

<HYMN “Good Christian Friends, Rejoice” UMH #224>

Gospel lesson

Let us hear the Good News of this day from:



background picture from
<https://www.pexels.com/photo/jesus-christ-figurine-1652555/>;
credit: Jeswin Thomas

John 1:1-14

NRSV

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

²He was in the beginning with God.

³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being

⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him.

⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

⁹ The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him.

¹¹ He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him.

¹² But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God,

¹³ who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

The word of God for the people of God

Message: Christmas Day



Foreground picture from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/god-of-the-dark-and-the-light/christmas-eve-year-a/christmas-eve-year-a-graphics>

Please pray with me?

Holy Lord whose birthday we celebrate now,
as we take time now to further consider today's
scriptures, please

- speak Your words through my mouth,
- open our ears to hear Your message, and

- abide in our hearts,
That we truly understand what it means to celebrate
Your birthday. Amen.

It's Christmas Day!



picture from

“I love Christmas Day on Sunday. I think it should always be on a Sunday. I think it would be easier to hold on to the “real meaning of Christmas” if it were on a Sunday and the day began not with the frenzy of presents under the tree, but with worship in the family of God. I think that is the way it ought to be.”

<Interactive portion>



picture adapted from
<https://www.pexels.com/photo/brown-cinnamon-793522/>;
photo credit: Alizee Marchand

What did you get for Christmas? <Let them respond>

Was it the highlight of your Christmas?

<Let them respond>

What is Christmas mostly about for small children?

<Let them respond; getting gifts?>

What becomes the focus of Christmas as an adult, a young parent? <Let them respond; giving gifts?>

What is the best gift you can receive, the older that you get? <Let them respond>

Whose birthday is it? <Let them respond>

Who should be getting gifts? <Let them respond>

How old is God? <Let them respond>

God gave us the gift of Himself, as Jesus. What kind of gift do you think God wants most from us?

<Let them respond>

So what gift did you give (or will you be giving) to God this Christmas? <Let them respond>

Christmas is about God coming to people in a way that we can comprehend enough to form a personal relationship with our Creator. It is an act of love, a gentle sharing of self from One otherwise far beyond our comprehension.

My sister asked how many presents per minute Santa would have to deliver for everyone on the planet to get one within 24 hours. It works out to about 5.6 million, or about 1 present every 10 nanoseconds.

That kind of scale is beyond individual human capability, only possible if we all work together. Our infinite God blesses us continually with far more gifts than that, yet in return seeks only that which we can give, that no one else can give for us: ourselves, given in love, in relationship with God.

The expressions of that love will be as unique as we are, and include caring for God's people. So this Christmas time, let us give thanks for all that God gives us, directly, through other people, and through the opportunities we have for expressing and sharing our love too.

Alleluia! Jesus Christ is born!

Let us now respond with the bringing forth of our tithes and offerings.

<Doxology>

<Offertory / Pastoral Prayer>

Let us pray:

Great God, our Redeemer, we sing your praises.

Your glorious love shines in the face of Jesus, born a babe in this dark world.

We marvel that he generously humbled himself to bring salvation. How precious is your gift of love!

Let the light in our sanctuary and our songs of praise spill through the windows to neighbors dwelling in darkness.

May our gifts and offerings reflect the light of Christ and, as beacons in the night, draw people far and near closer to you.

(above prayer from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org>)

- Lord, please help {these members of the body of Christ whom we lift up} with Your healing touch and

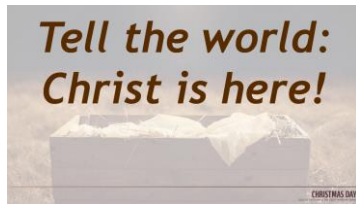
comfort:

- **Cassandra Marquard & Christopher** – difficult pregnancy
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- -
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- -
- Thanks for
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 - -
- Hold those who cannot be with us in Your loving embrace until we see them again.
 - Family far off
 - Travelers
- Lord, please help all people who struggle, especially those to whom we remain oblivious.
- Send Your Spirit to address world/social problems
 - end bigotry, dismantle racism, reform systems persist
 - bring world peace
- Guide our Leaders – local, state, federal, international, and especially of Your church.

All these things we lift up in Your holy name,
praying as You taught us to pray: *<Lord's Prayer>*

<Hymn "Go, Tell It on the Mountain" UMH #251>

<Benediction>



background picture from
<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/god-of-the-dark-and-the-light/christmas-eve-year-a/christmas-eve-year-a-graphics>

We have good news of great joy to share!
Go now and let the world hear through your love and
actions what the angels proclaimed:
Our Savior is born! He is here! Alleluia and Amen!