

Advent 2023

The Road To  
**JOY**

WEST END

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



ORDER OF WORSHIP  
DECEMBER 20, 2023 AT SIX THIRTY PM  
SERVICE OF THE LONGEST NIGHT

# GATHERING

Prelude

Welcome.....Shannon Baxter

† Opening Hymn: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, v. 1 and 4 ..... Veni Emmanuel

**O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem.  
Come and behold him, born the King of angels;  
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**

**See how the shepherds, summoned to his cradle,  
leaving their flocks, draw nigh to gaze;  
we too will thither bend our joyful footsteps;  
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**

† Call to Worship .....Carol Cavin-Dillon

*Liturgist: When we find ourselves in darkness,*

**People: may we also find a blessing.**

*Liturgist: When we find ourselves in shadows,*

**People: may we also find a welcome.**

*Liturgist: On this longest night of the year,*

**People: may we be encircled by love.**

*Liturgist: On this longest night of the year,*

**People: let us worship the One who calls us by name.**

† Call to Confession

† Prayer of Confession (in unison)

**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.**

† O Little Town of Bethlehem.....St. Louis

*Verse 4 (in unison)*

**O holy Child of Bethlehem,  
descend to us, we pray;  
cast out our sin, and enter in,  
be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels  
the great glad tidings tell.  
O come to us, abide with us,  
our Lord Emmanuel.**

† Silent Confession

† Refrain (in unison)

**O come to us, abide with us,  
our Lord Emmanuel.**

† Words of Assurance

*Liturgist: 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!*

**People: In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!**

## PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

Litany of Darkness and Light..... Shannon Baxter and Will McLeane

Prayer for Illumination

**As your Holy Spirit spoke to the prophets of old, speak to us now through  
your Word, that by listening to your voice we, too, will make a way for  
your joy to come into the world. Amen.**

A Lesson from the Old Testament ..... Lamentations 3:21-24

Words of Hope: From Mourning to Morning ..... Tammy Lewis Wilborn

The Great Thanksgiving

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Celebrant: Lift up your hearts.

**People: We lift them up to the Lord.**

Celebrant: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**People: It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Celebrant: Holy God, in this season...and join their unending hymn...

**People: Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he  
who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

Celebrant: Holy is your name...as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

**People: Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.**

Celebrant: Send the power of your Holy Spirit...all honor and glory is yours,  
Almighty God, now and forever.

**People: Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer (in unison)

**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, and the power, and the glory, forever.**

**Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

Time for Prayer, Candle Lighting, and Anointing with Oil

Closing Prayer ..... Tammy Lewis Wilborn

**SENDING FORTH**

† Closing Hymn: In the Still of the Winter ..... Foundation

*(See Music and Lyrics on page 4)*

1. In the still of the win - ter, the dark of the year,  
2. From the si - lence of eve - ning, from shad - ow and sleep,  
3. I am here in the stars, in the dark of the night.

there's a watch - ing and wait - ing for God to come near.  
comes a nu - mi - nous star like a voice from the deep.  
I am al - ways with - in you, and I am the light.

My heart, like a trav - eler who's lost in the night,  
How long must I wan - der, how far must I roam?  
I am who i am, sings the God of my soul.

feels a year - ing for com - fort, and long - ing for light.  
I am here, I am with you, and I'll lead you home.  
In your wait - ing and hope I am mak - ing you whole.

(Higher Key: UM Hymnal, no. 529)

† Benediction

Postlude

† *The congregation is invited to rise in body or in spirit.*

## ABOUT TODAY'S SERVICE

*The Call to Worship is adapted from the poem by Jan Richardson in her book, "Circle of Grace: A Book of Blessings for the Seasons."*

*The communion service is adapted from an Advent liturgy by Rev. Kathy Noble.*

### ***Communion by Intinction***

*With intinction, congregants will approach Rev. Shannon Baxter and Dr. Tammy Lewis Wilborn from the center aisle to receive the bread with palms out; then, one should take the bread and dip it lightly into the juice.*

*After eating the bread, congregants are invited to spend time at the altar where you may be anointed by Rev. Carol Cavin-Dillon or Rev. Will McLeane with frankincense, if one wishes, and/or visit one of the two prayer candle stations.*

*Congregants are welcome to light candles in memory of a loved one or as a sign of their prayer to God for the season.*

### ***Prayer Shawls***

Receiving a prayer shawl is like being wrapped in an embrace of love and compassion. It carries with it the warmth of heartfelt prayers and intentions woven into each stitch. It's more than just a garment; it's a symbol of a community's collective prayers and an expression of support. West End United Methodist Church has had a Prayer Shawl ministry for many years. We knit and crochet collectively and individually, pray over each gift, and offer them to all for comfort.

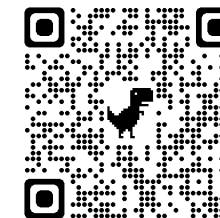
The Creative Hands group meets on the first and third Tuesdays of each month at 1:30 in the afternoon in Room 305. All are welcome to come for fellowship.

## A WARM WELCOME TO WEST END

Welcome to West End United Methodist Church! We seek to be the loving light of Christ in Nashville and beyond. We gather as the people of God with a wide range of religious backgrounds, education levels, political and theological perspectives, and we value that diversity. We welcome and celebrate the gifts God has given to all without regard to gender identity, race, sexual orientation, economic or family status, ethnicity, or mental or physical ability.

We believe God loves everyone unconditionally!

Scan this QR Code or visit [westendumc.org/links](https://westendumc.org/links) to register your attendance with us, find out more about our Sunday Morning Classes, sign up for our weekly email, and learn more about the different ways to give at West End.



## CHRISTMAS EVE MORNING WORSHIP SERVICE

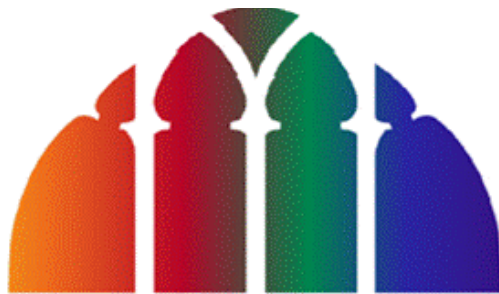
**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24 ♦ 10 A.M.** - We will celebrate the 4th Sunday of Advent in only one worship service the Sunday morning of Christmas Eve. There will be child care and Children's Church, but no Sunday School.

## CHILD-LED CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24 ♦ 4 P.M.** - All ages of children and families are invited to participate in our Child-led Christmas Eve worship service on December 24 at 4 p.m. We are excited to have our children lead us in worship and participate in bringing the story of Jesus' birth to life for us on Christmas Eve. We will have kids lead us in worship and any children who want to do so are invited to dress in costume to provide a visual image of the scripture. Children can choose to be a shepherd, a Wise One, one of the animals, or an angel. This service is lots of fun for all ages and we hope you will join us as we celebrate the birth of Christ! If you want to volunteer to help or have questions, contact Maggie Jarrell, Pastor of Children and Families, [mjarrell@westendumc.org](mailto:mjarrell@westendumc.org).

## TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24 ♦ 10:30 P.M.** - With the sacrament of Holy Communion and music of the choirs, this traditional service is one of the highlights of our West End worship, celebrating Christ's birth as a gift for all time. An organ prelude of Christmas music begins at 10 p.m. and the service begins at 10:30 p.m.



WEST END  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



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