

Sunday School
Christmas Program
2011

Sleep In Heavenly Peace
(Imagine No Malaria)

© 2011 Judy Mahler

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Created by Judy Mahler, Owatonna, MN,
for the children and youth of Blooming Grove United Methodist Church,
located in rural Waseca County, Minnesota

Resources and Credits

Call to Worship: taken from *Touch Holiness – Resources for Worship*, Edited by Ruth C. Duck and Maren C. Tirabassi, (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1990), p. 5.

Children’s Song - *Deck the Stalls*: Source unknown.

Children’s Song - *Holy Baby, Holy Child*: taken from *One Room Sunday School Songbook – Winter 2006-2007*, words & music by Lynn S. Hurst, (Nashville, TN, Abingdon Press, 2000), p. 3.

Advent Wreath Lighting: taken from *Outside the Box – The Gift that Can’t be Contained – Advent 2011*, by Jessica Bridges, Patty Smith, Jeremy Steele and Rev. William Williams, (United Methodist Communications: RETHINKCHURCH, 2011), pp. 30-31. (Found at www.umcom.org/advent).

Malaria Data and Information: taken from www.ImagineNoMalaria.org (A ministry of the Global Health Initiative; an area of focus of The United Methodist Church) and www.minnesotaumc.org/our-ministries/imagine-no-malaria (Imagine No Malaria - Minnesota Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church).

Rap: *No More Malaria in the Street*, by Judy Mahler, (Owatonna, MN: BurOak Writings, 2011).

The Christmas Story: Adapted from *The Good News Bible*, and a purchased Sunday School Christmas Program from the 1980’s for which the source is no longer known.

Benediction: taken from *Touch Holiness – Resources for Worship*, Edited by Ruth C. Duck and Maren C. Tirabassi, (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1990), p. 4.

Character	Person(s)/Class(es)	Script	Costume
Pastoral Liturgist			
Program Introduction			
Advent Wreath Reading			
Advent Wreath Candle-Lighters			
No More Malaria Intro			
No More Malaria Story			
No More Malaria Rap, with Congregation			
Narrator(s) – Christmas Story			
Joseph			
Mary			
Innkeeper			
Head Angel			
Heavenly Host of Angels			
Shepherds			
Sheep	Preschool Class		
Wise Person			
Wise Person			
Wise Person			
Director(s)			
Children's Song Leader			
Costume Assistants			
Greeters			
Bell-Ringer(s)			
Organist/Pianist			

Done	Props	Source
	Big Doll for Jesus	
	Life-Sized Stuffed Sheep	
	Shepherd Staffs	
	Christmas Backdrop	
	Stable & Manger	
	Manger Star Fabric	
	Chairs for Manger and for Bed Nets	
	Wise Men Gifts	
	Offering Baskets	

Done	To Do	Assigned
	Make song posters	
	Make Imagine No Malaria Offering Envelopes	
	Markers, tagboard, posterboard, double-sided tape to make posters for the No More Malaria Introduction	
	World Map on poster board	
	Smiley-Face Stickers	
	Sad-Face Post-It Note	
	Picture of people sleeping under a bed net <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Print from Imagine No Malaria website 	
	Make two Mosquito Nets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Directions from Imagine No Malaria website • Large Net for the “Mosquito Toss” • Small Net to drape over manger 	
	Make pipe-cleaner mosquitoes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Directions from Imagine No Malaria website • 1 for each student 	
	<p>Make card-stock mosquitoes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use/enlarge picture of mosquito from the Intranet • Place 4 images on an 8 ½ X 11 sheet of paper • Include the slogan “Imagine No Malaria” and brief information about the campaign • Cut into 4 mosquitoes • Attach a magnetic strip on the back of each <p>These mosquitoes will be placed in the manger. During the offering, all members of the congregation will come to the manger and clear it of mosquitoes, making it a safe and peaceful place for Jesus to sleep. The mosquitoes will go home as refrigerator magnets – as a reminder of this important campaign</p>	

Gathering God's People Together

Gathering Music
Ring of the Bell
Announcements/ Joys and Concerns
Time of Greeting
Prelude

Program Introduction

Welcome to our Sunday School Christmas Program, entitled "Sleep in Heavenly Peace". Throughout the service, we will hear reminders that Jesus came to earth to be the hands, feet, and heart of God so that we could better understand God's amazing love. We'll also hear an invitation for us to carry on the work that Jesus began, and use our hands, feet, and hearts to bring God's love and justice to the world.

