

+ Those who are able are invited to stand.

UMH - United Methodist Hymnal FWS – The Faith We Sing

You are invited to respond with the **Boldface** responses.

THE CHURCH GATHERS TO WORSHIP

Through every age and in every place, the Christ in whose name we gather calls disciples with a simple invitation, words of challenge: “Come follow me.”

And where is it that we go with Christ?

Christ leads us among enemies and strangers, causing us to regard all persons as potential friends.

Christ leads us into uncharted places of spiritual wilderness where the Word and will of God are the only reliable guides.

Christ leads us to lose ourselves just so we might be found, just so grace might become real.

And Christ leads us to the apparent dead-end of a cross to reveal a highway to new life.

We gather to worship the Christ who leads.

May we gain the wisdom and the courage to follow...

Thanks Be to God! Welcome to Worship!

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

Renee Warner

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND HOSPITALITY

PRELUDE

Dan Martin

SERVICE OF LIGHT

The Acolytes

Jesus said, “I am the Light of the world.”

+CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP

UMH 261

Lord of the Dance, v. 1

I danced in the morning when the world was begun, and I danced in the moon and the stars and the sun, and I came down from heaven and I danced on the earth. At Bethlehem I had my birth.

Dance, then, where-ever you may be; I am the Lord of the Dance, said he. And I’ll lead you all wherever you may be, and I’ll lead you all in the dance, said he.

+CALL TO WORSHIP

Responsively

To those who sit in darkness, light has dawned.

To those who dwell in gloom and despair,

God’s glorious presence has appeared.

God is indeed our light and our salvation.

We will follow, unafraid,

where God and Jesus lead us.

Let us worship our God of light and promise.

Let us celebrate the hope and joy of our

salvation.

+OPENING PRAYER

God of light and love, we gather this morning with eyes stinging from the brightness of your glory. We have become so accustomed to the darkness, that your radiant light sometimes overwhelms us. Open our eyes to the light of your dawn, that our souls may be flooded with love and mercy and joy. Open our hearts to receive your message of comfort and peace and security, that we may find rest in your loving, protective presence. Open our spirits to follow the path you put before us, that we may lead lives committed to your Way. **Amen.**

+HYMN OF PRAISE

UMH 157

Jesus Shall Reign

THE CHURCH IN MOMENTS OF CONFESSION

THE PSALTER

Psalm 27

CALL TO CONFESSION

Leader

The path to authentic renewal is through repentance.

In order to become more like Jesus, we must be willing to let him reveal those aspects of our lives which need to be changed. Let us accept the invitation, “Come unto me...” by gratefully, confidently laying our lives before Jesus now.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Responsively

God of our light and our salvation, sometimes we prefer to live in darkness, embracing the safety and anonymity of the shadows; sometimes we delight in our divisions, believing we are better than others; sometimes the yoke of our calling feels too heavy, and we seek to slip out from under the bar across our shoulders.

Forgive our fear. Forgive our distaste to the light. Forgive our unresponsiveness to your call. Forgive our willful blindness and deafness to the Way.

Help us know deep in our souls that you are our light and our salvation, our joy and our wonder, our very life. Hear us as we cry aloud in our need.

PERSONAL PRAYER OF CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader

Our God of light and love hears us when we cry aloud. We have nothing to fear. Know that this God of light wraps us in comforting arms, lifts us from the darkness of our guilt and sin, and forgives us once and for all. Know that we will dwell in safety in God’s house, now and forevermore.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Unison

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.

+DOXOLOGY

UMH 94

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise God, all creatures here below; Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise God, the source of all our gifts! Praise Jesus Christ, whose power up-lifts! Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

THE CHURCH LISTENS TO THE WORD

THE WORD

SONG AT CHILDREN'S SERMON

UMH 558

We Are the Church, v. 4

Refrain: I am the church! You are the church! We are the church together! All who follow Jesus, all around the world! Yes, we're the church together!
V. 4: And when the people gather, there's singing and there's praying, there's laughing and there's crying sometimes, all of it saying: Refrain

WIGGLETIME

Following Wiggletime, the Children are invited to join the Leaders in Linger Hall for CHILDREN'S CHURCH

