

# Woodbury United Methodist Church



December 29, 2024

The First Sunday of Christmas

Wesley Covenant Service

10:30 AM Worship



PRAYER OF THE DAY (*unison*)

UMH #231

*O God, Searcher of all our hearts, you have formed us as a people and claimed us for your own. As we enter into covenant with you, reveal any reluctance within us. Let your Holy Spirit impress your truth on our inmost being for the sake of Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, One God, world without end. Amen.*

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Adapted from the Rev. Howard Thurman

*Lord, forgive us for saying "Christmas is over." The Christmastide is here, and so let our prayer be that  
When the song of the angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and the princes are home,  
When the shepherds are back with their flocks,  
May our work of Christmas begin:  
To find the lost, to heal the broken, to feed the hungry,  
to release the prisoner, to rebuild the nations,  
to bring peace among people, to make music in the heart. Amen.*

SILENT CONFESSION AND WORDS OF PARDON

FOR THE CHILDREN AND YOUTH

**WE LISTEN FOR THE WORD OF GOD**

THE EPISTLE

Colossians 3:12-17

\*THE GOSPEL

Luke 2:41-52

\*HYMN

*"Sing We Now of Christmas"*

UMH #237

THE SERMON

*"Kids!"*

Pastor Brian Bodt

**WE RESPOND IN FAITH**

SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS

THE PASTORAL PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER

UMH #895

**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.**

A CHRISTMAS VIDEO MESSAGE FROM ROLAND GERNANDES,  
General Secretary of the Board of Global Ministries of  
The United Methodist Church



**All: Let me be your servant, under your command. I will no longer be my own. I will give up myself to your will in all things.**

L: Be satisfied that Christ shall give you your place and work.

**All: Lord, make me what you will. I put myself fully into your hands: put me to doing, put me to suffering, let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you, let me be full, let me be empty, let me have all things, let me have nothing. I freely and with a willing heart give it all to your pleasure and disposal.**

L: Christ will be the Savior of none but his servants. He is the source of all salvation to those who obey. Christ will have no servants except by consent; Christ will not accept anything except full consent to all that he requires. Christ will be all in all, or he will be nothing. Confirm this by a holy covenant. To make this covenant a reality in your life, listen to these admonitions:

First, set apart some time, more than once, to be spent alone before the Lord; in seeking earnestly God's special assistance and gracious acceptance of you; in carefully thinking through all the conditions of the covenant; in searching your hearts whether you have already freely given your life to Christ. Consider what your sins are.

Consider the laws of Christ, how holy, strict, and spiritual they are, and whether you, after having carefully considered them, are willing to choose them all. Be sure you are clear in these matters, see that you do not lie to God.

Second, be serious and in a spirit of holy awe and reverence.

Third, claim God's covenant, rely upon God's promise of giving grace and strength, so you can keep your promise. Trust not your own strength and power.

Fourth, resolve to be faithful. You have given to the Lord your hearts, you have opened your mouths to the Lord, and you have dedicated yourself to God. With God's power, never go back.

And last, be then prepared to renew your covenant with the Lord. Fall down on your knees, lift your hands toward heaven, open your hearts to the Lord, as we pray:

COVENANT PRAYER *(The people kneel or bow)*

**All: O righteous God, for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, see me as I fall down before you. Forgive my unfaithfulness in not having done your will, for you have promised mercy to me if I turn to you with my whole heart.**

L: God requires that you shall put away all your idols.

*All: I here from the bottom of my heart renounce them all, covenanting with you that no known sin shall be allowed in my life. Against your will, I have turned my love toward the world. In your power I will watch all temptations that will lead me away from you. For my own righteousness is riddled with sin, unable to stand before you.*

L: Through Christ, God has offered to be your God again if you would let him.

*All: Before all heaven and earth, I here acknowledge you as my Lord and God. I take you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for my portion, and vow to give up myself, body and soul, as your servant, to serve you in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life.*

L: God has given the Lord Jesus Christ as the only way and means of coming to God.

*All: Jesus, I do here on bended knees accept Christ as the only new and living Way, and sincerely join myself in a covenant with him. O blessed Jesus, I come to you, hungry, sinful, miserable, blind, and naked, unworthy even to wash the feet of your servants. I do here, with all my power, accept you as my Lord and Head. I renounce my own worthiness, and vow that you are the Lord, my righteousness. I renounce my own wisdom, and take you for my only guide. I renounce my own will, and take your will as my law.*

L: Christ has told you that you must suffer with him.

