

Prelude *Once Upon a December* arr. E. Pandolfi
Narmina Aliyeva, piano
People, Look East arr. Sandra Eithun
Jubilee Ringers

Passing of the Peace*

Call to Worship* Rev. Dom Short Mejia
*Rise in body or in spirit

In a weary and worn world, how do we begin again? Where do we start?

Let us begin with tenderness. Let us begin with our hearts on our sleeve. Let us begin from a place of vulnerability and hope. Let us begin with love.

Yes, let us begin with love. Today we light the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love

May the warmth of these lights be our cornerstone. May the truth in these lights help us begin again.

May it be so! Amen.

Opening Hymn* *Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates* UMH #213

**Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates;
Behold, the King of glory waits;
The King of kings is drawing near;
The Savior of the world is here!**

**Fling wide the portals of your heart;
Make it a temple, set apart
From earthly use for heaven's employ,
Adorned with prayer and love and joy.**

**Redeemer, come, with us abide;
Our hearts to thee we open wide;
Let us thy inner presence feel;
Thy grace and love in us reveal.**

**Thy Holy Spirit lead us on
Until our glorious goal is won;
Eternal praise, eternal fame
Be offered, Savior, to thy name!**

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Gospel Reading* Matthew 1:18-25 Rev. Lou Seipel

Affirmation of Faith

We believe in a God who gives us reason to hope, a God who fills our nights with stars, who follows winter with spring, who dwells with and among us. We believe that this God has dreams for creation, dreams of justice like a mighty stream and swords that will be beaten into plowshares. Therefore, we push cynicism aside. We risk vulnerability. We hold onto hope, and we declare: "My soul magnifies the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior." Amen.

Baptism of Margot Mason

Do you, as Christ's body, the church, reaffirm both your rejection of sin and your commitment to Christ?

We do.

Will you nurture one another in the Christian faith and life and include this child now before you in your care?

With God's help we will proclaim the good news and live according to the example of Christ. We will surround this child with a community of love and forgiveness that she may grow in her service to others. We will pray for her, that she may be a true disciple who walks in the way that leads to life.

Thanksgiving Over the Water

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray. Eternal God: When nothing existed but chaos, you swept across the dark waters and brought forth light. In the days of Noah you saved those on the ark through water. After the flood you set in the clouds a rainbow. When you saw your people as slaves in Egypt, you led them to freedom through the sea. Their children you brought through the Jordan to the land which you promised.

Sing to the Lord, all the earth. Tell of God's mercy each day.

In the fullness of time you sent Jesus, nurtured in the water of a womb. He was baptized by John and anointed by your Spirit. He called his disciples to share in the baptism of his death and resurrection and to make disciples of all nations.

Declare his works to the nations, his glory among all the people.

Pour out your Holy Spirit, to bless this gift of water and the one who receives it, to wash away her sin and clothe her in righteousness throughout her life, that, dying and being raised with Christ, she may share in his final victory.

All praise to you, Eternal God, through your Son Jesus Christ, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns forever. Amen

Baptism with Laying on of Hands

I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

The Holy Spirit work within you, that being born through water and the Spirit you may be a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Now it is our joy to welcome our new sister in Christ.

Through baptism you are incorporated by the Holy Spirit into God's new creation and made to share in Christ's royal priesthood. We are all one in Christ Jesus. With joy and thanksgiving we welcome you as a member of the family of Christ.

Commendation and Welcome

Members of the household of God, I commend this child to your love and care. Do all in your power to increase her faith, confirm her hope, and perfect her in love.

We give thanks for all that God has already given you and we welcome you in Christian love. As members together with you in the body of Christ and in this congregation of The United Methodist Church, we renew our covenant faithfully to participate in the ministries of the church by our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our witness, and our service, that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.

The God of all grace, who has called us to eternal glory in Christ, establish you and strengthen you by the power of the Holy Spirit that you may live in grace and peace.

Children's Moments Rev. Lou Seipel

Special Music *Gentle Mary Laid Her Child* arr. Cathy Moklebust
Jubilee Ringers

Season of Prayer Rev. Dom Short Mejia
Silent Prayer
Pastoral Prayer
The Lord's Prayer

Offerings in Ministries and Gifts Rev. Lou Seipel
Offertory Music *Come to Us* Greg Walton (CCLI #6149833)

Jarod Ogier, Tim Byrer, Emily Campbell, Emily Stuart

Doxology* *Praise God, from Whom all Blessings Flow* UMH #94

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below:
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise God, the source of all our gifts!
Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

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Offertory Prayer

God, as we give our tithes and offerings today, we want to do it with all the trust and simplicity of a child. We bring these gifts in anticipation of God's promised day. Receive them, we pray, as our sign of faith in your redeeming love. Amen

Gospel Reading* Luke 1:46-55 Rev. Lou Seipel

Sermon "Hope is Worth the Risk" Rev. Dom Short Mejia

Closing Hymn* *Faith, While Trees Are Still in Blossom* UMH #508

Faith, while trees are still in blossom,
Plans the picking of the fruit;
Faith can feel the thrill of harvest
When the buds begin to sprout.

