

Life & Light in the Darkness

December 21, 2025

Often we believe that darkness is bad; yet it is in the darkness that light shines, it is light in the darkness that draws us to safety, it is light in the darkness that reminds us that life exists.



Greeting

Prelude

Advent Celebration

Christmas is the season of celebration. Hear the voices of angels singing, Gloria! Like the sounds of distant trumpets announcing the greatest joy to the world Immanuel has come. Come, see the place where the child lays.

The Road to Bethlehem **calls us to the greatest announcement that would change the world forever.**

The Road to Bethlehem **proclaims Gloria to God in the highest and to all people peace on earth.**

The Road to Bethlehem **beckons shepherds to come and see the Glory of the Lord**

The Road to Bethlehem **calls us to “Fear not, for behold good tidings of great joy has come to all people. A Savior has been born in Bethlehem, come and see.”**

Isaiah 9: 6

6 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.

Luke 2: 10-12

10 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: 11 to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.”

Lighting Advent Candle and Hymn

Angels from the Realm of Glory #220 vs. 1

Centering Words

Psalm 130: 5-8

5 I wait for the Lord; my soul waits,
and in his word I hope;

6 my soul waits for the Lord

**more than those who watch for the morning,
more than those who watch for the morning.**

7 O Israel, hope in the Lord!

For with the Lord there is steadfast love,
and with him is great power to redeem.

**8 It is he who will redeem Israel
from all its iniquities.**

Opening Prayer

Father of light, who gives us unending joy, come to us, shine on us this Advent season. May the love that shines from the manger, shine within our hearts this day. Let all who see us find us faithful to the one born in Bethlehem. God of all time, Your Word became flesh and walked among us. Help us show others your unending love, joy, and peace that only Emmanuel can give. Receive our gratitude and awe for all that he has done, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

***Opening Praise**

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing #240 vs. 1&2
Angels We have Heard on High #238

Scripture

John 1: 1-18

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

6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. 8 He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. 9 The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

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

14 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. 15 (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.' ") 16 From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. 17 The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God. It is the only Son, himself God, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

Leader - "This is God's Word for all People"

People - "Thanks be to God"

Choral Anthem

Come and Behold Him

Children's Message

Message

Life & Light in the Darkness

***Gospel Praise**

Make room in Your Heart

The Peace

***Offertory Response**

Come and See the Glory of the Lord

***Prayers of Thanksgiving**

Prayers of the People

Lord's Prayer

***Closing Praise**

Love Has Come

Sending

Choral Benediction

Emmanuel # 1204

Postlude

*You are invited to stand as you are able or willing.

Prayer List

Pat Sankey, Kurt & Debra Behers, Barbara Gotwalt, Darla Franks, Deb Poulin, Carol Bair, Emily Gregory, Emma Dixson Family, The VanTres Family, Steve Ripka, Wm. Hill Jr., Kim Sharp, prayers for high risk pregnancy, Ralph John Harris , Gary Swimley and Family

DECEMBER 21: UMCOR - U.S. DISASTERS

UMCOR responds to natural or civil disasters of such magnitude that they overwhelm a community's ability to recover on its own. Through UMCOR, United Methodists extend loving care to people within the United States. When disaster strikes, it is local churches that provide the first response to their communities. This basic understanding—that disaster response is local—forms the foundation for UMCOR's US disaster training and response. When responding to a disaster in the United States, UMCOR provides training, financial assistance, expertise, community collaboration to churches and partners making them more resilient to disasters.

Announcements

Advent/Christmas Mission

This year, we are extending an opportunity to be a blessing to several ministries in our local community. In the main entryway of the church, we have a space set aside to bring in gifts to benefit persons who receive help from three (3) local ministries: St. Paul UMC shoe bank, Mommy Shoppe, and Schlow Library.

You will find the outline of a tree above the credenza in the hallway. As you bring in gifts, we invite you to put the associated picture of your gift on the "tree" as a decoration. Here are the items we are inviting persons to purchase or make: Sneakers, Diapers, Hats, Mittens, Gloves, Scarves. These items will then be taken to each of these outreaches on Monday, December 22nd. Any items that come in after this date will be taken to these ministries and outreaches the first week of January.

ANGEL TREE

Grocery Gift Cards for Elementary Families

In a year of financial unpredictability from world events, natural disasters, and frightening inflation stories, it's a good time to begin thinking about what the Christmas season will be like for those who find it difficult to meet regular needs. For many years, through the generosity of our congregation, we have provided toys, books, clothing, and household items to families within our community by pulling angels from a tree in our lobby.

However, in the last few years, we have recognized a need to provide food for families when the schools are on break during the Christmas holiday. Seeing this need, we have partnered with 2 Elementary Schools to provide grocery gift cards. These gift cards are purchased with money we receive for this mission. The cards are then shared with those identified within the schools who may struggle to provide a holiday meal or food during this time when school is not in

session. Last year, we were able to provide 52 Grocery Gift Cards to families within these two elementary schools. We will again be partnering with these schools to provide grocery gift cards and will be collecting money through December. Please visit our display in the lobby area for our donation box. If you write a check, please make check out to Mount Nittany and list Angel Tree in the memo section. If you would like an envelope to place a check or cash, there are some located in this display. Please prayerfully consider how you may contribute to this ministry and share our love with those in need in our community.

Calendar

December 21 - 27

Sunday

Friendship Class	8:30am	Boardroom
Worship	9:30am	Sanctuary
Children's Sunday School	9:30am	S/C Ed. Rm
Longest Night Service	7pm	Sanctuary

Monday

Pastor Office Hours	9am	Pastor's Office
Bible Study	10:00am	Boardroom
Bible Study	7pm	Zoom

Tuesday

Pastor Office Hours	9 -11am	Pastor's Office
Trustees	6pm	Boardroom
Council	7pm	Boardroom

Wednesday

Office closed Christmas Eve		
Children's Christmas Eve Service	5pm	Sanctuary
Adult Christmas Eve Service	7pm	Sanctuary

Thursday

Office Closed Merry Christmas