important to many of you—it's really important to me too. I understand that the experience of in-person worship is far superior to "virtual" worship. But, because of the increasing spread of COVID-19, Dr. Holmes, Bishop Saenz, and I all urge you to refrain from in-person worship for now. That said, we will have services at 10:30 a.m. on both Saturday and Sunday, we have plenty of extra masks, and I do not intend to turn anyone away.\* In our present situation, you are the person best able to weigh your spiritual needs against the risks of in-person attendance. All I know is that the potential danger of attending in-person is both real and dire.

\* To comply with #DK11-01, I will reluctantly turn people away in the unlikely event that we have more than 30 people show up.

—John Collins, 12/18/20

**RESTARTING THE PRAYER VIGIL** — We're restarting the Prayer Vigil in virtual form from our homes. It's a full day of prayer every Thursday from 5 a.m. to 7 p.m. We have the following two slots that remain open: 8 a.m. to 9 a.m., 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. Please email John or call the church office if you are interested in participating

— John Collins, 9/27/20, updated 11/15/20

**WORSHIP ON AUDIO CD** — Are you having trouble streaming online or listening on the radio? We're delivering audio CDs with the same service that is broadcast on the radio. Contact John Collins or call the church office if you would like one.

— Staff

**WEDNESDAY EVENING COMMUNION** — We have a Zoom meeting scheduled for the Wednesday Evening Communion Service at 6:00 p.m. Here are the details:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://bit.ly/38bf9qZ>

Meeting ID: 937 0998 7388

Password: 67410

Manually Dial In With a Touch-Tone Phone

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Meeting ID: 937 0998 7388

Password: 67410

— Staff

**EMAIL UPDATES** — John uses a service called TinyLetter to send out blog posts by email every day or so. This way, you can keep up with their blog at [revcollins.com](http://revcollins.com) by simply checking your email inbox. You can also reply with an email of your own and let us know what you think. You can sign up at [tinyletter.com/jcollins11](http://tinyletter.com/jcollins11)

— Staff

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24 — CHRISTMAS EVE

5:00 a.m. Prayer Vigil Begins @ Homes  
7:00 p.m. Candlelight Silent Night in the parking lot  
11:55 p.m. Candlelight Silent Night in the parking lot

### FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25 — CHRISTMAS DAY — OFFICES CLOSED

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27

10:30 a.m. In-Person Worship Service  
10:30 a.m. Via KABI 1560 AM / Facebook and Vimeo ([abilenefirstumc.org/onlineworship/](http://abilenefirstumc.org/onlineworship/))

### WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 30

1:30 p.m. Staff Meeting Via Zoom  
6:00 p.m. Communion Via Zoom

### THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31

5:00 a.m. Prayer Vigil Begins @ Homes

### FRIDAY, JANUARY 1, 2021 — NEW YEAR'S DAY — OFFICES CLOSED

## **SATURDAY, JANUARY 2**

10:30 a.m. Recording the Online Service/In-Person Worship Service

## **SUNDAY, JANUARY 3**

10:30 a.m. In-Person Worship Service

10:30 a.m. Via KABI 1560 AM / Facebook and Vimeo ([abilenefirstumc.org/onlineworship/](http://abilenefirstumc.org/onlineworship/))

## **MONDAY, JANUARY 4**

7:00 p.m. Staff Parish Meeting Via Zoom

## **TUESDAY, JANUARY 5**

10:00 a.m. Parkinson's Group Exercise - Narthex

6:30 p.m. Outreach Committee Meeting

## **WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 6**

1:30 p.m. Staff Meeting Via Zoom

3:30 p.m. Power & Light

6:00 p.m. Communion Via Zoom

6:00 p.m. Youth Group

## **THURSDAY, JANUARY 7**

5:00 a.m. Prayer Vigil begins @ Homes

## **FRIDAY, JANUARY 8**

12:00 p.m. Offices Close

## **SATURDAY, JANUARY 9**

10:30 a.m. Recording the Online Service/In-Person Worship Service

## **SUNDAY, JANUARY 10**

10:30 a.m. In-Person Worship Service

10:30 a.m. Via KABI 1560 AM / Facebook and Vimeo ([abilenefirstumc.org/onlineworship/](http://abilenefirstumc.org/onlineworship/))

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# **STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION**

John Collins, Pastor — Mobile Phone: 620-252-9622 / Email: [john@revcollins.com](mailto:john@revcollins.com)

Pam Simpson, Office Administrator — Email: [office@abilenefirstumc.org](mailto:office@abilenefirstumc.org)

Wendy Robinson, Director of Children and Youth Ministries — Email: [wendy@abilenefirstumc.org](mailto:wendy@abilenefirstumc.org)

Clark Williamson, Director of Music Ministries — Email: [clark@abilenefirstumc.org](mailto:clark@abilenefirstumc.org)

Pam Jackson, Parish Visitor — Email: [parishvisitor@abilenefirstumc.org](mailto:parishvisitor@abilenefirstumc.org)