RICHFIELD
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

December 21, 2025 at 9:30 am
Fourth Sunday of Advent

Bold = in unison *** Rise in body and/or spirit**

ENTRANCE

Prelude	"Away in a Manger" arr. Mark Hayes	Sonja Gustafson
Welcome		Rev. Nate Melcher
Call to Advent	"Advent Song" vs. 4	TFWS Hymnal 2090

4. **Light the Advent candle, four: Think of joy forevermore;**
Christ Child in a stable born, gift of love that Christmas morn.
Candle, candle, *bright your ray*, *shining on this winter day*;
Candle, candle, *bright your ray*, *sending din and doubt away*.

Lighting the Advent Wreath IV — Sarah and Alex Currie Brennan, Cameron

We gather in the season of Advent, a season of Faith.

A vision shines bright and stirs something in us.
God knows our name, gives us life, bears our pains.
We pray to the Spirit and find what we are looking for.
We discover a Savior not in the palace, but in the manger.
Tidings of comfort and joy fill the winter air.

On this fourth Sunday of Advent, we light the Candle of Faith.
Restore us, save us, reveal to us your face, O LORD!
May Faith light up this world. Amen.

Time with Children

Sharing the Peace

May the peace of God be with you. **And also with you.**

Please greet your neighbor here - & online - with mutual signs of peace.

Gathering Hymn* "Once in Royal David's City" UM Hymnal 250
v. 1: Brad Gardner
vv. 3 and 4: All; Please rise in body and/or spirit.

3. **Jesus is our childhood's pattern; day by day like us he grew;**
he was little, weak, and helpless, tears and smiles like us he knew;
and he feeleth for our sadness, and he shareth in our gladness.

4. **And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own redeeming love;**
for that child so dear and gentle is our Lord in heaven above;
and he leads his children on to the place where he is gone.

Lighting Our Conflux Candles

You are invited to safely light a candle or lamp to celebrate
the moments this week when your life's journey met God's heart.

Celebration Music "Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabella" Chancel Choir
arr. Howard Halvey Jan Kirchner, Victor Zupanc

Celebrating Our Conflux Moments

PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

First Lesson Light in the Darkness, from Isaiah 9:2-7 London Owens

All over the face of the earth, across the ages, from here and from there,
the people walking in darkness have seen a great light.
On those living in a pitch-dark land, light has dawned.
The people are glad in God's presence
sharing gifts and warm greetings.
The power of oppressors and cruel tyrants – is gone, done away with;
and all of Creation is delivered.
For unto us a Child is born.
To us an heir is given, and authority will be upon his shoulders.
There will be no limits to the wholeness of the Coming Kingdom
established and sustained throughout the earth.
Heaven and earth will blossom in justice and righteousness
now and forever.

Carol "Toda la Tierra (All Earth is Waiting)" vv. 1, 3 UM Hymnal 210

1. **All earth is waiting to see the Promised One,**
and the open furrows, the sowing of the Lord.
All the world, bound and struggling, seeks true liberty;
it cries out for justice and searches for the truth.

3. **Mountains and valleys will have to be made plain;**
open new highways, new highways for the Lord.
He is now coming closer, so come all and see,
and open the doorways as wide as wide can be.

Second Lesson Prophecy, from Isaiah 11:1-6, 9 *The Message* Brennan Currie

Carol "Lo, How a Rose" vv. 1, 3 UM Hymnal 216

1. **Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung!**
   Of Jesse's lineage coming, as those of old have sung.
   It came, a floweret bright, amid the cold of winter,
   when half spent was the night.

3. **O Flower, whose fragrance tender with sweetness fills the air,**
   dispel in glorious splendor the darkness everywhere.
   True man, yet very God, from sin and death now save us,
   and share our every load.

Third Lesson Annunciation, from Luke 1:26-38

…One morning, long ago, God sent an angel, Gabriel, to Nazareth,
A little town in Galilee!
Right. To carry a message to Mary,
A girl pledged to be married to Joseph, a man descended from the house of David.
David, the ancient king. And… The angel appeared to Mary and said,
"Greetings, you who are highly favored! God is with you!"
Exactly! Understandably, Mary was thoroughly shaken!
So the angel said to her,
"Do not be afraid!"
"Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God."
"And you're going to have a baby!"
That was a big surprise! It came like a lightning bolt out of the sky!
"You will conceive and carry a child and give birth to a son...
"And you will give him the name Jesus. And…"
"He will be magnificent, and there will be no end, ever, to his kingdom."
But Mary knew her own habits and her own intentions, and she said to the angel, "Impossible. No way!"
The angel answered, "Nothing is impossible for the God who makes a way out of no way."
And then Mary said, as any of us may be asked to say:
"Yes! Let it be. Let it be with me just as God has said."

Special Music "Dreaming Mary" (An alternate to the "Magnificat")
by Janet Gadeski; arr. Patricia Wright
Solo/s - congregation joins the final chorus

And we dream, rejoicing in our saviour;
We dream of justice for the poor.
We dream that kings oppress no more,
As we dream with Dreaming Mary.

