

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by, born that man no more may die,
born to raise the sons of earth, born to give us second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”

BENEDICTION

People of the promise, go now to carry the story and the glory of all you have witnessed, that the world might know that good news has come to dwell among us now and forever. Amen.

Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, June 2025

HYMN

“Joy to the World”

Joy to the world! The Lord is come!
Let earth receive her king.
Let every heart prepare Him room
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

He rules the world with truth and grace
and makes the nations prove
the glories of His righteousness
and wonders of His love,
and wonders of His love,
and wonders, wonders of His love.

#246, vv. 1-2

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Oaklette United Methodist Church
"God's Body in this Community"
“Oaklette United Methodist Church through worship, education, and outreach, seeks to make the gospel of Jesus Christ real, as we minister to all people.”

December 24, 2025
Christmas Eve

CALL TO WORSHIP

Beloved, on this day, we gather to enliven the story once again of God who came to dwell among us as a vulnerable baby.
We rejoice in the day that all the earth awaits.
We remember the stable, the animals, and the manger that witnessed the arrival of Emmanuel, God with us.
We rejoice in the day that all the earth awaits.
We recall the angels who announced the Messiah’s birth to the shepherds, those most unlikely witnesses of God’s glory.
We rejoice in the day that all the earth awaits.
In our remembering and enlivening, we gather today as people of God’s promise, witnesses to God’s glorious presence among us in the vulnerable, forgotten, and tucked away places of the world.
We gather to rejoice in the day that all the earth awaits, the day that has already come and will yet be. Thanks be to God! Amen.

Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, June 2025.

HYMN

“O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL”

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem.
Come and behold Him, born the King of angels;
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

True God of true God, Light from Light eternal.
Lo, He shuns not the virgin's womb.
Son of the Father, begotten, not created.
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation.
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest!
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

#234 vv. 1-3

OPENING PRAYER Debbie Rippard

We have waited for a long time for your hope, your joy, your love to shine in the darkness of this world, Almighty God. Even now, in our gathering here, we await you. In our hearts, we still hope that your light will blaze forth, banishing the shadows of this world and guiding all the people back to you.

Yet you did not come into this world in a show of power and glory. You did not shine forth for all of creation to behold. A tiny spark – a newborn baby, visible to parents and curious animals. A host of angels – away from the populated areas, singing to migrant workers. A sparkling star – guiding foreigners to see what neighbors could not.

Open our hearts, merciful God, to the sparks of your presence still in this world. Open our eyes, that we might behold your presence in the least likely of places, and among the least likely of people.

God with us, kindle your spark within us, that together we may shine forth your light, we might banish the shadows of this world, we might be the continuation of the Christmas miracle: Emmanuel is in this world, God is with us, now and evermore. Amen.

Written by Rev. Eliza Buchakjian-Tweedy, pastor at First Church Congregational in Rochester, NH. Reposted on the re:Worship blog at <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2018/12/christmas-opening-prayer.html>

The Prophecy of the Messiah
Isaiah 9:2, 6-7, John 1:1-2, 4-5

The Lighting of the Christ Candle Bob and Judy Carter

Today, we gather to remember with the prophet Isaiah: For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders, and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Great will be his authority, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

We gather once again to bask in the glory that visited a stable and a manger, shepherds watching their flocks, and a young couple cradling the newborn Messiah.

We light the Christ candle as a sign of the glory that came among us in unexpected places and to unexpected people, that we may be people who seek and follow the glory of the Christ child here and now.

The Coming of Jesus Is Announced to Mary and Joseph
Luke 1:26-38; Monica Whitehurst

The Preparations for the Birth of Jesus
Luke 2:1-5

HYMN **“O Little Town of Bethlehem”** **#230, v.1**
O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie,

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim today the Lord’s blessing, present in our time just as in ages past, building the communion of saints even from our own bodies.

Long, Kimberly Bracken. Feasting on the Word Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year A, Volume 1 (p. 189). Presbyterian Publishing Corporation. Kindle Edition.

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.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Bless us with your presence and give us here a foretaste of the feast to come. Let your Holy Spirit infuse our hearts and minds with joy so that we may live to praise you, O God, holy Trinity, now and forever. Amen.

We are filled with joy for we have heard good news of great joy. We are filled with love for we have tasted the sign of God's great love. We are filled with hope for the angels still sing in our world and there is a Light for us to follow.

THE PASSING OF THE LIGHT

HYMN **“Silent Night”** **#239, v. 1**

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.

HYMN **“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”** **#240**

Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King;
peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!
Joyful all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies;
With th’ angelic host proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”

Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord;
late in time behold him come, offspring of a virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail th’ incarnate Deity,
pleased as man with man to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”

above thy deep and dreamless sleep, the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark street shineth the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

Jesus is Born
Luke 2:6-7; Don Moody

HYMN

“Away in a Manger”

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus lay down His sweet head.
The stars in the sky look down where He lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

Jesus' Birth is Announced to the Shepherds
Luke 2:8-14; Debbie Rippard

HYMN

“It Came Upon the Midnight Clear”

#218, v. 1

It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold.
Peace on the earth, good will to men, from heaven's all gracious King.
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.

The Shepherds Find the Baby Jesus
Luke 2:15-18; Monica Whitehurst

HYMN

“The First Noel”

#245, v. 1

The first noel, the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay.
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Noel, noel, noel, noel. Born is the King of Israel.

The Wise Men Bring Their Gifts to Jesus
Matthew 2:1-11; Don Moody

HYMN

“The First Noel”

#245, v. 3

And by the light of that same star,
three wise men came from country far.
To seek for a king was their intent,
and to follow the star wherever it went.
Noel, noel, noel, noel. Born is the King of Israel.

MEDITATION

Rev. Ned Alderman

PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND PARDON

Lord Jesus, this most holy of nights brings us Gladness, Grief, and Joy. Gladness,
because you left the splendor of Heaven's glory to come to a dark and cold world, to bring the light and warmth of your Kingdom to a world so in need of your Love, your Peace, your Joy.
Grief,
because you came into the world, yet the world did not receive You. You came to your own, and your own did not welcome you. And still today, people turn away from you. We turn away from you. Sin still scars your creation and the hearts of your own people.
And Joy,
because you offer perfect forgiveness and full cleansing to all who acknowledge their need of you. Cleanse our hearts, Lord Jesus, so that we may welcome you as we long to, certain that we are also welcomed by You. Amen.

Adapted from © Rick Lindholtz 2008 Posted on his on the tracks blog. Reposted on the re:Worship blog at <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2011/12/confession-for-christmas-eve.html>.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

In every time and in every place, it is right that we should give you thanks and honor, for you shelter your people from age to age. You came to us as a brother and a friend, in a likeness we could recognize as one of our own, showing us the face of the Most High God. Through the centuries, your witnesses have taught and proclaimed your Word, giving shape to the truth that your promises are sure and your presence everlasting. In communion with all the saints, with angels and shepherds, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Holy God, author of time, one among us, breath of our bodies, you are as close to us as skin and infinite as stars. You came to us as Jesus of Nazareth, carpenter and rabbi, who on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.