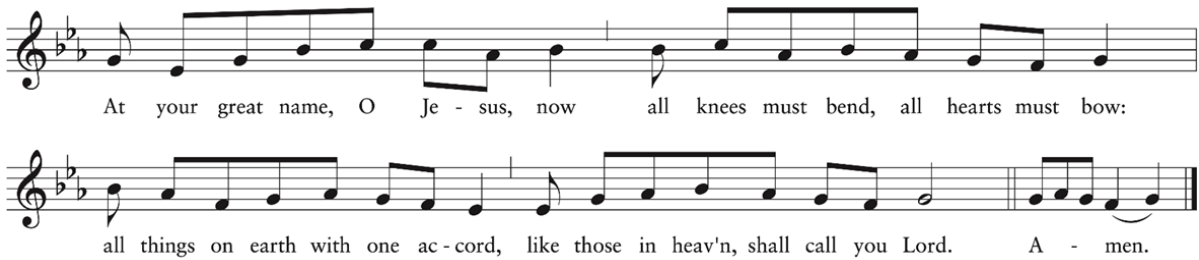


Even when despair is all around us and apathy seems the order of the day,  
we set our face steadily towards the light.  
**Lord Jesus, as we search for signs of joy this week,**  
**help us to become the signs of joy that others are searching for.**  
**As these candles are but a glimpse of the light of the heavens,**  
**help us to be a glimpse of heaven’s joy. Amen.<sup>2</sup>**



**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**Holy and wonderful God,**  
**we confess that we have closed our eyes to what you are doing.**  
**We prefer to concentrate on problems, bad news and violence.**  
**When we do, we miss all the healing,**  
**freeing and helping you accomplish in our world.**  
**We pass up opportunities to participate in your Good News.**  
**We rob ourselves of so much joy.**  
**Forgive us and give us eyes to see, ears to hear, minds to understand,**  
**and hearts to treasure your mission in the world.**  
**Fill us with unquenchable joy at the coming of Jesus. Amen.<sup>3</sup>**

*(silent reflection)*

**ASSURANCE OF GRACE**

The angel told Joseph,  
“You are to name the baby Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”  
Believe the good news of the gospel:  
**in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Hallelujah! Amen.<sup>3</sup>**

**†PASSING THE PEACE**

**†SCRIPTURE**

Luke 1:39-56

NRSVUE

This is the word of God for the people of God.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**SERMON**

Incarnate Joy

Paul Purdue

**THE GREAT THANKSGIVING AND HOLY COMMUNION**

*Please register your attendance in the pew pad or with the QR code.*

You may place your Communion offering on the rail as you come forward to receive Communion, give online at [belmontumc.org/give](http://belmontumc.org/give), text BELMONT to 73256, scan the QR giving code (back of bulletin), contact Sara Christi ([bookkeeper@belmontumc.org](mailto:bookkeeper@belmontumc.org)) to set up a bank draft , or mail it to the church, Box 120098, Nashville, TN, 37212.

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.**

*The celebrant gives thanks, remembering God’s acts of salvation, and concludes:*  
And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven,  
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 he who comes in the name of the Lord.**  
**Hosanna in the highest.**

*The celebrant continues the thanksgiving.*  
*The institution of the Lord’s Supper is recalled, and the celebrant concludes:*  
And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,  
we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice,  
in union with Christ’s offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith:  
**Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.**

*The celebrant invokes the present work of the Holy Spirit*  
*and then praises the Trinity, concluding:*  
All honor and glory is yours, Almighty God, now and forever.  
**Amen.**

**THE LORD’S PRAYER**

Hymnal page 895

**BREAKING THE BREAD - SHARING THE CUP**

*As we celebrate the gift of Holy Communion, everyone is invited. Offering may be placed on the Communion rail.*

**PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

**Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery**  
**in which you have given yourself to us.**  
**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.**

BENEDICTION

Now unto the One who is able to do beyond what we can ask or even imagine  
be all honor and glory and power.  
And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
and fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and forever.  
**Amen.** (from Ephesians 3:20)

MUSIC FOR MEDITATION

†You are invited to stand as you are able.

Liturgy written/selected by Matthew Webb.  
<sup>1</sup>Matthew Webb, *The Work of the People*, 2025  
<sup>2</sup>Carol Holbrook Prickett, 2003  
<sup>3</sup>Presbyterian Outlook, Order of Worship, Dec 14, 2025

Make your 2026 pledge today  
Many thanks to everyone who has already submitted their pledge for 2026 and made the commitment to invest in Belmont UMC and in God’s kin-dom. If you haven’t turned in your pledge yet, you can fill out the pledge card in the pew or pledge online at [belmontumc.org/-/form/pledge/2026](http://belmontumc.org/-/form/pledge/2026). Questions? Contact Carrie Sherrill ([carrie@belmontumc.org](mailto:carrie@belmontumc.org)) or Sara Christi ([bookkeeper@belmontumc.org](mailto:bookkeeper@belmontumc.org)).

\*\*\*\*\*

Join us in the sanctuary for 10:30am worship on December 28, 2025, and January 4, 2026;  
*there will not be an 8:10am service these 2 Sundays.*

\*\*\*\*\*

*We believe every person is of sacred worth and created in God’s image. We commit to Jesus’ example of inclusive love, care, and intentional hospitality with persons of every race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, faith story, physical or mental ability, economic status, or political perspective.*

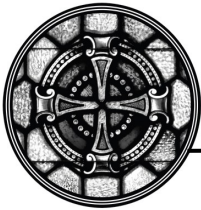
Scan to give here:



Register attendance here:



Want to get involved? Scan to learn more:



BELMONT UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

*A community of Christ-followers growing in love of God and neighbor*

DECEMBER 14, 2025 8:10AM  
THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

WELCOME

Heather Harriss

CENTERING PRAYER

God of hope, you still speak to us –  
sometimes with angelic heralds and other times in a quiet, gentle voice.  
May we answer your call with the willingness, boldness, and joy of Mary. Amen.<sup>1</sup>

MUSIC FOR MEDITATION

Amanda Dembiec, piano

†CALL TO WORSHIP

The Lord be with you!  
**And also with you!**  
Lift up your hearts!  
**We lift them up to the Lord!**  
Our souls magnify the Lord!  
**And our spirits rejoice in God, our Savior!**  
Let us worship the One who has done great things!  
**For the mercy of our God is from generation to generation!**<sup>1</sup>

†HYMN NO. 198

My Soul Gives Glory to My God

MORNING SONG

LIGHTING THE CANDLE OF JOY

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth and set lights in the sky —  
sun and moon and stars.  
By these stars, our ancestors charted their journeys.  
By these stars, they knew God was with them.  
**Today we light the candle we call “joy” to bring the fire of the stars  
down from heaven to earth, to nestle among the greens.**  
We too are on a journey, and we do not always know the way.  
But we chart our path by the star of joy.  
Even when despair is all around us and apathy seems the order of the day,  
we set our face steadily towards the light.