



# WEST END

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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ORDER OF WORSHIP  
DECEMBER 18, 2024 AT SIX O'CLOCK  
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, O come, Emmanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel,  
that mourns in lonely exile here  
until the Son of God appear  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to thee, O Israel.**

**O come, thou Root of Jesse's tree,  
an ensign of thy people be;  
before thee rulers silent fall;  
all peoples on thy mercy call.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to thee, O Israel.**

† Call to Worship .....Shannon Baxter

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

**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, v. 4.....St. Louis

**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: O Little Town of Bethlehem .....St. Louis

**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!**

**All: Glory to God. Amen.**

## PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

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

Carol Cavin-Dillon

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 .....Ezekiel 37:1-10

Words of Hope: Breath for Dry Bones.....Tammy Lewis Wilborn

## SENDING FORTH

### 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

**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

A Time for Prayer, Candle Lighting, and Anointing with Oil

Closing Prayer ..... Tammy Lewis Wilborn

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

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 yearn - 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 ..... Tammy Lewis Wilborn

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 the communion servers 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 our clergy with frankincense, if one wishes, and/or visit one of the two prayer 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.

### Bulletin Cover Art

*The Vision of Ezekiel: The Valley of Dry Bones*, created by John Roddam Spencer Stanhope, who lived between 1829 and 1908.

# Christmas Eve Services

3 p.m.

*Child Led Service*

5 p.m.

*Carols, Communion  
and Candles*

10 p.m.

*Choirs, Communion  
and Candles*



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2200 WEST END AVENUE ♦ NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37203  
615.321.8500 ♦ WESTENDUMC.ORG