Our students will weave the traditional Christmas story in with vignettes that tell of an amazing project that all United Methodist Churches in the USA are tackling: to raise \$75 million dollars over three years to save lives from malaria-related deaths in Africa. The project is called "Imagine No Malaria". Here in our own backyard, all United Methodist Churches in Minnesota are working together to save 180,000 lives. Our state-wide goal is to raise \$1.8 million dollars (\$10 for each of 180,000 persons) to purchase "mosquito bed nets" that will protect adults and children from the insects that carry the disease, and help them sleep in peace. Blooming Grove UMC has promised to raise \$3,000 over the next three years to save 300 lives. During our morning offering, if you wish to contribute to this special Christmas Mission Offering, "Imagine No Malaria", please place those gifts in the envelopes designated as such, found in the red hymnals in the pews. All other offering gifts will go toward the Blooming Grove UMC church budget.

Let us join together in celebration of the coming of Jesus, God with us in human form!

(*) Congregational Call to Worship: Isaiah 40:3-4

L: Gracious God, we hear the promise of the coming of Jesus into a manger and into our hearts and homes.

P: **Bless our Advent waiting.**

L: Fill our worship with anticipation of your love.

P: **Dedicate us to prepare your way by lifting up the valleys in our lives and making smooth the rough places of others.**

All: **For we pray in the name of Emmanuel – God with us. Amen.**

(*) Carol: "The King of Glory Comes"

The Faith We Sing #2091

Christmas Songs – Preschool Through 3rd Grade

“Deck the Stalls” (to the tune of “Deck the Halls”)

Verse 1	Verse 2
Deck the stalls in Bethlehem B-a-a-a, B-a-a-a, B-a-a-a, Moooo, Hee-Haw (repeat this line wherever it says “repeat” Come you all to Bethlehem (repeat) Cattle lowing in the stable (repeat) Gather ‘round the manger cradle (repeat)	Deck the stalls in Bethlehem (repeat) Come you all to Bethlehem (repeat) See the Savior there before us (repeat) Hear the creatures join the chorus (repeat)

“Holy Baby, Holy Child”

Holy baby, holy child, we await your coming now,
 You bring us hope, you bring us peace,
 You bring us joy, you bring us love.
 Holy baby, Holy child, come to us now.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Person	
Leader 1	Luke 2:8-20, Common English Bible “Nearby shepherds were living in the fields, guarding their sheep at night. The Lord’s angel stood before them, the Lord’s glory shone around them, and they were terrified. The angel said, “Don’t be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you - wonderful, joyous news for all people. Your savior is born today in David’s city. He is Christ the Lord. This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger.” Suddenly a great assembly of the heavenly forces was with the angel praising God. They said, “Glory to God in heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors.” When the angels returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, “Let’s go right now to Bethlehem and see what’s happened. Let’s confirm what the Lord has revealed to us.” They went quickly and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. When they saw this, they reported what they had been told about this child. Everyone who heard it was amazed at what the shepherds told them. Mary committed these things to memory and considered them carefully. The shepherds returned home, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. Everything happened just as they had been told.”
Leader 2	We are born into one family, but through Christ, new family is found.
Congregation	God continues to expand who we are through those with whom we unify.
Leader 3	God came in the form of man to show us what love can do.
Congregation	Through ordinary people, God accomplished extraordinary things.
All	Like the shepherds, may we unite in purpose to seek the unbelievable that when it is found we may point to the sky and praise the One in whom we believe.
Candle Lighters	Light the Advent candles.
Congregation	Unifying God, ignite within us the desire to travel the journeys of life together, seeking you and leaving behind things less important. Amen.

Imagine No Malaria!

