

Announcements

- 1 Next Sunday's Worship Leader is Carl Bishop.
- 2 If you ordered plants, the poinsettias will be available to take after the Christmas Eve service. Please come up one by one to take yours. Thanks Becky.
- 3 We are asking that everyone bring their Christmas card to church to hang on the wall in the coffee room, to be shared with our Asbury family. Thanks again!
- 4 Tau Cross - The cross hanging above the altar for the Advent season is called the Tau Cross. It is so named because it resembles the Greek letter of that name. It is also called the Old Testament Cross because, according to tradition, the pole on which Moses lifted up the brazen serpent was a Tau Cross. This is the original form of a cross. The cross was made many years ago by Robert Baldwin Sr.
- 5 Christmas Eve Worship Service will be a joint worship service with Zion KUMC held at Asbury UMC, Wednesday, December 24th at 5:00 PM.

Birthdays

23rd Carter Harrell, Jacob Harrell, & Dawson David Whitham

24th Janice Anderson

Flowers The flowers on the altar this week are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Sandra Howard and Naomi Webb, Cami's grandmothers, by Tim and Cami Webb.

Asbury United Methodist Church

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Worship Leader: Lee Arnold

* Please rise in body or in spirit

Chancel: Barbara Bishop

“Enthroned by Love”

Advent 4

December 21, 2025

GATHERING

Prelude “O Little Town of Bethlehem” Hanna Noh

Greetings and Announcements

We Gather at the Scene (Threshold Moment)

Leader: As we have ventured “beyond the lullaby” to unpack the circumstances surrounding the birth of Jesus, we have encountered a continuing human saga—one in which lullaby is met with lament for all that is not right with this world. But as we prepare for the celebration of the birth soon upon us, we are reminded that what also endures in the human story is the presence of hope beyond hopelessness, peace beyond understanding, and joy beyond despair. This is all made possible through the steadfast love of God-with-us.

[the candle-lighters/readers come forward to the nativity scene/Advent candles as we sing]

**So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh,
Come, peasant, king to own Him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.**

Leader: When we hear “let loving hearts enthrone him” in our theme carol, we are encountering the “essence of the message.” Love is at the heart of this beloved story of the birth of Christ. It is love that is the true definition of “kingdom,” of “kinship.” No one exemplifies this more than Joseph’s love for Mary and for the child. He is protector of Love; he is hospitality incarnated. Not only the very life of Jesus was in his hands, but his own character and sacrifice were influential in the way that Jesus went on to live his life and center “love for all” as his message.

Leader: We light this candle of Love for those who need it most.

People: For all who feel they are on the outskirts of love.

Leader: For all who know the loss of a love.

People: For all who are rejected because of who they are.

Leader: Our question for today at the scene of the nativity is this: “How will we make sacrificial love our aim in our time?”

People: What child IS this? This, this, is the babe who was swaddled in love and wraps us all in love forever.

Sing Together

**This, this is Christ, the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,
The Babe, the Son of Mary!**

Prayer of Invocation

[unison]

**Here, at the nativity of your birth,
give us the courage to face this moment
with a steadfast love that casts out fear.**

**Open us to new understandings of
the unfolding story of your presence among us.**

What child IS this?

Leader: This is the one who would go on to great sacrifice in the name of love.

What child IS this?

Leader: This, this is the one “Enthroned by Love” who invites us into more love than we thought was possible.

Closing Hymn “Angels We Have Heard on High” UMH 238 vs. 1 & 3

Benediction **Rev. Yohan Go**

May our Gracious God,
the Child of Love,
the Spirit of Resistance to Injustice
be with you now and as you go.

Amen.

Sung Response

Together

**This, this is Christ, the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,
The Babe, the Son of Mary!**

Postlude “Go, Tell it on the Mountain” Hanna Noh

forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

“So Bring Him...”
(Offering)

What gifts are adequate for the Child Enthroned by Love? Our theme song says, “so bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; come peasant, king, to own him.” Whether what we have to give is simply the gift of our presence and gratitude, or if we are privileged with coffers of precious resources, we give what we can. In this way we “take ownership” of our role in the scene, in the unfolding story of Love.

