

# Christmas Eve - Gifts & Carols



**P**ORT  
**E**DWARDS  
**U**NITED  
**M**ETHODIST  
**C**HURCH

The Rev. Caleb McGregor, *Pastor*  
Candy Prah-Tell, *Greeter*  
Diane Sweat, *Liturgist*

50% of tonight's offering  
will go to support students with  
school meal debt in the Rapids Area.

## THOUGHTS FOR THE EVENING

"Never better than at Christmas to be like a child,  
when its mighty Founder was also a Child." – *Charles Dickens*

"Christmas is our assurance that our loving God, Immanuel, is with us and is  
continuously crashing through our darkness with light." – *Jennifer Slattery*

"For us a Child has been born; to us a Son is given.  
All the earth's governments will rest upon His shoulders." – *Isaiah 9:6a*

L – Liturgist / P – People / M – Minister / † – words are on the TVs / \* – stand in body or spirit  
UMH – *The United Methodist Hymnal*

**Please silence your mobile devices. Thank you!**

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(1) *The Body of Christ gathers to worship God!*

†WORDS OF WELCOME (Matthew 2:2-3)

*M: "Where is the Child who has been born to be the king  
of the Jews? I saw His star that shows He was born.*

**P: We saw it, too, rising in the east.**

**ALL: We have come to worship this Child!"**

P.E.U.M.C. – *A Home for All of God's People*

†\*HYMN OF PRAISE: *Once in Royal David's City* UMH 250

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(2) *We listen to what God is saying to us!*

GATHERING PRAYER

THE STORY BEGINS: *An Introduction*

First Gift: Genesis 3:8-19 Kathy Mills

†First Carol: *Open Wide Your Heavens*

Second Gift: Genesis 22:15-18 Kathy Mills

Exodus 19:1-8

2 Samuel 7:11-16

†Second Carol: *O Come, O Come Emmanuel* UMH 211

(verses 1 & 7)

Third Gift: Isaiah 9:2-7 LuAnn Slattery  
†Third Carol: *O Little Town of Bethlehem* UMH 230  
(verses 1 & 3)

Fourth Gift: Luke 1:26-35, 38 Matt Boerner  
Matthew 1:18-24  
†Fourth Carol: *A Christmas Hallelujah*

Fifth Gift: Luke 2:1-7 Korbin Boerner  
*Lighting the Christ Candle*  
†\*Fifth Carol: *Good Christian Friends, Rejoice!* UMH 224  
(verses 1 & 2)

Sixth Gift: Luke 2:8-20 Sharon Studinski  
†Sixth Carol: *Angels We Have Heard on High* UMH 238  
(verses 1 & 2)

†Seventh Gift: 1 John 1-3 Pastor Caleb  
†\*Seventh Carol: *O Holy Night* (see insert)  
*(switch your electric candles ON during this hymn;  
keep them lit through the Revelation reading)*

†\*Eighth Gift: John 1:1-14 Lucy Silvester  
*(switch your candles OFF following this reading  
and before the next hymn)*

†\*Eighth Carol: *Joy to the World* UMH 246

\*A HOLIDAY BLESSING FOR YOU

\*MARCH TO THE MANGER

*You are invited to make your way forward  
and place your "gift" (financial or otherwise) in the manger.*

*Please drop off your candles in the bin on your way out! Thank you!*

# Sunday Services – 10:00 AM

December 29th

**First Sunday of Christmastide**

**Newborn Saints Sunday**

*(a celebration of those born  
in the past year)*

January 12th

**Baptism of the Lord Sunday**

*Reaffirm Our Baptismal Vows*

*Packing of the Greens*  
after the service

January 5th

**Epiphany Sunday**

*Holy Communion Sunday*

*Blessing of Our Homes*

January 19th

**Ecumenical Sunday**

January 26th

**Wesley's Covenant Renewal**

## About Tonight's Service

**Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols** started in 1918 at King's College in Cambridge, England. During World War I, Eric Milner-White, dean of the college, was concerned that the distress of the "Great War" had hardened attitudes against religion.

Since the beginning, "Once in Royal David's City" has opened the service, followed by a bidding prayer inviting worshippers to 'go unto Bethlehem' in their imaginations and holding in prayer the many who are far from glad in their personal and shared suffering. The prayer ends by mentioning those who have passed from this mortal life; when this was first written, Milner-White had in mind all who were bereaved by the violence of war and the recent deaths of thousands of loved ones. The scripture readings have largely remained the same. They are the story of the fall of humanity, the promise of the Messiah, and the birth of Jesus is interspersed with the singing of hymns. The order and selection of hymns do vary from year to year. The service always ends with Charles Wesley's "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing."

The service, and its message, have a beautiful simplicity. It is a beloved tradition rooted in healing, because it was forged in the fires of war, grief, and suffering. Rather than leading with the holly-jolly razzle-dazzle that can crush a bruised spirit, this service tenderly invites the congregant into a holy stillness.

Like the very candles flickering throughout our darkened sanctuary, the hope and joy that headline much of the Christmas season shine brighter against the acknowledgement of brokenness, pain, and wait.

# MY GIFT TO BABY JESUS

*(write a message/draw a picture in the space below)*  
**(you are invited to come forward at the end of the service  
to place your “Gift” in the manger)**

## **CONNECT TO JESUS’ FAMILY**

*Let us send you a “2025 Blessing”  
by email, phone, or mail!*

**My name is:** \_\_\_\_\_

**My email / address / phone # is** *(choose preferred):*  
\_\_\_\_\_

#1:

**O holy night! The stars are brightly shining,  
it is the night of our dear Savior's birth.  
Long lay the world in sin & error pining,  
'til He appeared and the soul felt its worth.  
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices,  
for yonder breaks a new & glorious morn.**

**Fall – on your knees!**

**O hear – the angel voic—es!**

**O night – divine,**

**O night . . . when Christ was born!**

**O night! O ho – ly night!**

**O night Divine!**

#2:

**Led by the light of faith serenely beaming,  
with glowing hearts by His cradle we stand.  
So led by light of a star sweetly gleaming,  
here came the Wise Men from Orient land.  
The King of kings lay thus in lowly manger,  
in all our trials born to be our Friend.**

*(reverse side)*

**He – knows our need!  
To our weak – ness is no stranger!  
Behold – your King,  
before – Him lowly bend!  
Behold – your King,  
before – Him lowly bend!**

*#3:*

**Truly He taught us to love one another.  
His law is love and His gospel is peace.  
Chains shall He break  
for the slave is our brother;  
and in His name all oppression shall cease.  
Sweet hymns of joy  
in grateful chorus raise we,  
let all within us praise His holy name!**

**Christ – is the Lord!  
O praise – His Name forever!  
His pow'r – and glo—ry  
e—vermore proclaim!  
His pow'r – and glo—ry  
e—vermore proclaim!**