Fourth Lesson Travel by Decree, from Luke 2:1-7 Jen Pacyga

Anthem "Bethlehem Spiritual" Chancel Choir
by Donald Moore

Fifth Lesson Meanwhile Outside of Town, based on Luke 2:8-10
Rev. Chris Kliesen Wehrman
and Rev. Nate Melcher

Carol* "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" vv. 1, 3 UM Hymnal 240

1. **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 hosts proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

3. **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 we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

Anthem "The Hands That First Held Mary's Child" Chancel Choir
by T. Troeger/D. Forrest

THANKSGIVING

Sermon "A Future to Make" Rev. Nate Melcher
"Never Better Than at Christmas" Worship Series 4 of 4

Carol "Sing We Now of Christmas" vv. 1, 3 UM Hymnal 237

1. **Sing we now of Christmas, Noel, sing we here!**
Hear our grateful praises to the babe so dear.

Refrain:
Sing we Noel, the King is born, Noel!
Sing we now of Christmas, sing we now Noel!

3. **In Bethlehem they found him; Joseph and Mary mild,**
seated by the manger, watching the holy child. [Refrain]

Faith, Justice, and Joy as the Church / Sharing Our Gifts

Your gift in-person, by mail or phone, or online at richfieldumc.org/give supports the ministry, outreach, and operations of your church.
Thank you for your extravagant generosity.

Offertory "Swing Down Angels" Chancel Choir
by J. Graham/B. Nix

Prayer of Gratitude / The LORD's Prayer*

Our God, 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.

SENDING FORTH

Sixth Lesson — Hope, from Isaiah 40 — Orlean Kovach

Sending Hymn* — "Good Christian Friends, Rejoice" vv. 1, 2 — UM Hymnal 224

1. **Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;**
give ye heed to what we say: News, news! Jesus Christ is born today!
Ox and ass before him bow, and he is in the manger now.
Christ is born today, Christ is born today!

2. **Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;**
now ye hear of endless bliss: News, news! Jesus Christ was born for this!
He hath opened heaven's door, and ye are blest forevermore.
Christ was born for this, Christ was born for this!

Benediction*

...And until we meet again,
let us live in faith, justice, and joy! Amen.

Postlude — I. Noel Fanfares from "A Christmas Suite" by Charles Callahan

Worship is over. Service begins.
Go forth as Richfield United Methodist Church.

Hello, guests! Welcome to worship as Richfield UMC. It's a big step to come to a new church and we're glad you're here. If you have questions, please ask any church member, and we hope you have a good experience.

RICHFIELD UMC NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today, Sunday, December 21

Christmas Cookie Party
Join in holiday cheer after worship today. Enjoy some cookies and good fellowship.

A Service of Hope and Healing, today at 3:00 pm
The Christmas season can bring complex emotions of grief, loss, and other challenges. It's okay to feel our feelings. Come as you are for a Service of Hope and Healing filled with music, poetry, prayer, and ritual. Prepare your heart for the light of Christ with candlelight, and God's blessings to you.

This Wednesday, December 24
Christmas Eve Worship Service, 4:00 pm

Christmas Eve service features Time with Children, prayer and preaching, music by organ, choir, strings, "Silent Night" sung by candlelight, and our wonderful stained glass windows all lit up. Mark your calendar and invite your friends and family.

The Warming Tree

When weather gets cold, hearts heat up! **Through Dec. 28**, the Warming Tree is ready for your donations of clean and gently-used or brand-new winter accessories:

- Winter Hats (purchased or handmade)
- Scarves (purchased or handmade)
- Waterproof Mittens (store-purchased)
- Waterproof Gloves (store-purchased)

Child-size donations go to local schools. Adult-size donations go to residents in housing programs with Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative. Find the tree in the Commons.

Next Sunday, December 28

Cereal Sunday: Come for a music-filled service followed by cereal in the Commons. We'll have a variety of cereals or bring one to share. Kids: wear your pajamas to worship! All are welcome to bring an unopened box of cereal for VEAP Food Shelf.

Milestones & Miracles, Dec. 21
Once a quarter in worship, you're invited to share what you celebrate with your church. Whether it's your birthday, anniversary, a new job, retirement, or other significant milestone or miracle, this is a time to celebrate the joy God brings in our everyday lives together.

Sunday, January 4, 2026

Souper Bowl of Caring: Soup Drive Begins (January 4—February 8)
Begin 2026 with this perennial tradition. Please bring your donations of cans of soup and other shelf-stable goods to benefit our longstanding partner, VEAP Food Shelf.

Lunch For New People | Sunday, January 4, 10:45 am-11:45 am, Fellowship Hall
Please RSVP to Pastor Nate, nmelcher@richfieldumc.org or 612-861-6086
You came to worship and met someone new over coffee. You participated in an event, Bible study, or donation drive. Now you want to grow in your faith, community connections, and service to God and neighbor. RSVP for a pizza lunch with new faces and longtime members to make connections, deepen your faith, and consider becoming a member. We'd love to get to know you more.

Pub Theology | January 4, February 1, First Sundays at 7:00 pm-8:00 pm
Pizza Lucé (800 W 66th St, Richfield) Led by Pastor Nate, Pub Theology is a drop-in discussion about faith, God, and life over a tasty beverage.

Ongoing and Open

1st Mondays, 1:30 pm | Women Who Read
To join by Zoom, email Fern wfalbertson@gmail.com. Next meeting January 6, 2026. At this gathering, participants will make recommendations and the reading list for 2026 will be created. If you are a woman who enjoys good books and thoughtful discussion, then consider joining fellow readers for Women Who Read.

Tuesdays, 9:30 am | Women's Bible Study
Contact Molly Reko, mollyreko@comcast.net, to get connected.

Wednesdays, 9:00 am | Men's Bible Study
Contact Kent Johnson, kentjmn@gmail.com, to get connected.

Night Owl Bible Study | Wednesdays at 9:00 pm | *Resumes January 7*
Online-Only by Zoom Meeting ID: 819 9039 0338 / Passcode: 5835 or call: (312) 626-6799. Busy days? Up late at night? This is the Bible study for you. Open to all.

Saturdays, 8:30 am | Men's Support Group
Contact Kent Johnson, kentjmn@gmail.com, to get connected.

Families with Young Children are always welcome in worship!
Here are some options to help your family have a good experience when worshiping in the Sanctuary:

The Nook - A space connected to the Sanctuary perfect for a quiet or wiggly moment.
Art Cart - Children can fill a bag with items in The Nook to bring with them to worship with their families in the pews.
Time with Children - Children of all ages are invited to experience a message just for them. Parent/guardians are welcome to join their children too.
Sunday School - **(Grades K-6)** *Note: no Sunday School on December 28.*
Second and fourth Sundays during worship time Following the Time with Children, children may go to Sunday School or stay in the sanctuary to worship. Children meet Sunday school teachers in the Nook.
Nursing Mothers - You may nurse wherever you like. There is also a reserved Nursing Room available near the Library area.

An Everyday Prayer Life Is for Everyone

May we devote time and energy to God and neighbor and pray every day for:

- People in need of a loving church home.
- Our church's journey toward vitality.
- The babies and toddlers who are cared for each weekday by CFC (Caring For Children, the early learning ministry at the church) and their families.

Our prayers are a beautiful expression of care and solidarity for each other.
We pray in celebration and gratitude.
We pray for those who seek healing: Laurel Lien, Agnes Danzl, Jim Vetsch, John Darling, Shar Salisbury, Bob Mills, Lynne Alexander, Donis (Burt) Andrews (sister of Shari Burt), Pat Eder, Marilyn Dodge, Pat Noonan, Betty, mother of Michele Wegscheid, and Eric, nephew of Lori Claussen.
We pray for those who seek comfort: Paula Milani
We pray for those who seek strength and wisdom: Pat Robertson.
We pray for those who grieve:

- The friends and family, especially Dayle, of David Couillard who died on December 4. A memorial service will be held at Richfield UMC on Friday, January 16, 2026 at 10:00 am with visitation the hour prior to the service.
- The family and friends of Ron Larson who died on December 6. A service was held last Friday.

We pray for our neighbors and for all in the RUMC community.

Please call the church office to be included in any of the prayers of our church.

This Week's Calendar

The church office/Campus is open Tues.-Thurs., 8am-4pm.
The Church Library is open when the campus is open.

Sunday, December 21, 2025
Lessons and Carols
9:30 am In-Person Worship Service
(+Live streamed & archived)
10:30 am Christmas Cookie Party
3:00 pm Service of Hope and Healing

Monday, December 22, 2025

Tuesday, December 23, 2025
9:30 am Women's Bible Study

Wednesday, December 24, 2025
4:00 pm Christmas Eve Worship Service

Thursday, December 25, 2025
Merry Christmas
The church campus is closed.

Friday, December 26, 2025
The church campus is closed.

Saturday, December 27 2025
8:30 am Men's Group
10:30 am Saturday Covenant Group

Sunday, December 28, 2025
Cereal Sunday
9:30 am In-Person Worship Service
(+Live streamed & archived)

We thank those who help make this worship a ministry of grace:
Ministers: All Members of the Congregation
Musicians: Chancel Choir, Sonja Gustafson, organ/piano, Jan Kirchner, piano, Dave Nyberg, Choir Director, Victor Zupanc, piano.
Vocal soloists: Scott Clarke, Brad Gardner, Shar Salisbury, Chris Kliesen Wehrman.
Strings: Mac Johnson, viola; Carolyn Liptak, violin; Pat Norton, cello; Allen Reyes, violin
Liturgists: Alex, Brennan, Cameron and Sarah Currie, Orlean Kovach, London Owens, Jen Pacyga, Rev. Nate Melcher.
Tech Crew today: Linda Blomsness, Rev. Bill Johnson, Steve Warner

Please let the church office know if you or someone from the church is hospitalized or immediately pre or post hospitalization. The pastoral care team is available to extend care and provide support in times of need. The Parish Minister for the week of December 21 is Pat Norton.

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