**ORDER OF WORSHIP**

 *\* Indicates, please stand if able.*

First Sunday after Christmas December 31, 2023, 9 am

Liturgist: Howard Gomer

WELCOME, PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST, & ANNOUNCEMENTS

**\***CALL TO WORSHIP

L: He was born in a stable.

**P: But at his birth angels sang, plain folk worshiped, and kings paid homage.**

L: He grew up in obscurity.

**P: But when he declared himself, it was as if a new sun had risen.**

L: He lived a life of love and died a death of shame.

**P: But the life he lived was for our instruction; the death he died was for our redemption.**

L: Death’s dark womb could not hold him.

**P: On Easter day he was born anew.**

L: Lord, be born anew this Christmas:

ALL: In me, in you, in us. Amen.

\*OPENING PRAYER

**Loving God, deep in the night, when all the world had locked the doors on love and closed the shutters on hope, you pierced the darkness with Light and a baby's cry. Never again shall we be alone. No more shall we sit in fear. For Christ, the Light of the World and of our lives, is born. God of angels and babies, open us once again to this miracle, this wonder that you became one with us. Let the angels sing for us; let the star shine for us; let the child smile at us, here and now. Amen.**

**\***OPENING HYMN***Angels from the Realms of Glory*** UMH #220

CHILDREN'S TIME Rod McGillivray

JOYS AND CONCERNS

CALL TO CONFESSION

**The psalmist reminds us, “The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always accuse, nor will he keep his anger**

**forever.” With this knowledge, we may confess our sins before God and one another with confidence.**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**God of eternal hope, you place a light into every darkness and a star in every sky, and yet we prefer to walk in the darkness of despair and worry. We cover over the light of possibility with a flurry of worry. We walk bent over with care and concern and miss the reach of the stars. We fear the worst and distrust the best. We forge ahead on our own, not noticing your outstretched hand. We forget that there is never a moment that you are not with us, that your Son was called Immanuel, which means "God with us" You bring a candle of hope, the light of peace, the radiance of joy.**

**Shine your light on our path and walk with us through all our valleys with the sun at our backs. Amen.**

WORDS OF ASSURANCE Rev. Loretta Waughtal

Friends, “God does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far he removes our transgressions from us.” In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

PASTORAL PRAYER Rev. Loretta Waughtal

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.**

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

Bring now a portion of the abundance God has committed to your care as an offering of thanksgiving. God rewards our faithfulness with further opportunities and responsibilities, with deeper fulfillment and joy. Let all around bring gifts to God, who is to be feared and honored.

**\***DOXOLOGY Pr***aise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow*** UMH #94

\*OFFERTORY PRAYER Rev. Loretta Waughtal Christ Jesus, touch us deeply in our worship. Touch and embrace our lives. Move our lives to generosity and service. Strengthen our faith and direct us into ministries and service for those in great need. Rededicate our lives and bless our gifts, and may our offerings help to renew your church and meet the urgent needs of the day. Amen.

SCRIPTURE Luke 2:22-40

\*HYMN OF PRAISE  ***There’s A Song in the Air*** UMH #249

SERMON Words of Wisdom, Hope for the World Rev. Loretta Waughtal

\*CLOSING HYMN  ***Hope of the World***  UMH #178

**\***BENEDICTION Rev. Loretta Waughtal

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**PRAYER REQUESTS:** Please pray for people in need in our church, community, nation,

 and the World.

**STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN**: for the upgrade of the sound and video system at the

 Sanctuary, boilers replacement, and next year’s church budget.

**PRAYER WORKSHOP:** January 18th & 25th at 6:00 pm. We will learn 4 forms of Prayer

 life based on your personality type.

**DINNER CHURCH**: Team members wanted.

**NEW MEMBER CLASS:** January 14th, 21st, and 28th. WELCOME new members.

**SEWING GROUP:** January 17th, 10 to 3:00 pm Sewing Pillowcase Dresses. Double fold

 bias tape (all colors) and gently used or new cotton pillow cases are needed.

**USHER/GREETERS**: Don and Charlene Galston

**FELLOWSHIP:** United Women in Faith

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

Sat Jan. 6 United Methodist Men 8:00 am

Tues Jan. 9 Finance Committee 6:30 pm

Wed Jan. 10 Youth/Confirmation Resumes 5:30/7 pm

Wed Jan. 17 Sewing-Pillowcase Dresses 10-3:00 pm

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**BLACK RIVER FALLS**

**UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

**UMC Mission Statement:**

"To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”

 PASTOR Rev. Loretta Waughtal

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