Long before the dawn is breaking,
Faith anticipates the sun.
Faith is eager for the daylight,
For the work that must be done.

Long before the rains were coming,
Noah went and built an ark.
Abraham, the lonely migrant,
Saw the light beyond the dark.

Faith, uplifted, tamed the water
Of the undivided sea,
And the people of the Hebrews
Found the path that made them free.

Faith believes that God is faithful:
God will be what God will be!
Faith accepts the call, responding,
“I am willing, Lord, send me.”

© Words by Anders Frostenson, 1960.

Benediction*

Rev. Dom Short Mejia

As you leave this place, may you have the wisdom to lean on one another. May you have the courage to hold onto hope, and the confidence to trust that God sees you -- as a blessing. **Advent invites us to begin again. To start now. In the name of Christ our new beginning, we go in peace.**

Postlude

Angels We Have Heard on High
Narmina Aliyeva

T. Albrecht

Announcements

Altar Flowers: The altar flowers are given in remembrance or celebration. Please visit the sign up beside the round table and sign up for Altar Flowers for 2025.

Livestreamed Service: The 10am service is being livestreamed on our YouTube channel.

Events today: Early service (Potter Chapel) 9am • Advent Study (Library) 9am • Worship service (Sanctuary) 1am • Reception (Fellowship Hall) 11am • Jubilee Ringers (Sanctuary) 11am • Impact (Potter Chapel) 6pm

Weekly Offering (electronically): Go to <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-Z2ZG/home>

Celebrate Pastor Lou: Today, after the 10am service, join us for a reception in South Fellowship Hall as we celebrate Pastor Lou's Retirement. If you would like to contribute toward Lou's travel fund as a token of your appreciation, please feel free to include that in your card to Lou.

Homebound Visits: Those who are visiting the homebound: please pickup Christmas bags for delivery. They are located in the hallway by the church office.

Become a Companion—Join Us in Serving Our Neighbors in Need: Join us in the Fellowship Hall on January 12 at 11:30am as Adam Householder, the Resource Manager at Hilliard Food Pantry Plus will lead us in a training on how to connect people with important resources such as housing assistance, Medicare and Medicaid enrollment, and SNAP benefits. These companions will guide individuals through the process and connect them to the organizations that can help. Register by emailing Pastor Dom at dominic@worthingtonumc.com, or by calling the church office at 614-885-5365. The deadline to register is Monday, January 6. Pizza will be provided. We look forward to seeing you there!

Foundry Groups: Early Methodists participated in weekly ‘class meetings’ where the members met and discussed their faith journeys and look over one another with love through their walks with Christ. We are hoping to embrace this practice in our congregation. To help start up this program we will be doing an 8-week study guided by the book *The Class Meeting: Reclaiming a Forgotten (and Essential) Small Group Experience* by Kevin Watson. If you are interested in participating in one of these groups please contact Abby Beers at alb.2135@gmail.com. Groups will meet at a place/time decided by each group once they are formed based on availability. Please sign up no later than January 6 so that groups can organize and begin meeting the week of January 13 running through the week of March 3.

Join us for Christmas Eve Services: We have three services on Christmas Eve—

4PM FAMILY SERVICE: Join us for a family-friendly service led with music provided by our children’s choir and bell ensemble! A coloring-page bulletin with crayons will be provided, along with jingle bells and glow sticks to add to our fun!

8PM LESSONS & CAROLS: Join us for a service that is focused around the Christmas Story and Carols. This service will also be livestreamed on our YouTube channel for those who wish to join us from home.

10PM CANDLELIGHT SERVICE: Join us for a Contemplative Service with Communion.

One Worship Service December 29: We will have one worship service at 10am in the Sanctuary on December 29. There will not be Children’s Church. Nursery will be provided on a first come basis. There will not be a livestream next Sunday.

Holiday Church Hours: The church offices are closed on December 26, 2024 and January 1, 2025. Office hours for December 30 and 31 will be 9am-1pm. January 2, the church office hours will be 9am-4:30pm.

Next Week’s Lectionary: 1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26; Psalm 148; Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52

Keep us in the loop! Please contact our pastors with pastoral concerns, including hospitalizations, births and deaths. Contact Dom at dominic@worthingtonumc.com or Lou at lou@worthingtonumc.com

Greeters: Sally Falk, Jim Gahman, Sally Jordan, Jerry & Liz Knorr, Kay Mollman, John Wolters, Ann Wheat

Ushers: Dave Dudley, Mark & Michelle Hadley, Marty Schwarz Jacob, Vivian Schweb, Gary Sieg, Ellen Stiner **Audio & Visual Team:** Brian Wingerter, Jessica Sapp, Kent Koch, Ken MacFarlane, Eric Hess, Craig Kramer

Worthington UMC Staff

Pastoral: Rev. Louise R. Seipel, Rev. Dominic Short Mejia, Ashley Gerard

Administrative: Mindy Go, Jessica Sapp, Danielle Wright

Facilities: Eddie Jarrell, Kelvin Poole

Music: Jarod Ogier, Tim Byrer, Emily Campbell, Emily Stuart, Narmina Aliyeva

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Christ-Centered. Engaged in Community. Sharing God’s Love.