Instructions:

Break up the readings below however it makes the most sense amongst class members and then do as many creative things as possible to make the statistics come alive. Starter ideas:

- Make giant posters for
 - BAD NEWS, GOOD NEWS, GREAT NEWS. For each one, at the appropriate time, a student & sign can come bounding through the sanctuary.
 - YEAR and 45 SECONDS. (Same idea as bullet 1.)
 - The numbers of 500 million and 1 million. (If enough students, have 1 digit/comma per student, with the students standing next to one another to give a visual impact of the size of the numbers.)
 - The 4 focus areas (Same idea as bullet 1.)
- Do something to help mark 45 seconds and the death of four children, i.e. at each 45 second mark, have a different voice from a different part of the sanctuary read one of the four occupations -- and then ring a bell from somewhere, i.e. toll the main bell, or ring “angel bells” from different spots in the sanctuary.

Person(s)	No More Malaria – Introduction: Grades 4 - 12
	<p>God came in the form of a man to show us what love can do. Jesus came to be God’s hands, feet, and heart in the world. He helped many people when he was here.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We wish that he could reappear today, snap his fingers, and cure the world of war and disease. • Instead, God calls US to be God’s hands, feet, and heart, and we want to tackle and bring down a huge disease - malaria!
	<p>Here’s the BAD news about malaria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Each year</u>, malaria <u>infects</u> 500 million people around the world. • <u>Each year</u>, malaria <u>kills</u> 1 million people – 900,000 of them live in Africa. • <u>Every 45 seconds</u>, malaria kills a child. In four minutes, four children will die, among them someone who could have grown up to be <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ (Voice 1) A farmer – to help feed the world (ring bell, wait 45 seconds) ○ (Voice 2) A teacher – to help educate the world (ring bell, wait 45 secs) ○ (Voice 3) A doctor – to help heal the world (ring bell, wait 45 seconds) ○ (Voice 4) A leader – to help bring peace to the world (ring bell, 45 secs)
	<p>Here’s the GOOD news about malaria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malaria is completely preventable. • Malaria is completely treatable. • People wouldn’t need to die.
	<p>Here’s the GREAT news new about malaria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The United Methodist Church is working to stop malaria, and we aren’t doing it alone. • We are working together with the United Nations, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the World Health Organization, and The Global Fund. We are excited to learn that just this summer, some congregations in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America are now joining the cause! • Together, we will focus on 4 areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention—bed nets, pesticides, and drainage of standing water • Treatment—medical supplies, medication, and rapid diagnoses • Communication—hand-cranked and solar-powered radios; broadcasts of prevention information • Education—volunteer training
	<p>Let’s listen to the story about this great project.</p>

Scene Change

Organist/Pianist plays some kind of “mosquito music” while Grades 4 – 12 students help set up chairs and a mosquito bed net in the chancel area. The preschoolers through Grade 3 will then come up and sit on the front step, facing the congregation. The leader will sit on the floor below the chancel, facing the students.

The following section of the program will be a kind of well-rehearsed Children’s Sermon, in which the students have practiced the questions and answers numerous times prior to the program, so that their answers can be loud and clear, and full of confidence.

Leader Answer	No More Malaria - The Story: Leader and Preschool – 3rd Grade
Leader	Can you tell me what the word “prevent” means?
All Kids	To stop!
Leader	In the Bible, there are lots of stories about how Jesus stopped bad things from happening. Today, we are remembering that we can live like Jesus and help stop bad things from happening too!
Leader	This Christmas, here at church, we are collecting pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters to help stop a bad disease. Do you remember the name of the disease?
All Kids	Malaria!
Leader	Malaria is a disease that is found in a place far, far away called....
All Kids	Africa!
Leader	You are right! Let’s look at this map. This is where we live, in the state of Minnesota in the United States of America. We don’t have malaria here. Let’s put smiley face stickers in a circle all around the United States to show that we don’t need to worry about malaria. (Students attach stickers.)
Leader	Let’s look at the map again. Here is the place far, far away called Africa.
Leader	Africa is one of the places that we find the disease called malaria. Malaria makes people who live in Africa very sick, especially boys and girls. Let’s put a sad-faced post-it note on Africa. (Student attach a post-it.)
Leader	Now, let’s go back to the United States. Do we have malaria in the United States?
All Kids	No!
Leader	Do we have malaria in Minnesota?
All Kids	No!
Leader	Do we have malaria in Waseca?
All Kids	No!
Leader	Do we have malaria in Medford?
All Kids	No!
Leader	Do we have malaria in Owatonna?
All Kids	No!
Leader	How do you think people in Africa get malaria?
All Kids	Mosquitoes!
Leader	Yes - from one particular kind of mosquito that lives in Africa – and only bites people at night when it is dark outside! This kind of mosquito carries malaria, and when the mosquito bites someone, it can make that person very sick.
Leader	Do Minnesota mosquitoes carry malaria?
All Kids	No!
Leader	You are right! So we don’t need to worry. But our friends in Africa need our help to get rid of those pesky mosquitoes and to stop them from biting people.

