



## MILFORD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

December 3, 2023 | 1st Sunday of Advent | 10:00 AM

Hanging of the Greens—Holy Communion

Theme: The Gift of the Nutcracker

Jennifer Lovallo, Pastor

Jeffrey Fornoff, Music Director

### PRELUDE

### WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### \*CALL TO WORSHIP

How shall we prepare this house for the coming of the King?

***With branches of cedar, the tree of royalty.***

How shall we prepare this house for the coming of the eternal Christ?

***With garlands of pine and fir, whose leaves are ever living, ever green.***

How shall we prepare this house for the coming of our Savior?

***With wreaths of holly and ivy, telling of his passion, death, and resurrection.***

How shall we prepare our hearts for the coming of the Son of God?

***By hearing again the words of the prophets, who foretold the saving work of God.***

For God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.

***Glory to God in the highest!***

\* CONGREGATION STANDS AS COMFORTABLE

CONGREGATION RESPONSE IN ***BOLD Italic***

### BLESSING OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE

*In the darkest days of winter an evergreen tree brings hope of new life, reminding us of the gift of life we have through Jesus Christ.*

***Holy Lord, we come with joy to celebrate the birth of your Son, who rescued us from the darkness of sin by making the cross a tree of life and light. May this Christmas tree, arrayed in splendor, remind us of the life-giving cross of Christ, that we may always rejoice in the new life that shines in our hearts, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.***

### BLESSING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

*The circle of greens which form the Advent Wreath is a sign of life without end.*

Christ came to bring us salvation and has promised to come again. Let us pray that we may always be ready to welcome him.

***Come, Lord Jesus.***

That the keeping of Advent may open our hearts to God's love,

***Come, Lord Jesus.***

That the light of Christ may penetrate the darkness of sin,

***Come, Lord Jesus.***

That this wreath may constantly remind us to prepare for the coming of Christ,

***Come, Lord Jesus.***

That the Christmas season may fill us with peace and joy as we strive to follow the example of Jesus,

***Come, Lord Jesus. Loving God, your Church joyfully awaits the coming of its Savior, who enlightens our hearts and dispels the darkness of ignorance and sin. Pour forth your blessings upon us as we light the candles of this wreath. May their light reflect the splendor of Christ, who is Lord, for ever and ever. Amen.***

### CHILDREN'S MOMENT/ LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

\*OPENING HYMN

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" (verse 1)

UMH 211++

GOD WILL SEND A RIGHTEOUS KING

Jeremiah 23:5-6

Placing the Cedar Branch

*In ancient times the cedar was revered as the tree of royalty. It also signified immortality and was used for purification. We place this cedar branch as a sign of Christ, who reigns as King forever, and whose coming, in justice and righteousness, will purify our hearts.*

**HYMN** "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus" UMH 196++

**THE PROPHET DECLARES A CHILD WILL BE BORN** Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

**Placing the Evergreen Wreath**

*Because the needles of pine and fir trees appear not to die each season, the ancients saw them as signs of things that last forever. Isaiah tells us that there will be no end to the reign of the Messiah. Therefore, we place this wreath of evergreens shaped in a circle, which itself has no end, to signify the eternal reign of Jesus, the Christ.*

**HYMN** "People, Look East" (verse 1) UMH 202

**THE FOURTH SERVANT SONG** Isaiah 53:1-6

**Placing the Holly and the Ivy**

*For Christians, this passage from Isaiah reflects the sufferings of Jesus, who saved us from our sins by his death on the cross, and by his resurrection from the dead. In ancient times, holly and ivy were considered signs of Christ's passion. Their prickly leaves suggested the crown of thorns, the red berries the blood of the Savior, and the bitter bark the drink offered to Jesus on the cross. As we place the holly and the ivy, let us rejoice in the coming of Jesus, our Savior.*

**HYMN** "Hail to the Lord's Anointed" (verse 1) UMH 203

**THE MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION** John 1:1-5, 9-14

**Lighting the Christmas Tree**

*As we prepare for the coming of Jesus, the Light of the World, we light the Christmas tree. During this Advent, wherever you see a lighted Christmas tree, let it call to mind the One who brings light to our darkness, healing to our brokenness, and peace to all who receive him.*

**HYMN** "I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light" (verse 1) UMH 206

**SCRIPTURE LESSON** Jeremiah 33:14-16 OT p.738

**SERMON** "Waiting for Christmas"

**ANTHEM** "Come to Us Now, Emmanuel" Don Besig

**OFFERING**

**\*DOXOLOGY** "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow" UMH 95

**\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

*With these gifts, we seek to accomplish the good you intend, O God. Multiply the harvest of our offerings to feed your hungry people in body and spirit. We rejoice in the hope of these days as you reveal your promise among us, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.*