THE WORD IN MUSIC

Chancel Choir

SERMON

Rev. M. Steven Meadows

**THE CHURCH SCATTERS
TO SHARE GOOD NEWS**

+HYMN OF DEDICATION

UMH 159

Lift High the Cross

+BENEDICTION

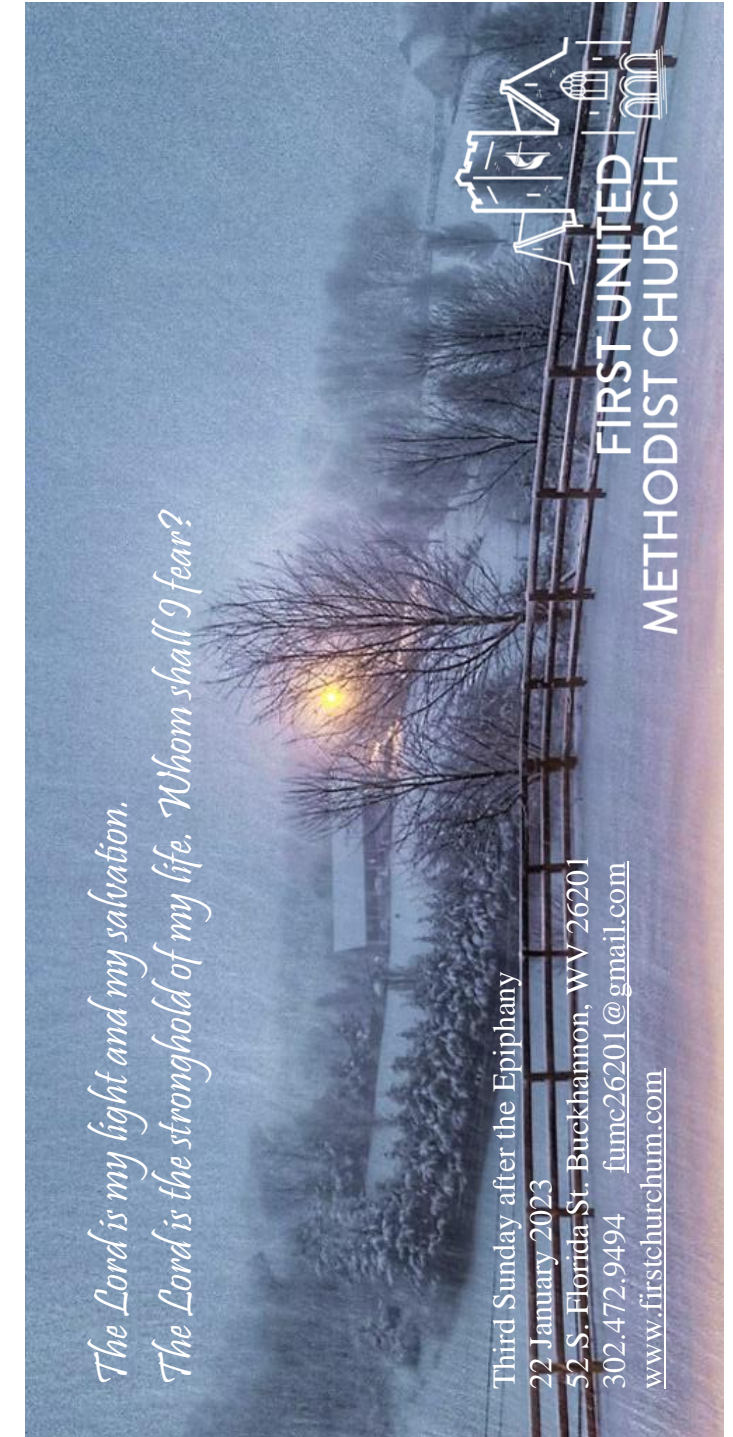
Pastor

Jesus, the light of the world, calls us to follow.
Go and tell the news of God's love.
Cast the nets of grace wide,
that all may see the glory of God.
Go forth and shine with God's light!
May God—Source, Word, and Spirit—
bless you with the radiance of love.
Amen.

+POSTLUDE

Dan Martin

...and the worship continues.



*The Lord is my light and my salvation.
The Lord is the stronghold of my life. Whom shall I fear?*

Third Sunday after the Epiphany

22 January 2023

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**FIRST UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH**