



Welcome to Christmas Eve Worship!

Wednesday, December 24, 2025 at 5:00pm
Lighting the Candles of Hope, Peace, Joy, Love
Lighting the Christ Candle

**Please stand as you are able.*

PRELUDE

Silent Night! Holy Night! ~ arr. by Tedd Smith and Don Hustad
Piano/Organ Duet; Lisa Hamilton and Marilyn Tice

WELCOME

Pastor Karen Evenson

CHRISTMAS CAROL

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear (UMH 218, v 1)

*It came upon a midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth,
To touch their harps of gold:*

*"Peace on the earth, goodwill to all,
From heaven's all-gracious King."
The world in solemn stillness lay,
To hear the angels sing.*

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES

"The Christ Candle"

***CHRISTMAS CAROL**

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus (UMH 196, v 1)

***GATHERED TO WORSHIP**

One: We gather together in this place; **All: prophets and dreamers, singers and poets,**
One: We have the will to imagine a world renewed; **All: the will to dream God's dream.**
One: We ponder with Mary; **All: we marvel at Christ's birth.**
One: God comes to us, a vulnerable child; **All: heaven and earth, meeting in a manger.**
One: The angels sing, the shepherds dance. **All: We treasure these things in our hearts.**
One: Come and worship, all who dream and imagine.
All: We come with wonder and praise on this Christmas Eve!

PRAYER

God of the vulnerable, you come to us in ways that defy expectation: as a fragile baby, not a trampling warrior; birthed in a stable, not a palace; born in the quiet stillness of night. Teach us to look for you in the tender things. Make our hearts soft and our spirits generous, living the way of Christ, born so long ago and again in us today. Amen.

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Luke 2:1-7 (NRSVUE)

Leader: God of newborn cries and shouts of justice, you proclaim the good news of God-with-us from all corners of creation. As we hear the Scriptures, may the words inspire us to dream of a world where hope, peace, joy, and love thrive among us.

All: God-with-us, Emmanuel, the angels sing of peace on earth, but conflict and unrest work to prevail in our world and in our hearts. We confess that we defend our interests and judge our neighbors, instead of living with grace and mercy. We fear difference instead of celebrating the diversity of your Creation. We close doors instead of opening them to neighbors in need. Abide in our hearts and renew us to lead with compassion in all that we say and do. We pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC

I Wonder as I Wander John Niles, arr. Rutter
UMCA Chancel Choir

THE SHEPHERDS & ANGELS

Luke 2:8-14

SPECIAL MUSIC

Birthday of a King/O, Holy Night arr. by Birdwing Music
Dale Brown

LOVE IS BORN

Luke 2:15-20

CHRISTMAS CAROL

“What Child is This” (UMH 219, v 1)

MESSAGE

“Embodied Promise”
Pastor Karen Evenson

PRAYER FOR OUR OFFERING

Holy God, we bring our gifts and offerings to you because the voices of the prophets remind us of something bigger, something greater than any system this world offers us. We believe when we trust you with our resources, the kin(g)dom of God comes much closer to reality on earth. Help us steward these gifts to create abundant life and love. **Amen.**

OFFERING

On This Day! 14th Century, arr. Mark Hayes
UMCA Chancel Choir

All: Praise God, from whom all blessings flow! On this Christmas Eve, bless the gifts we offer, that they will help this church to embody Your promise of love in the world!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Lighting of the Christmas Candles

There is a candle for each person who would like to shine a light for Jesus' birth tonight!

CHRISTMAS CAROL

Silent Night (UMH 239, v. 1, 2, 3)
v. 1 will be repeated after v. 3

*CHRISTMAS EVE BLESSING

Leader: For a child is born for us, a son is given to us. Authority will rest on his shoulders and he is named: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

All: What a gift to be present at the beginning of new life! God comes as an infant, reminding us all that new life is possible in the most difficult of times. As we go forth from this place, may we see present possibilities, not just distant dreams. May we lift up our gratitude that on that quiet night beneath the noise of the empire, Christ was born, not in power but in vulnerability. We sing with joy that love is born once again this day!

*CHRISTMAS CAROL

Joy to the World! (UMH 246, v 1, 2, 4)

*BENEDICTION

Go out into the world, embracing the will to dream, filled with the knowledge that new life is possible. As we celebrate tonight, be reminded that God is always with you. Merry Christmas!

POSTLUDE

I Am So Glad On Christmas Eve ~ Norwegian Carol

Worship Hospitality Team

Choral Conductor ~ George Chu
Congregational Care Coordinator ~ Sue Buckland
Discipleship Coordinator ~ Adam Breiner
Greeters ~ Heidi Moen and Margaret Ekstrum
Liturgist ~ Bev Summerbell
Music Ensembles ~ *To be prayerfully determined*
Organist ~ Marilyn Tice
Pastor ~ Rev. Karen Evenson
Praise Team Coordinator ~ Kelvin Paye
Snow Removal and Salting ~ Scott Evenson
Scripture Reader ~ Bev Summerbell
Ushers ~ Joyce Buffington and Mark Worst
Welcome Center ~ Bev and Dean Summerbell
Worship Tech ~ Dallas Berry

Stewardship Note: a reminder that all Christmas offerings and year-end gifts must be made in person, online, (or postmarked) by December 31, 2025 in order to be counted in 2025.

December 28, 2025

9:30am Worship (in-person and online)

First Sunday after Christmas

“Generational Praise”

Luke 2:22-40

Message by Adam Breiner, Discipleship Coordinator

January 4, 2026

9:30am Worship (in-person and online)

Epiphany Sunday and Communion Sunday

Matthew 2:1-15

“Courageous Defiance”

Message by Pastor Karen Evenson



WEEKLY SCHEDULE:

UMCA Office Hours: 9:00am - 3:00pm ~ Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday

Please contact us at: 763-421-2378 | Email: umcanoka@gmail.com

Thursday, December 25, 2025

Friday, December 26, 2025

Sunday, December 28, 2025

Merry Christmas!!! (Church Office is closed)

9:00am Women's Breakfast at Bakers Square

9:30am Worship (In-Person & Online)

9:45am Sunday School

DECEMBER

Ministry Highlight of the Month



**United For The Community:
EASTER “Resurrection & New Life”**

**We will be inviting our neighbors to an
Easter Community Event in March/April of 2026.**

Easter is April 5, 2026

Scripture: Luke 2:1-20 & Isaiah 9:2-7

Character Spotlight: Mary

THEOLOGICAL SUMMARY

Christmas proclaims that God's love arrives through solidarity and presence rather than spectacle or power. The incarnation is a radical theological claim: God chose to be born not in a palace, but into poverty and political uncertainty. The Gospel of Luke invites us to witness a nativity surrounded by imperial pressure—a census that reduced people to numbers—and yet, in this context Christ is born, not registered but revealed.

Mary's body becomes the dwelling place of divine love, and through her, the kin(g)dom begins—as mutual care and courageous embodiment rather than domination. Her "yes" to God transforms the world. The shepherds, outcasts of their society, are the first to hear the good news. Isaiah's promise of light breaking into darkness finds fulfillment not in empire's grandeur but in a manger among the weary, the displaced, and the faithful.

This story dismantles hierarchies of worth. The Divine chooses to be counted among the marginalized, turning lowliness into sacred space. Christmas, then, is not merely a celebration of birth, but of who is included in the story and where we are called to look for God. Amid documentation systems that erase the poor and systems that assign value based on productivity, Christmas insists: every life has sacred worth.



CHARACTER SPOTLIGHT

Mary is not just a passive vessel in Luke's gospel—she is a bold, faithful partner in God's liberating work. From the annunciation to the birth of Jesus, Mary models courageous consent, prophetic vision, and deep resilience. Her *Magnificat* (Luke 1) reveals her as a theologian and activist, proclaiming God's reversal of the world's power structures.

At the center of Christmas is Mary's act of embodied love: she nourishes, births, wraps, and lays down the Christ child in the midst of empire. She says yes to vulnerability, yes to risk, yes to a love that upends the world. Her faith is not quiet compliance but brave, bodily participation in the kin(g)dom of God. Her story teaches us that incarnation—God-with-us—requires human courage, and that love makes space for liberation through our bodies, our labor, and our care.

Christmas Eve: The Christ Candle

Person A: The birth of Jesus has been told and retold a thousand times and in a thousand ways.

All: Its impact cannot be contained in any one perspective. But who is telling the story changes how we hear it, how we imagine it, how we experience it.

Person B: Close your eyes, and imagine new parents who are excited to meet their son. Herod is terrified he might lose power and influence. The shepherds are in awe of all they have seen and heard. Whose perspective you consider changes the experience. Is this a story about an innocent child coming into the world or a story about one coming to upset the empire? (*wait a full ten seconds before speaking again.*) Now open your eyes. We hope, when we believe something good is coming! We hope, when we recognize all is not yet as it should be. Before we can hope, we must be honest with what is wrong—greed, judgement, harm done to others in so many ways. Our world is not as it should be, but with Jesus, we have hope that one day it will be.

All: We light the candle of hope because hope creates a path for a new, unknown story to unfold.

Light the first candle...for hope.

Person A: Hope allows us to set down, even temporarily, anxiety and worry for much-needed peace. Peace allows for a respite, ringing much-needed restoration; and restoration is needed to act without becoming numb or burned out.

All: We light a candle of peace because it requires us to pay attention to the needs of those around us.

Light the second candle...for peace.

Person B: When we are at peace, we can see joy in the most unexpected of places. Mary and Joseph found joy in a warm, dry manger. We can find joy in small acts of kindness and beauty in a harsh world.

All: We light the candle of joy because joy sustains us in the midst of uncertainty.

Light the third (pink) candle...for joy.

Person A: From joy we move to love! Love for God, love for family, for our neighbors, and for this world. Love motivates us to protect others and this world for generations to come. Love is far more than an emotion; it is the foundation of the gospel that is good for all!

All: We light the candle of love because love makes the impossible, possible.

Light the fourth candle...for love.

Person B: Tonight, we light the Christ candle. May we acknowledge the new light it provides, breaking through the darkness, disrupting what is, lighting the path for our dreams to come.

All: Give us the will to dream, O God. May all be true in your name.

Light the center candle...the Christ Candle.