Leader Answer	No More Malaria - The Story: Leader and Preschool – 3rd Grade
Leader	Let's put smiley face stickers in a circle all around Africa to show that we are ready to help. (Students attach stickers.)
Leader	The pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters that we collect at Christmas will be used to do lots of different things to help people in Africa stay safe from mosquitoes. We have one of the coolest things here with us today. What is it called?
All Kids	A bed net!
Leader	This is what a real-life bed net looks like, and this is how people sleep under it. (show picture)
Leader	The bed net protects people from mosquitoes when they sleep at night. There is a chemical on the net, kind of like a super-duper "Deep Woods Off". When a mosquito lands on the net, the mosquito dies, because of the chemical.
Leader	If the mosquito dies, it cannot bite a person and send malaria into that person's body. People who sleep under the net are safe from the mosquitoes and can sleep in peace.
Leader	Let's show everyone how a bed net works. Let's take our pipe-cleaner mosquitoes and throw them toward the net. Let's see how many of them we can get to stick onto the "bed net".
All Kids	(Students demonstrate the "Mosquito Toss"!)
Leader	How did the net do at keeping the mosquitoes from passing through?
All Kids	Great!
Leader	In our game, even the mosquitoes that didn't stick could not go through the net. In real life, bed nets keep all the mosquitoes away from the people who sleep under them, because the chemical on the net is powerful enough to protect people even if there is a hole in the net!
Leader	How can we prevent our friends in Africa from getting malaria?
All Kids	Send them bed nets!
Leader	How much does it cost to send one bed net?
All Kids	\$10
Leader	You are right! \$10 will buy one bed net for a friend in Africa and it will stop them from getting malaria. It will keep them from getting very, very sick.
Leader	Our Christmas Mission Offering this year will go to help purchase bed nets for our African friends. Let's see how many pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters we can collect in the next weeks – and see how many bed nets we can buy this Christmas!

Person	Rap - No More Malaria In the Street: Leader and Preschool – 3 rd Grade
Leader	Are you ready for our “No More Malaria” Rap? This will be done as a call and response. The leader will say a line and show the actions. The congregation and children are invited to repeat each line after the leader – children will repeat actions. Be ready for great actions from our children! (Actions are in italics. Print the rap, without the actions, in the program.)
1a	God came (<i>point arms out to sides</i>) to earth (<i>point to ground</i>)
1b	when Jesus was born. (<i>pretend to rock a baby</i>)
1c	God came (<i>point arms out to sides</i>) to earth (<i>point to ground</i>)
1d	in human form. (<i>touch head, shoulders, knees, toes</i>)
2a	Jesus was God with hands (<i>jazz hands</i>) and with feet (<i>run in place</i>)
2b	and a heart (<i>right hand over heart</i>) full of love (<i>left hand cross over chest</i>) that couldn't be beat (<i>tap hands on chest 3 times for “couldn't be beat”</i>).
2c	Jesus helped folks who were hungry (<i>hold stomach in pain</i>) or sad (<i>trickle fingers down cheeks – like tears</i>).
2d	He even cured people from diseases that were bad (<i>say “diseases that were bad” with the voice, scrunched up face, and crawling fingers on either sides of eyes to resemble the Wicked Witch of the West from “The Wizard of Oz”</i>).
3a	Jesus said, “Don't tremble with fear! (<i>shake in fright</i>)
3b	Be brave, (<i>hold both arms to sides, elbows bent, fists up, like a power lifter</i>)
3c	do great things, (<i>strike the Super Man pose</i>)
3d	'cause I'm right here!” (<i>using a hip-hop voice and actions, do a shake of the head and shoulders and point to the ground</i>)
4a	Each year, at Christmas, we stop to remember, (<i>cross one arm over chest and point to brain with other hand, tapping one time each for “stop” and “remember”</i>)
4b	that Jesus came, but not just one December! (<i>pretend to rock a baby</i>)
5a	He's still right here, (<i>using a hip-hop voice and actions, do a shake of the head and shoulders and point to the ground</i>)
5b	in you (<i>point to another</i>) and in me, (<i>point to self</i>)
5c	long after we pack up the Christmas tree! (<i>hands stretched over head as high as possible, touching fingertips together</i>)
6a	He says, “I need you (<i>point to another in the fashion of Uncle Sam</i>)
6b	as God's hands(<i>jazz hands</i>) and God's feet! (<i>run in place</i>)
6c	I need hearts (<i>right hand over heart</i>) full of love (<i>left hand cross over chest</i>) that can't be beat! (<i>tap hands on chest 3 times for “can't be beat”</i>).
7a	You (<i>point to another in the fashion of Uncle Sam</i>) can help folks who are hungry (<i>hold stomach in pain</i>) or sad. (<i>trickle fingers down cheeks – like tears</i>).
7b	You (<i>point to another in the fashion of Uncle Sam</i>) can cure people from diseases that are bad!” (<i>say “diseases that were bad” with the voice, ,scrunched up face, and crawling fingers on either sides of eyes to resemble the Wicked Witch of the West from “The Wizard of Oz”</i>).
8a	Jesus says, “Don't tremble with fear! (<i>shake in fright</i>)
8b	Be brave. (<i>hold both arms to sides, elbows bent, fists up, like a power lifter</i>)
8c	do great things, (<i>strike the Super Man pose</i>)
8d	'cause I'm right here!” (<i>using a hip-hop voice and actions, do a shake of the head and shoulders and point to the ground</i>)
9a	We'll start right now, as God's hands (<i>jazz hands</i>) and God's feet. (<i>run in place</i>)
9b	No more malaria in the street! (<i>Shake pointer finger on each word in the style of “No More Monkeys Jumping on the Bed”</i>)
	Judy Mahler - 2011 BurOak Writings

