RICHFIELD
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

December 24, 2025 at 4:00 pm
Christmas Eve

Bold = in unison *** Rise in body or spirit.**

Prelude — "Pastorale" from "Christmas Concerto" by Corelli — String Quartet

Welcome — Rev. Nate Melcher

Call to Advent — "Light the Advent Candle" v. 5 — TFWS Hymnal 2090

5. **Light the Christmas candles, now; sing of donkey, sheep and cow;**
   Birthday candles for the King; let the alleluia's ring.
   Candle, candle, burning bright, shining in the winter night;
   Candle, candle, burning bright, fill our hearts with Christmas light.

Lighting of the Christ Candle — Shana Hoffer, Jeff Heuer, Vienna Hoffer

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

Sing with praise, give thanks for beauty and sanctuary.
Sing of God's marvelous works among all the peoples.
Sing praises to the LORD, all you within this place.
Embrace one another in love and kinship forever.
Tidings of comfort and joy fill the winter air.

On this Christmas Eve, we light the Christ Candle.
The Son of the LORD is here with truth and righteousness!
May Christ light up this world. Amen.

Anthem — "What Child" by Paul Lohman — Chancel Choir

Christmas Prayer

This bright night is for mystery, O God. We scarcely understand the ways you break into this world and into our lives. Yet we know you do. The whole earth still needs your peace, with peoples in conflict and climate in crisis. May the ancient story of your arrival on this night make us courageous bearers of good news and doers of good deeds. For the sake of your beautiful, created world we pray the words Jesus taught us, saying…

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.

Time with Children — Becca Whitaker

Hymn* — "O Come, All Ye Faithful" — UM Hymnal 234
vv. 1, 3, 6

1. **O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,**
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem.
Come and behold him, born the King of angels;

Refrain:
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

3. **Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation;**
O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest; (Refrain)

6. **Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,**
Jesus, to thee be all glory given.
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing: (Refrain)

Sharing the Story — Luke 2:1-7 — Marj Wittenborg

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room.

Hymn "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly" UM Hymnal 229

1. **Infant holy, infant lowly, for his bed a cattle stall;**
   oxen lowing, little knowing, Christ the babe is Lord of all.
   Swift are winging angels singing, noels ringing, tidings bringing:
   Christ the babe is Lord of all.
2. **Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping vigil till the morning new**
   saw the glory, heard the story, tidings of a gospel true.
   Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow, praises voicing, greet the morrow:
   Christ the babe was born for you.

Sharing the Story "Meanwhile, Outside of Town" based on Luke 2:8-20

SHEPHERDS: We've got to tell you what happened just now! Amazing news!
We were half asleep when these angels popped out of the sky saying…

ANGELS: We've got news! Good news! Great news for all people everywhere!

SHEPHERDS: Glory, but we were scared! We were shaking! They were singing…

ANGELS: Don't be afraid. God sent us.
It's the glory of God that's shining 'round about you.

SHEPHERDS: At first we thought we were dreaming, but we had never been more awake in our lives! We all saw them. Really.

ANGELS: It was a heavenly host! Flocks of us! Flying, and singing:
Good news! Gloria! Gloria in excelsis deo! Glory to God!

SHEPHERDS: And they said to go tell people; they said to tell everybody!

ANGELS: We sing peace and joy for all people, everywhere!
For creatures and trees; oceans and deserts; hills and valleys, too!

SHEPHERDS: And then...they told us to go see a baby!

ANGELS: Unto you is born this day in the city of Bethlehem! A savior! A tiny king!
New life! New joy! Go! Go!

SHEPHERDS: So we ran down the hill and the sheep ran with us and we got into town and…

ANGELS: You will find the child lying in a manger!

SHEPHERDS: We found the baby… And we all gathered 'round to adore him.

ANGELS: Prince of Peace! Wonderful Counselor!

SHEPHERDS: Our newborn Christ Child King! We all said,

ANGELS & SHEPHERDS: "Gloria!"

Hymn* "Angels We Have Heard on High" UM Hymnal 238

1. **Angels we have heard on high sweetly singing o'er the plains,**
   and the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.

Refrain:

Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

3. **Come to Bethlehem and see Christ whose birth the angels sing;**
   come, adore on bended knee, Christ the Lord, the newborn King. (Refrain)

4. **See him in a manger laid, whom the choirs of angels praise;**
   Mary, Joseph, lend your aid, while our hearts in love we raise. (Refrain)

Sharing the Story Luke 2:17-19

When the shepherds saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them, and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.

Hymn "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear" vv. 1-2, 4 UM Hymnal 218

1. **It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,**
   from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold:
   "Peace on the earth, good will to men, from heaven's all-gracious King."
   The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.

2. **Still through the cloven skies they come with peaceful wings unfurled,**
   and still their heavenly music floats o'er all the weary world;
   above its sad and lowly plains, they bend on hovering wing,
   and ever o'er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.

4. **For lo! the days are hastening on, by prophet seen of old,**
   when with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold
   when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
   and the whole world send back the song which now the angels sing.

