

WELCOME! We're glad you're here tonight as we celebrate the coming of God in the person of Jesus. If you don't have a home church, we invite you to consider STEELE MEMORIAL CHURCH. We gather each Sunday at 9:40 AM for Sunday School and Worship at 10:45 AM.

WE GATHER FOR WORSHIP

PRELUDE

***LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE** Bobby Bannister
Alexis Bannister, *Candle Lighter*

One: Tonight, we come seeking hope, peace, joy, and love and we find these things in a child...who dwells with us even now, our Emmanuel, God with us..

All: **We live as people in the in-between who celebrate the arrival of the Light that shines in lost and broken places as we wait for the day when we will live in the fullness of God's kingdom.**

One: We light these candles as signs of our shocking hope, our just peace, our fierce joy, the love that transforms us, and Jesus Christ, our wondrous Light. May the Light burning in our hearts guide us, comfort us, protect us, and tend us in all seasons and circumstances, reminding us that day and night, in the light and in the darkness, God is with us. Our salvation has come! Amen.

***OPENING HYMN, NO 234** *O Come, All Ye Faithful* (stanzas 1, 2, 3)

CHRISTMAS EVE PRAYER -Luke Damron, *Liturgist*

WE HEAR AND RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION -*Liturgist*

THE CHRISTMAS STORY. Luke 2:1-14 -*Liturgist*

MESSAGE Welcoming the Guest -Rev. Greg Markins

HYMN OF RESPONSE, No. 240 *Hark, the Herald Angel Sing*

INVITATION:

Please turn to page 12 in the United Methodist Hymnal for Liturgy
Christ our Lord invites to his table all who love him, who earnestly repent of their sin, and who seek to live in peace with one another. Let us confess our sins before God and one another.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Prepare our hearts, O God, to receive the Christ Child once more. When we are lost in darkness, shine your light into the darkness of our world. When the gloom clings tightly to us, shine your glory into the shadows of our lives. Overcome our fear, Holy One, and inspire us to leave our flocks, and seek the Christ Child this night. Prepare our hearts, O God, to behold your precious gift in awe and wonder. (*silent confession*)

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness-on them light has shined." In the name of Jesus Christ, we receive forgiveness, we receive light. We walk in God's light. **Amen.**

WE CELEBRATE HOLY COMMUNION

GREAT THANKSGIVING

- page 13 in *UM Hymnal*

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

Leader: Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf. The bread which we break is a sharing in the body of Christ.

People: Thanks be to God.

Leader: The cup over which we give thanks is a sharing in the blood of Christ.

People: Thanks be to God. Amen.

Steele Memorial United Methodist Church has an Open Table for the celebration of Holy Communion. This means all are welcome to participate, regardless of denominational affiliation or no affiliation.

We will receive the offering as you come forward to receive Holy Communion. The entire Christmas Eve offering will go to mission projects.

SHARING OF THE BREAD AND CUP

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. Through it may we await in blessed hope the appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit, to give ourselves for others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

WE GO FORTH TO SERVE

(Ushers come forward to receive and share the light.)

CLOSING HYMN, No. 239

Silent Night, Holy Night

On the final verse, please raise your candle as we celebrate the coming of light to the world—Jesus!

Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright.
Round yon Virgin, Mother and Child. Holy infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia,
Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born!

Silent night, holy night! Son of God love's pure light.
Radiant beams from Thy holy face with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth, Jesus Lord, at Thy birth.

Silent night, holy night, wondrous star, lend thy light;
with the angels let us sing, Alleluia to our King;
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born!

DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING

Leader: The people who walk in darkness have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness, on them light has shined.

People: We go into the night as those who have seen the Christ Child.

Leader: Go and tell of the angels' song: that Good News of great joy
is here, that Christ has been born for all people.