Scene Change

Grades 4-12 move the big mosquito net, chairs, and map off to the side. All students go to Sunday School Rooms to change into costumes

Offering and Offertory

Hear again the words that we read during the lighting of the Advent wreath:

God came in the form of man to show us what love can do. Through ordinary people, God accomplishes extraordinary things. We are those people who can accomplish extraordinary things.

Our offering this morning has a two-fold purpose.

- One – to gather and honor the financial gifts that you bring for the Blooming Grove UMC Budget and for the Christmas Mission Offering, “No More Malaria”.
- Two – to offer ourselves as the hands and feet of God for our neighbors in Africa.

We invite you to come to the stable and help us empty the manger of all mosquitoes – to make it a safe place for Jesus to sleep in peace. We ask that each of you remove a mosquito from the manger and take it home, with its attached message of “Imagine No Malaria”. We hope that it can serve as inspiration for each of us to find creative ways to help raise funds to save 300 lives from malaria over the next three years - and to help families in Africa sleep in peace.

On your way back to your pew, we invite you to place your financial gifts in the baskets provided. Thank you.

Offering Response: Carol “Love Came Down at Christmas”

United Methodist Hymnal (UMH) #242

Congregational Carols (if needed while students are changing into costumes)

“Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

UMH #229

“The First Noel”

UMH #245

The Birth of Jesus: Luke 2:1-7

Character	Script	Instructions
Narrator	At that time, Emperor Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Roman Empire. When this first census took place, Quirinius was the governor of Syria. Everyone, then, went to register himself, each to his own home town.	Mary & Joseph wait in back of church.
Narrator	Joseph went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to the town of Bethlehem in Judea, the birthplace of King David. Joseph went there because he was a descendant of David.	Mary & Joseph begin to walk slowly down the aisle. They stop half-way down the aisle.
Narrator	Joseph went to register with Mary, to whom he was engaged. She was pregnant. They tried to find a place to stay in Bethlehem where they could have the baby.	Mary and Joseph look around for a place to stay – in the center aisle.
Narrator	At last, Joseph found an inn that looked like it might have room. He knocked on the door and said “Innkeeper! Do you have room in the inn?”	Mary and Joseph walk to left chancel door and knock. Innkeeper will come out.
Narrator	The innkeeper said, “No, we have no more room!”	
Narrator	Joseph said, “But ma’am (or sir), we have come a long way. My wife is tired and cold. She is ready to have a baby! Isn’t there any place to stay?”	
Narrator	The innkeeper thought for a little bit and then said “Well, you can stay in the stable, but you’ll have to be with the animals!”	Innkeeper take Mary & Joseph to the stable and help them settle in. Innkeeper exit left Chancel door. Mary and Joseph stay seated in the stable.
Narrator	While there were in Bethlehem, the time came for Mary to have her baby. She gave birth to her first son, wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger.	Mary and Joseph take the baby from behind the cradle and place in manger.

