

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE
DECEMBER 24, 2020

"I Bring You Good News"

Opening Hymn: #55 (1-3) "Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful"

1 Oh, come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant,
Oh, come ye, oh, come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him, Born the King of angels.

Refrain:

Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come, let us adore him,
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

2 God from true God, and Light from Light eternal,
Born of a virgin, to earth he comes,
Only begotten Son of God the Father. [Refrain]

3 Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation;
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above.
Glory to God, All glory in the highest. [Refrain]

Invocation

P: Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD;

C: let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.

P: Come, let us bow down in worship,

C: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.

P: For God so loved the world

C: that he gave his one and only Son,

P: that whoever believes in him shall not perish

C: but have eternal life.

P: Oh, come, all ye faithful,

C: Oh, come, let us adore him.

All: (sing) To you, then, O Jesus, this day of your birth

Be glory and honor through heaven and earth,

Word of the Father, Now in flesh appearing.

Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come, let us adore him,

Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord. (CW:55:4)

Prayer

P: O Father in heaven, in the calm and serenity of this hour, as we meditate on the wonder of your gift to the human race, we thank you for preparing our salvation. We thank you for loving us while we were still sinners and for sending the Son you love to be our Savior.

C: Who is a God like you who forgives sin and pardons the transgression of your people?

P: Lord Jesus we thank you for being willing to live under God's law in our place and for experiencing our every temptation, struggle and sorrow without sin. We thank you for being willing to die under God's anger on the cross in order to turn his anger away from us.

C: I praise you, O Lord, although you were angry with me your anger has turned away, and you have comforted me.

P: O Holy Spirit, lead us to welcome Jesus into our hearts and homes this Christmas in childlike faith and love. In awe and wonder keep our eyes open to this wonderful evidence of God's love all our days, until we join the saints and angels in God's ceaseless praise in the world to come; through Jesus Christ, our new-born King and Savior.

C: May God strengthen us with power through his Spirit, so that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith. Amen.

I. Good News of a wonderful birth

Scripture Reading: Micah 5:1-5a

Marshal your troops, O city of troops,
for a siege is laid against us.

They will strike Israel's ruler
on the cheek with a rod.

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
though you are small among the clans of Judah,

out of you will come for me
one who will be ruler over Israel,
whose origins are from of old,
from ancient times."

Therefore, Israel will be abandoned
until the time when she who is in labor gives birth
and the rest of his brothers return
to join the Israelites.

He will stand and shepherd his flock
in the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.

And they will live securely,
for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth.
And he will be their peace.

Scripture Reading: Luke 1:26-38

²⁶In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

²⁹Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. ³¹You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

³⁴"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

³⁵The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. ³⁶Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. ³⁷For nothing is impossible with God."

³⁸"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

Hymn: #50 "Once in Royal David's City"

**1 Once in royal David's city Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby In a manger for his bed;
Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ her little child.**

**2 He came down to earth from heaven Who is God and Lord of all,
And his shelter was a stable, And his cradle was a stall;
With the poor and mean and lowly Lived on earth our Savior holy.**

3 But our eyes at last shall see him Through his own redeeming love,
For that child, so dear and gentle, Is our Lord in heav'n above,
And he leads his children on To the place where he is gone.

4 Not in that poor, lowly stable With the oxen standing by
Shall we see him, but in heaven, Set at God's right hand on high.
Then like stars his children crowned, All in white, his praise will sound.

II. Good News of a Wonderful Baby

Scripture Reading: Matthew 1:18-25

¹⁸This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

²⁰But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

²²All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³"The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" — which means, "God with us."

²⁴When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 9:1-7

Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan—

²The people walking in darkness

have seen a great light;

on those living in the land of the shadow of death

a light has dawned.

³You have enlarged the nation
and increased their joy;
they rejoice before you
as people rejoice at the harvest,
as men rejoice
when dividing the plunder.

⁴For as in the day of Midian's defeat,
you have shattered
the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor.

⁵Every warrior's boot used in battle
and every garment rolled in blood
will be destined for burning,
will be fuel for the fire.

⁶For to us a child is born,
to a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.

And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷Of the increase of his government and peace
there will be no end.

He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.

The zeal of the LORD Almighty
will accomplish this.

Hymn: #37 "Once Again My Heart Rejoices"

1 Once again my heart rejoices

**As I hear Far and near
Sweetest angel voices.**

**"Christ is born!" their choirs are singing
Till the air Ev'rywhere
Now with joy is ringing.**

2 Hear! The conqueror has spoken:

"Now the foe, Sin and woe,
Death and hell are broken!"
God is man, man to deliver,
And the Son Now is one
With our blood forever.

3 Should we still fear God's displeasure,

Who, to save, Freely gave
His most precious treasure?
To redeem us he has given
His own Son From the throne
Of his might in heaven.

4 Softly from his lowly manger

Jesus calls One and all,
"You are safe from danger.
Children, from the sins that grieve you
You are freed; All you need
I will surely give you."

5 Come, then, banish all your sadness!

One and all, Great and small,
Come with songs of gladness;
We shall live with him forever
There on high In that joy
Which will vanish never.

III. Good News of a Wonderful Blessing

Scripture Reading: Luke 1:68-79

⁶⁸ "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,
because he has come and has redeemed his people.