Sermon "The Christmas Score" Rev. Nate Melcher

Anthem "Mary Did You Know?" Chancel Choir
by J. Schrader / M. Lowry / B. Greene

Faith, Justice, and Joy as the Church

Sharing Our Gifts

This year's special Christmas Eve offering supports Small Sums, and the ministries of Richfield UMC. Make your special gift in-person, by mail or phone, or online: richfieldumc.org/give.
Thank you for your extravagant generosity in the spirit of Christmas.

Offertory "O Holy Night" *Chancel Choir*
arr. H. Hopson, by C. Roquemaure, trans. J. S. Dwight

Doxology* "Angels We Have Heard on High (refrain)"
You are invited to ring a bell during the refrain.

Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Prayer of Gratitude*

As People of God, we proclaim the truth: we have heard the good news of great joy. It is real. It is for all the earth. May these gifts be a sign of how we bear this good news in word, in deed, and in attitude. May these blessings reveal the good news in the world. May the blessing of Jesus bring amazement and wonder throughout creation. Amen.

Sharing the Light

Hymn "Silent Night" vv. 1, 3-4 UM Hymnal 239

1. **Silent night, holy night,**
all is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

3. **Silent night, holy night,**
Son of God, love's pure light;
radiant beams from thy holy face
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, the Lord, at thy birth.

4. **Silent night, holy night,**
wondrous star, lend thy light;
with the angels let us sing,
Alleluia to our King;
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born!

Benediction*

Those who walk in shadow have seen a great light!
Sing to the heavens a new song; God's glory is here to bring faith!
Those who live in a land of deep shadow, upon them light has shined!
Sing to the heavens a new song; God's glory is here to bring justice!
For a child has been born for us, one of righteousness everlasting!
Sing to the heavens a new song; God's glory is here to bring joy!
Hallelujah! Jesus is here for all! Merry Christmas!
Hallelujah! Jesus is here for all! Merry Christmas! Amen!

Christmas Proclamation* "Joy to the World" UM Hymnal 246
v. 1

1. **Joy to the world, the Lord is come!**
Let earth receive her King;
let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven, and nature sing.

Postlude VI. Toccata-Finale by Stephen P. Johnson
from *Salvation unto Us Has Come*

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.

Christmas Eve Offering Mission Recipient is Small Sums
Small Sums outfits people experiencing housing instability with the clothing, shoes, and tools they need to start and keep a new job. Our generosity will help new neighbors gain stability faster, make resources last longer, and improve lives in holistic ways.

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 to 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.*
2nd and 4th Sundays during worship, following the Time with Children, children may go to Sunday School or stay in the sanctuary to worship. Meet teachers in the Nook.
Nursing Mothers - You may nurse wherever you like. There is also a reserved Nursing Room available near the Library area.

RICHFIELD UMC NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Christmas Eve Celebration

Be sure to stop in the Commons Area for these Christmas gifts and fun:

Book, *Short Stories by Jesus* by writer Amy-Jill Levine
In preparation of our January worship series, pick up your free copy of *Short Stories by Jesus* by Amy-Jill Levine. One per household while supplies last.

Olive Wood Christmas Tree Ornaments
Please take an olive wood Christmas tree ornament (one per household) from the Holy Land. Enjoy this gift from the church to you.

A Nativity Craft for Children
Please take a Nativity craft that you can turn into a Christmas tree ornament during worship or later at home.

Photo Booth Fun!
Take a photo with your family in the "photo booth" with our cardboard Christmas cohort: Buddy the Elf, Olaf, Ralphie the Bunny, and Clark W. Griswold!

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. 28
Once a quarter in worship, you're invited to share what you celebrate with your church. Your birthday, anniversary, a new job, retirement, or other significant milestone or miracle, it's 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.

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.

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.

We thank those who help make this worship a ministry of grace:

Ministers: All Members of the Congregation
Musicians: Sonja Gustafson, Chancel Choir, David Nyberg
Instrumentalists: Mac Johnson, viola; Carolyn Liptak, violin; Pat Norton, cello; Allen Reyes, violin
Liturgists: Shana Hoffer, Jeff Heuer, Vienna Hoffer, Rev. Nate Melcher, Chris Kliesen Wehrman, Becca Whitaker, Marj Wittenborg
Tech: Rev. Bill Johnson, Bea Melcher, 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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- Copyright and license agreements can impact our ability to always present expansive language for God and inclusive language for humankind. All are invited to sing or pray the words on their heart. For more, visit richfieldumc.org/worship.
- "Lighting the Advent Wreath" and "Benediction" by Rev. Nate Melcher
- "Meanwhile Outside of Town" by Rev. Chris Kliesen Wehrman
- "Christmas Prayer" by Hans Holznagel. Scifres, Mary and B.J. Beu, ed. *The Abingdon Worship Annual 2025. © 2024 Abingdon Press, Nashville, TN. Used by permission. 296-298.*
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Stay informed, be involved, and get invitational

Richfield UMC gathers on Dakota land. More at richfieldumc.org/land.