*All: I do here covenant with you, O Christ, to take my lot with you as it may fall. Through your grace I promise that neither life nor death shall part me from you.*

L: God has given holy laws as the rule of your life

*All: I do here willingly put my neck under your yoke, to carry your burden. All your laws are holy, just, and good. I therefore take them as the rule for my words, thoughts, and actions, promising that I will strive to order my whole life according to your direction, and not allow myself to neglect anything I know to be my duty.*

L: The almighty God searches and knows your heart.

*All: O God, you know that I make this covenant with you today without guile or reservation. If any falsehood should be in it, guide me and help me to set it aright. And now, glory be to you, O God the*

*Father, whom I from this day forward shall look upon as my God and Father.*

*Glory be to you, O God the Son, who have loved me and washed me from my sins in your own blood, and now is my Savior and Redeemer.*

*Glory be to you, O God the Holy Spirit, who by your almighty power have turned my heart from sin to God.*

*O mighty God, the Lord Omnipotent, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, you have now become my Covenant Friend. And I, through your infinite grace, have become your covenant servant. So be it. And let the covenant I have made on earth be ratified in heaven. Amen.*

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*(You are invited to sign your covenant.)*

### **GOING FORTH**

+CAROL                                    *"There's a Song in the Air"*                                    UMH #249

+THE BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE    *"Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light"*                                    J.S. Bach

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**THE WORSHIP IS ENDED: THE SERVICE BEGINS.**

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### **Woodbury United Methodist Church**

*We are a welcoming Christian fellowship who celebrate and share God's love with everyone. We seek a closer relationship with Jesus Christ. Inspired by His example, we strive to be God's hands in this world. Empowered by God's word, we proclaim the Gospel and serve through worship, study, mission, and community support.*

*The Rev. Dr. Brian R. Bodt, Pastor            Jeff and Barbara Hunt, Lay Leaders  
Christopher Shay, Minister of Music       Matti Paparazzo, Admin. Assistant*

### **WE THANK TODAY'S WORSHIP LEADERS:**

Liturgist: Rynn Naylor                    AV Tech: Mark Davis

Fellowship Time Host: Gillian Griswold

Greeters and Ushers: Carol Quinby and Mollie Bodwell

### **OUR COMMUNITY PRAYERS**

Prayers for our nation; for Bishop Bickerton, Superintendent Sylvester and The United Methodist Church; for victims of conflicts in Syria and the wider Middle East, the Ukraine and the Sudan; for those facing life stress, and for our congregation.

## NOTES ON TODAY'S WORSHIP

*In the Name of Christ, the new-born King, welcome! The Twelve Days of Christmas continues to Twelfth Night, January 5. Today's order of worship reflects that, as will next week when we hear the story of the Magi. Please share the Christmas message of salvation in Jesus Christ!*

*Today's "anthem," "Good King Wenceslas," is a favorite of mine because it conveys the spirit of sharing that is a response to the Good News of Christ's birth, also captured in our opening prayer, an adaptation of the Rev. Howard Thurman poem, "When the Song of the Angels is Stilled." Chris Shay and I agreed that what was originally intended as a solo should be joined by the Chancel Choir on the last verse.*

*If you do not have a spiritual home, we invite you to consider this church and to learn about us at [www.woodburyumc.net](http://www.woodburyumc.net). May our saying, "Love Spoken Here," be incarnate in you! May God, who is rich in mercy, enfold us with Christ's love! A blessed Christmastide to you!*

*Pastor Brian Bodt*

## TODAY AT WOODBURY UMC

**WELCOME TO WOODBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH! IF YOU ARE A VISITOR PLEASE COMPLETE A VISITOR'S CARD AND PLACE IT IN THE OFFERING.** Our desire is that you experience the warmth of Christ's welcome and ours in this church. Please introduce yourself to Pastor Brian Bodt.

**FELLOWSHIP TIME** follows worship downstairs. Invite someone you don't know to join you!

**VISION 2024 EMPHASIS TODAY** is "*Evangelism.*" **Sharing the story of Christ's birth is indeed the sharing of Good News!** Each week we focus on one of four areas: Evangelism, Missions, Communications and Congregational Vitality and Growth, the latter with three subsets: Spiritual Wellness, Financial Health, Inviting Facilities. Let's move them forward!

**PASTOR BRIAN'S CHRISTMAS EVE SERMON** was adapted for the "Guest Sermon" series in the Christmas Day edition of the local free newspaper, "*Voices.*" A copy is posted in Fellowship Hall. His "*Faith Matters*" column in *The New Haven Register* appeared this weekend and is also posted.