⁶⁹ He has raised up a horn
of salvation for us

in the house of his servant David

⁷⁰ (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago),

⁷¹ salvation from our enemies

and from the hand of all who hate us—
⁷² to show mercy to our fathers
and to remember his holy covenant,
⁷³ the oath he swore to our father Abraham:
⁷⁴ to rescue us from the hand of our enemies,
and to enable us to serve him without fear
⁷⁵ in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.
⁷⁶ And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High;
for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him,
⁷⁷ to give his people the knowledge of salvation
through the forgiveness of their sins,
⁷⁸ because of the tender mercy of our God,
by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven
⁷⁹ to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the path of peace.”

Scripture Reading (Isaiah 12:1-6)

P: In that day you will say: “I will praise you, O LORD.

C: Although you were angry with me,

P: your anger has turned away

C: and you have comforted me.

P: Surely God is my salvation;

C: I will trust and not be afraid.

P: The LORD, the LORD, is my strength and my song;

C: he has become my salvation.”

P: With joy you will draw water

C: from the wells of salvation.

P: In that day you will say:

C: “Give thanks to the LORD,

P: call on his name;

C: make known among the nations what he has done,

P: and proclaim that his name is exalted.

C: Sing to the LORD,

P: for he has done glorious things;

C: let this be known to all the world.

P: Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion,

C: for great is the Holy One of Israel among you.”

THE HYMN #707 "Peace Came to Earth" (Beth Stirmel, flute)



1 Peace came to earth at last that cho - sen night
2 And who could be the same for hav - ing held
3 You show the Fa - ther none has ev - er seen,
4 How else could I have known you, O my God!



When an - gels clove the sky with song and light And
The in - fant in their arms and lat - er felt The
In flesh and blood you bore our griefs and pain, In
How else could I have loved you, O my God! How



God em - bod - ied love and sheathed his might— Who could but
wound-ed hands and side, all doubts dis - pelled— Who could but
bread and wine you vis - it us a - gain— Who could but
else could I em - brace you, O my God! Who could but



gasp: Im - man - u - el! Who could but sing: Im - man - u - el!
sigh: Im - man - u - el! Who could but shout: Im - man - u - el!
see: Im - man - u - el! Who could but thrill: Im - man - u - el!
pray: Im - man - u - el! Who could but praise: Im - man - u - el!

THE CHRISTMAS STORY IN WORD AND SONG

P: And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, everyone to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, (because he was of the house and lineage of David,) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

(sing) 1 O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie!

Above thy deep And dreamless sleep The silent stars go by.

Yet in thy dark streets shineth The everlasting light.

The hopes and fears Of all the years Are met in thee tonight.

**2 O holy Child of Bethlehem, Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin And enter in, Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels The great glad tidings tell;
Oh, come to us, Abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel! (CW:65)**

P: And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

**C: (sing) 1 Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.**

**2 The cattle are lowing, the Baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love thee Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.**

**3 Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay
Close by me forever and, love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
And take us to heaven to live with thee there. (CW:68)**

P: And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be for all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

**(sing) 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.

2 Shepherds, why this jubilee?

Why your joyous strains prolong?

What the gladsome tidings be

Which inspire your heav'nly song? [Refrain]

3 Come to Bethlehem and see

Him whose birth the angels sing;

Come, adore on bended knee

Christ the Lord, the newborn King. [Refrain]

P: And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the babe, lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

All: (sing) Ah, dearest Jesus, holy child,

Make thee a bed soft, undefiled,

Within my heart, that it may be

A quiet chamber kept for thee.

My heart for very joy doth leap,

My lips no more can silence keep;

I, too must sing with joyful tongue

That sweetest, ancient cradle-song:

Glory to God in highest heaven,

Who unto us his Son hath given!

While angels sing with pious mirth

A glad new year to all the earth. (CW:38)

THE OFFERING (Please place your offering in the basket in the narthex.)

THE LITANY

P: God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

C: Oh, come, let us adore him.

P: As Mary and Joseph were filled with wonder at the birth of Jesus, so may we see and believe that Jesus is the eternal Son of God who assumed our flesh and blood.

C: The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

P: God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them.

C: Oh, come, let us adore him.

P: As the angels proclaimed that peace had come to earth through God's gracious gift of a Savior for sinners, so let us rejoice that God has given us peace through his Son and made it possible for us to pray:

C: Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.

P: God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

C: Oh, come, let us adore him.

P: As the shepherds believed what they heard and then went and told others, so may we who have heard the good news spread the word so that the words of the prophet may be fulfilled:

C: I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth. Amen.

THE BENEDICTION

P: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look on you with favor and † give you peace.

C: Amen.

THE HYMN “Silent Night” (*Marcus Bitter, piano, Beth Stirmel, flute*)

Verse 1 Solo (Beth Stirmel)

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.

(Interlude)

2 Silent night! Holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar;
Heavenly hosts sing, Alleluia;
Christ, the Savior, is born!
Christ, the Savior, is born!

(Interlude)

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, Lord, at thy birth. (CW: 60)



Our celebration of the Savior’s birth continues with our Christmas Day service at 9:00 tomorrow morning. Please join us!



