

Welcome

Choral Call to Worship

*Emmanuel*

UMH #204

Call to Worship

Worship Leader:

One: Every year we celebrate Christmas.

All: **Every month we break bread.**

One: Every week we gather for worship.

All: **Every day we count our blessings.**

One: Every minute God is near.

All: **Yes, every minute God is near.**

One: These are the rituals of our faith.

All: **Let us worship Holy God.**

\*Hymn

*Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light*

UMH #223

Storytime with Children (Children ages 3 -5 may leave for Sunday School after this.)

Prayer of Confession and Words of Forgiveness:

God of rhythms, we confess:

our faith would not be what it is without rituals.

Unlike you, we depend on bread and water.

We have to return to this space again and again

to hear old, familiar stories.

For if we stopped,

we know it would not take long before we lost our way.

Forgive us for our fragility, and thank you for giving us  
ordinary rituals and rhythms to hold onto.

With grateful and humble hearts we pray, amen.

Prayer for Illumination

Gracious God,

When our world turns upside down

or when the road ahead is unclear,  
we return to ritual.

We come to the sanctuary.

We break bread at table. We pour water.

We greet one another as family. And we listen to your Word.

Today we pray—meet us in this moment.

Meet us in these rituals that anchor us and speak a word of hope.

We are listening. We are drawing near. We are seeking you. Amen.

Scripture Reading

Luke 2:21-38

N.T. p. 59

For the word of God in scripture, for the word of God among us,  
for the word of God within us. **Thanks be to God.**

\*Hymn

*Cold December Flies Away* vv. 1&2

UMH #233

Reflections on Ritual and the New Year

Pastor Michelle Mejia

Affirmation of Faith

We believe that faith is a journey  
marked by rituals and rhythms.

We come to worship. We confess our sins.

We pass the peace. We offer grace.

We hear the Word. We baptize children. We break the bread.

And we tell the story of a loving God.

And through these sacred rituals, we are reminded:  
we are not alone.

God is near, and we have work to do.

May this belief shape the rhythm of our lives. Amen.

Choral Call to Prayer

*Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart.* v. 4

UMH #500

Prayers of the People

Lord's Prayer

UMH #895

## Offering and Answering God's Call

Your financial giving supports many wonderful ministries and partnerships. Please prayerfully consider UUMC in your end of year giving or for a special offering. Place your gifts in the box in the back of the sanctuary, or make a gift electronically at [www.uumcp.org/electronic-giving](http://www.uumcp.org/electronic-giving), or texting an amount to: 301-364-9236

\*Doxology UMH #94

\*Closing Hymn *Go, Tell It on the Mountain* UMH #251

\*Benediction

Postlude



*Today's Liturgy by Sanctified Art; art by <https://www.logos.com/about>*

**MD Food Pantry** Please donate feminine hygiene products and cumin.

### For Your Calendar:

Jan. 7 Epiphany; Luncheon and Undecorating Party  
Jan. 21 Loaves and Fishes Meal

[www.uumcp.org](http://www.uumcp.org) office@uumcp.org (301) 422-1400



## UNIVERSITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



December 31, 2023  
First Sunday after Christmas



*...and he was called Jesus, the name given  
by the angel before he was conceived  
in the womb. Luke 2:21*