**People: Arise, shine, for our light has come,
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon us.**

POSTLUDE

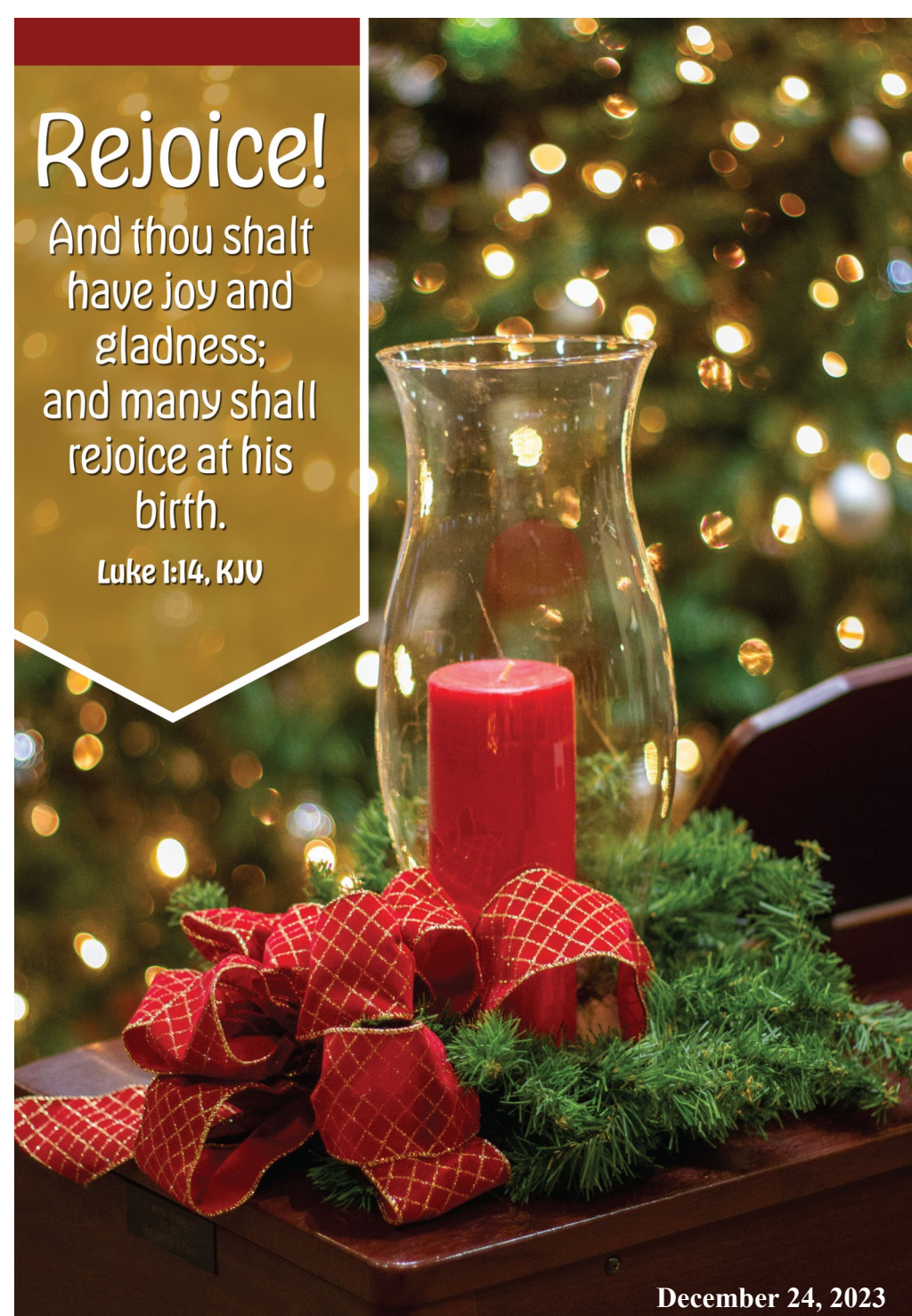
- Lynette Call

GOING FORTH

Rejoice!

And thou shalt
have joy and
gladness;
and many shall
rejoice at his
birth.

Luke 1:14, KJV



December 24, 2023

Steele Memorial United Methodist Church