Offering/Offertory “The First Noel”

Doxology

Praise God of hope, Emmanuel,
Whose saving love with us will dwell.
Praise God, who hears our longing cry;
Praise Christ, whose dawn is drawing nigh. Amen.

Offering Prayer Rev. Yohan Go

SENDING FORTH

Just as our theme carol asks, “what child is this?” we, too, have come with our questions this day. We go into the world with answers of Good News, being the Body of Christ through our words and deeds.

We Ask, We Answer

Leader: As we prepare to go into the world,
let us ask and answer the question we came with.

What child IS this?

Leader: This is the one surrounded by sacrificial love.

Show us how to be with and for one another
in ways that add to the flourishing of all creation.
We pray in the name of the Child,
the Love Enthroned in our hearts and lives.
Amen.

Opening Hymn “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” UMH 240 vs. 1 & 3

Signs of Love

Leader: Peace be with you!
People: And also with you!
Leader: I invite you to pass the peace with one another and to those
worshiping online.

We Hear the Story

*Reader: The story of Joseph is told most clearly in the Gospel according to Matthew. Today we join the story in Mathew 1:18-25 as Joseph must decide what to do when Mary becomes pregnant. In the book, *The First Advent in Palestine*, author Kelley Nikondeha says this: “[Joseph] entered into her disgrace... They shouldered the shame together... God had invited him into the heart of the divine deliverance operation—along with its social stigma. Indeed, following the unborn Christ already had consequences.” Hear now the beginning of the story of Jesus’ saving love.*

This is how the birth of Jesus came about. When Jesus’ mother, Mary, was engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Joseph, her husband, an upright person unwilling to disgrace her, decided to divorce her quietly. This was Joseph’s intention when suddenly the angel of God appeared in a dream and said, “Joseph, heir to the House of David, don’t be afraid to wed Mary; it is by the Holy Spirit that she has conceived this child. She is to have a son, and you are to name him Jesus—‘Salvation’—because he will save the people from their sins.” All this happened to fulfill what God has said through the prophet:

*“The virgin will be with child
and give birth,*

*and the child will be named 'Immanuel'
—a name that means 'God is with us.'"*

When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of God had directed, and they went ahead with the marriage. He did not have intercourse with her until she had given birth; she had a son, and they named him Jesus.

Choir Anthem “Enthroned by Love”

Sermon
“Enthroned by Love” by Rev. Yohan Go

RESPONDING

Our faithful response is to praise God for this story of Emmanuel, God-With-Us, even and especially in the midst of difficulty, for God is indeed with us even still.

Sharing Joy and Concerns

“We Keep Watch” – Prayers

*“Great Holy One”
by Brian Wren and Susan Heafield - see downloads*

[sung together]
**Great, Holy One, spreading time and space,
show us who You are in a human face.**

[underscoring continues]

Leader: In this moment of silent contemplation, we lift up our hopes for the world, for its people, for the kind of kin-dom embodied by the child who was Love Incarnate.

Time of Silent Contemplation

*Leader:
Awesome one, how shall we meet you?*

*“In the wisdom of a child, in opponents reconciled?
When you meet with sudden kindness,
find my holy place in your neighbor’s face.”*

[sung together]
**Great, Holy One, spreading time and space,
show us who You are in a human face.**

*Leader: Holy Living One, Child of Love Spirit of Acceptance,
we come to you today weary of the divisions
perpetrated by those who profit from fear,
weary of continued violence by those
who refuse to acknowledge the right
to love and life for all people.*

*We know you are with us,
for you came to our human story when we needed your message so much.
We still do.*

*We ask, “what child is this that we follow, and who are we
in the scene of this unfolding story?”*

*As the manger awaits the arrival of the child,
we pray for a hospitality like Joseph’s,
and we again plead for your presence to break into our lives
and show us the light of love.*

*And we ask for the courage to step into the scene,
preparing the way for your kin-dom.*

Pastoral Prayer Rev. Yohan Go

*Be with us as we seek to be the Body of Christ in the world.
We pray this in the way you taught us, saying...*

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