**PASTORAL PRAYER**

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

*Merciful God, we confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart. We have failed to be an obedient church. We have not done your will, we have broken your law, we have rebelled against your love, we have not loved our neighbors, and we have not heard the cry of the needy. Forgive us, we pray. Free us for joyful obedience, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

**PARDON**

Hear the good news: Christ died for us while we were yet sinners; that proves God's love toward us. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

*In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven! Glory to God. Amen.*

**\*PASSING OF THE PEACE**

**SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION** UMH 15-16

**LORD'S PRAYER**

**RECEIVING THE BREAD AND CUP**

*(Everyone is invited to come to the rail to receive the bread and cup)*

**PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

*Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit, to give ourselves for others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.*

**\*CLOSING HYMN** "Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates" (verses 1&2) UMH 213

**\*SENDING FORTH**

**POSTLUDE**



**GREETERS** | Linda Ryder **LITURGIST** | Nancy McCallum  
**FLOWERS** | Sign up with office **FELLOWSHIP** | Linda Grady

**TODAY'S COMMUNION OFFERING** will be received in support of **UNITED METHODIST STUDENT DAY**. United Methodist Student Day was the original Special Sunday founded by United Methodist Church Sunday Schools who collected offerings to help advance education for their children. The fund was originally established in 1872 as the Children's Fund. Today, United Methodist Student Day Sunday has the same purpose, calling upon the denomination to support their students as they prepare for life by adding knowledge to their faith. Supporting this Special Sunday is truly an investment in our future.

**PRAYER LIST:** Family of Kathleen Jewel, David Heim, Family of Marge Carofano, Pam Houskeeper, Doug Houskeeper, Marie Fornoff, Agnes Halsey, Dale Chanson, Sherry Raser, Martha Peldunas, David Kent, James Bennet, Barbara Repenning, Joan Pauley, Ali Fitzgerald, Roger Fitzgerald, Jodi Hancock, Gloria Schneider, Karen Boehning, Arlene & Emil Moglia, Ernie Balch, Michael Gilmore, Debbie Conklin, Carl Hendrick, Joan Lucciola, Lori Sheppard, Richard Holt, Lorraine Gregory, Gretel Metzger, Nancy McKeen, Steve Urban, Raymond Vetter, Brian Sheppard, Rose Belcastro, Jeanette Hendrick, Patrick Hall, Barbara Urban, Alan & Karen Zuis, Lee Malone, Ellen Lee, Joan Wortman, Robert Keuhne Sr., Henry Salidino, Bill Davis, Jim Lordi, Christine Pasquarosa, Patty Reynolds, Casey Peguero, Linda Klee, Geoff & Pam Sackett, Diane Siconolfi

**WE WELCOME ALL!**

**Visiting with us today? Please fill out a Visitor Card found in our pews, thank you!**

Our live church worship services are made available to persons viewing through the link: [www.facebook.com/MilfordUMC](https://www.facebook.com/MilfordUMC).

The weekly bulletin and monthly newsletter can be viewed through our website: [www.milfordmethodists.org](http://www.milfordmethodists.org). It is located under the Worship Heading on the site.

If you would like to be on our email list, please contact the office at [www.milfordmethodists@gmail.com](mailto:www.milfordmethodists@gmail.com) or (570) 296-6124.

**IMPORTANT CHURCH INFORMATION**

**CHILD CARE AVAILABLE** (NURSERY LOCATED AT END OF HALL IN EDUCATION WING)

**SUNDAY SCHOOL BEGINS 10:15 IN EDUCATION WING**  
 (CHILDREN WILL BE ESCORTED TO CLASS AFTER CHILDREN'S MESSAGE)

- **CHOIR REHEARSAL:** Sunday at 8:30 AM in the Sanctuary
- **BELL CHOIR REHEARSAL:** Sunday at 11:30 AM in Sanctuary
- **CRAFTY LADIES:** No Meetings Until Further Notice—Winter Break

**MEETING SCHEDULE and MEETING ZOOM LINK: [bit.ly/MUMCZoom](https://bit.ly/MUMCZoom)**

- **Tuesday, December 12, 6:30PM—Church Council Meeting (Hybrid)**
- **Thursday, December 14, 6:30PM—RMT**
- **Sunday, December 17, 4:00PM—Blue Christmas Service**
- **Tuesday, December 19, 6:00PM—Finance Committee Meeting (Online)**
- **Friday, December 29, 6:15PM—Ecumenical Food Pantry**



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