

Asbury United Methodist Church

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Worship Leader: Kerri Dorsey

Chancel: Becky Arnold

* Please rise in body or in spirit

“Son of Mary”

Advent 3

December 14, 2025

GATHERING

Prelude “Away in a Manger” Hanna Noh

Greetings and Announcements

We Gather at the Scene

(Threshold Moment)

Leader: This week in our Advent series of asking and answering the complex question “What Child IS This?”, we encounter another description of the Christ Child that will tell us much more about who he was destined to be.

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

**What Child is this, who, laid to rest,
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
While shepherds watch are keeping?**

*[underscoring continues as the third Advent candle is lit
(the first and second candles are already lit)]*

Leader: We often hear Jesus referred to as the “Son of God” and the “Son of Man.” But this carol points out his identity over and over as the “Son of Mary.” This equally powerful description points to his being reared by a woman who, upon hearing she would bear a child, said “yes” to one of the most difficult and precarious situations she could face. And then she sings with joy a song of justice for the ages. She goes on to guide and help form this child who would tend to the suffering ones.

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

People: For all whose despair feels endless.

Leader: For all who find little joy in daily living.

People: For all whose disappointment runs deep.

Leader: Our question for today at the scene of the nativity is this: "How can we proclaim a deep joy "in spite of" hardship in our time?"

People: What child IS this? This, this, is the Son of Blessed Mary who reigns with joy 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 an uncanny joy.

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

Show us how to praise you even when songs and carols feel empty.

We pray in the name of the Child,
the One Who Uplifts our hearts and lives.
Amen.

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

Signs of Joy

Leader: Peace be with you!

People: **And also with you!**

Leader: I invite you to pass the peace with one another and to those worshipping online, and I invite children to come forward as we do so!

We Hear the Story

Reader: We all have witnessed people who "rise to the occasion," who bring energy and commitment, even and especially in the midst of the most unsettling times. From the book, *The First Advent in Palestine*, we read: "...without a doubt, [Mary] experienced the push and pull of war and resistance that shaped the villages of Galilee." The situation for women in the time of Jesus' birth was more difficult than we might imagine. In the scripture today, we hear that Mary will be perceived as an unwed mother, something that could have ruined her future forever. But she believes in the mission that God is laying out for her, and her role in it. Hear now this remarkable account:

Six months later, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a young woman named Mary; she was engaged to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. Upon arriving, the angel said to Mary, Rejoice, highly favored one! God is with you! Blessed are you among women!” Mary was deeply troubled by these words and wondered what the angel’s greeting meant. The angel went on to say to her, Don’t be afraid, Mary. You have found favor with God. You’ll conceive and bear a son, and give him the name Jesus—‘Deliverance. His dignity will be great, and he will be called the Only Begotten of God. God will give Jesus the judgment seat of David, his ancestor, to rule over the house of Jacob forever, and his reign will never end.”

Mary said to the angel, How can this be, since I have never been with a man?” The angel answered her, The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you—hence the offspring to be born will be called the Holy One of God. Know too that Elizabeth, your kinswoman, has conceived a child in her old age; she who was thought to be infertile is now in her sixth month. Nothing is impossible with God.” Mary said, I am the servant of God. Let it be done to me as you say.” With that, the angel left her.

Within a few days Mary set out and hurried to the hill country to a town of Judah, where she entered Zechariah’s house and greeted Elizabeth. As soon as Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the child leaped in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed, Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! But why am I so favored, that the mother of the Messiah should come to me? The moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who believed that what our God said to her would be accomplished!”

Mary said:

*“My soul proclaims your greatness, O God,
and my spirit rejoices in you, my Savior.
For you have looked with favor
upon your lowly servant,
and from this day forward
all generations will call me blessed.
For you, the Almighty, have done great things for me,
and holy is your Name.
Your mercy reaches from age to age
for those who fear you.
You have shown strength with your arm;
you have scattered the proud in their conceit;
you have deposed the mighty from their thrones
and raised the lowly to high places.
You have filled the hungry with good things,
while you have sent the rich away empty.*

*You have come to the aid of Israel your servant,
mindful of your mercy—
the promise you made to our ancestors—
to Sarah and Abraham
and their descendants forever.”*

Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then returned home.

Choir Anthem “O Little Town of Bethlehem”

Sermon
“Son of Mary” 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 Joys 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 prayers for the world, for its people, for the kind of kin-dom embodied by the child who was son of a strong and wise woman. [You have a sticky-note and we invite you to write a word or phrase of joyful desire for the world that we can add to our Bethlehem prayer wall.]

Time of Silent Contemplation

[prayer song continues; verse sung by choir or soloist]

Living one, how will you lead us?

*Not by scheming or by stealth, not with glamor, power and wealth,
but through Jesus, teacher, healer,
In a manger born, joy on Christmas morn.”*

[sung together]

Great, Holy One, spreading time and space,

show us who You are in a human face.

Leader: Holy Living One,
Child of Joy,
Spirit of Audacity,
we come to you today weary of the forces that make
joy such a difficult thing to hold,
weary of the effort it takes to birth something new
in a world bent on regressing away from
wholeness 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 nativity begins to fill with the promise of new birth,
we again plead for your presence to break into our lives
and show us the light of joy.

And we ask for the courage to step into the scene,
preparing the way for fullness of possibility for all people.

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 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 Son of Mary, the Bringer of Joy? 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 Joy.

Offering/Offertory “Silent Night”

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.

People: What child IS this?

Leader: This is the one born into a time when
unbridled joy was squelched by those in power.

People: What child IS this?

Leader: This is the one whose birth would stir the world from slumber
and challenge us to know joy that comes from right relationships.

People: What child IS this?

Leader: This, this is the “Son of Mary”
who shows us the song of life that is ours when we stand up for the least.

Closing Hymn UMH 246 Joy to the World vs. 1 & 4

Benediction Rev. Yohan Go

May the Womb of Life,
the Child of Joy,
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 “Angels We Have Heard on High” Hanna Noh

Announcements

- 1 Next Sunday’s Worship Leader is Lee Arnold.
- 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

14th Nadia McGovern
17th Stephen Blanche
19th Deb Marshall
20th Zach Diffley

Flowers The flowers on the altar this week are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Family and friends spending Christmas Day in Heaven by Alice Pace, Diana Redmond, and Donna Rowe.