Carol: “Away In A Manger” (Please remain seated)

UMH #217, Vs. 1, 2

The Shepherds and the Angels: Luke 2: 8-14

Character	Script	Instructions
Narrator	There were some shepherds in that part of the country who were spending the night in the fields, taking care of their flocks of sheep.	Mary and Joseph remain seated in stable. Shepherds and preschool sheep move down center aisle with shepherds taking care of their sheep – eventually arrive at the first pew.
Narrator	Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terribly afraid.	Head Angel come out of right chancel door and stand on edge of front steps. Shepherds fall down in fright!
Narrator	The angel said, “Do not be afraid! I am here with good news for you! This news will bring great joy to all the people.”	Angel waves arms. Shepherd shake with fright.
Narrator	The angel told this news to the shepherds: “This very day, in David’s town, your Savior was born – Christ the Lord! This is what will prove it to you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.”	Shepherds become unafraid. Angel hold arms out.
Narrator	Suddenly a host of heaven’s angels appeared with the angel, praising God and saying: “Glory to God in the highest heaven! Peace on earth! Good will to all!”	Heavenly Host of Angels come out the right chancel door and join the Head Angel.

Carol: “Angels We Have Heard on High” (Please remain seated) UMH # 238, Vs. 1, 2, 3

The Shepherds Go to Bethlehem: Luke 2: 15-20

Character	Script	Instructions
Narrator	When the angels had left the shepherds and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us.”	Shepherds & sheep look at each other and go to the stable.
Narrator	So the shepherds hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and saw the baby lying in the manger. When the shepherds saw Jesus, they told them what the angel had said about the child. All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. Mary remembered all these things and thought deeply about them. The shepherds and sheep went back to their fields, singing praises to God for all they had heard and seen: it had been just as the angel had told them.	Shepherds and sheep go up to the manger and kneel while the narrator reads. Shepherds and sheep leave down the center aisle and sit in a front pew. Mary and Joseph stay in the stable.

Carol: “Silent Night” (Please remain seated)

UMH #239, Vs. 1, 2

Mary and Joseph drape the bed net over the manger and settle in for a peaceful night’s sleep

Visitors From the East: Matthew 2: 1-11

Character	Script	Instructions
Narrator	Perhaps other people came to visit this baby born in a stable. With such a tiny baby, Mary and Joseph probably stayed quite a while in Bethlehem. They didn’t know they were going to have a visit from some important people.	
Narrator	A bright star appeared the night Jesus was born. Some wise people in a faraway land saw it. They knew it was a special star. They followed it. These people had studied the prophecies and the stars and believed this star meant a Messiah had been born. They wanted to see him.	During this reading, the Wise Men slowly come up center aisle.
Narrator	The wise ones soon arrived at Bethlehem bringing precious gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.	Wise Ones kneel and present offering before the Child.
Narrator	They bowed before Mary, Joseph, and their son Jesus. When they were ready to leave, the wise ones returned to their country by another road, since God had warned them in a dream not to go back to Herod.	Wise Ones leave out left Chancel Door. Come to sit in front pew.
Narrator	The best part of the whole story is that it doesn’t end. Jesus was born many centuries ago; yet he’s alive and with us as we tell the story today. We don’t have to wait like the people of Israel, for a Messiah. Our good news is that Jesus has come. He is here, God with us, Emmanuel.	

Carol: “O Little Town of Bethlehem” (Please remain seated)

UMH #230, Vs. 1, 2, 4

(* Congregational Benediction (1 John 4:9-12)

L: God’s love has been made known among us, for God has sent Christ into the world that all people might live. My friends, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

P: **No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God abides in us. Let us live our lives as God’s hand and feet, and seek to love as God has loved us.**

(* Carol: “He is Born”

UMH #228

Sending Forth

Postlude