

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

December 24, 2023

The Order of Service

The Entrance Hymn: 387 “Joy to the World”

The Invocation and the Dialog

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: “O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain. O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!” (*Isaiah 40, v.9*)

C: “**Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.**” (*Isaiah 60, v.1*)

P: “For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.” (*Isaiah 60, vv.2–3*)

C: “**The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; and they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.**” (*Isaiah 9, v.2*)

ALL: “**For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.**” (*Isaiah 9, v.6*)

A Hymn: 384 “Of the Father’s Love Begotten”

The Messiah is Promised:

Luke 1:26-38

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” ²⁹ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” ³⁴ And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?” ³⁵ And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will

overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy – the Son of God. ³⁶ And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God.” ³⁸ And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

A Hymn: 361 “O Little Town of Bethlehem”

The Messiah is Awaited:

Matthew 1:18-25

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” ²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: ²³ “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us). ²⁴ When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ²⁵ but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

A Hymn: Oh Come, All Ye Children”

1. Oh Come, all ye children, oh, come, one and all
To Bethlehem haste, to the manger so small
God’s Son for a gift has been sent you this night,
To be your Redeemer, your Joy and Delight.
2. He’s born in a stable for you and for me,
Draw near by the bright gleaming starlight to see,
In swaddling clothes lying, so meek and so mild,
And purer than angels, the heavenly Child.
3. See Mary and Joseph with love-beaming eyes
Are gazing upon the rude bed where He lies,
The shepherds are kneeling, with hearts full of love,
While angels sing loud hallelujahs above.

4. Kneel down and adore Him with shepherds today,
Lift up little hands now, and praise Him as they;
Rejoice that a Savior from sin you can boast,
And join in the song of the heavenly host.

5. Dear Christ Child, what gift can we children bestow
By which our affections and gladness to show?
No riches and treasures of value can be,
But hearts that believe are accepted with Thee.

6. Our hearts, then, to Thee we will offer today,
We offer them gladly, accept them, we pray,
And make them so spotless and pure that we may
Abide in Thy presence in heaven for aye.

The Messiah Travels to Bethlehem in Mary's Womb

Luke 2:1-5

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴ And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵ to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

A Choral Anthem: "Joseph Dearest, Joseph Mine"

The Messiah is Born

Luke 2:6-12

⁶ And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. ⁸ And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."

A Hymn: 370 "What Child Is This"

The Messiah is Worshipped

Luke 2:13-20

¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" ¹⁵ When the angels went away from them into heaven, the

shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶ And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷ And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰ And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

A Choral Anthem: "And the Glory of the Lord"

A Hymn: 377 "In Christmas Night All Christians Sing"

The Christmas Message

Our Christmas Offering: "Advent Meditation" - (Bell Choir)

A Hymn: 358 "From Heaven Above to Earth I Come" (verses 1-3, 8, 13-15)

The Candle Lighting Ceremony

*(The Pastor takes a large candle and lights it from an altar candle, which symbolizes Christ, the Light of the World. The worshipper's candles will now be lit. Worshipers are cautioned to tip only the unlit candles to receive the flame from the lit candles. **Parents, please do not allow children to handle the candles! As the candles are lit the Bell Choir will play "Born is the King of Israel."**)*

Then the Pastor says: *Arise, shine; for your Light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you ... And nations shall come to your Light, and to the brightness of your rising. Jesus said, "I have come as Light into the world, that whoever believes in Me may not remain in darkness ... The Light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the Light, lest the darkness overtake you ... While you have the Light, believe in the Light."*

The Pastor then gives light to the ushers' candles; they in turn give light to the first worshipper in each pew, who passes it on. The lighted candle is never tilted but is always held upright when giving light to another.

A Hymn: "Silent Night"

*(The original composition of Silent Night contained six verses. For some reason, verses 3, 4, & 5 were never included in the English translation. Tonight, we will sing all six verses of Silent Night as it was written by Joseph Mohr in 1818. **Note:** We will pause between verses 3 and 4 for the Prayers and The Lord's Prayer.)*

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.

Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from Your holy face, With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Your birth, Jesus, Lord, at Your birth.

Silent night, holy night! Brings to earth saving light;
Grace fulfilled to us is giv'n, From the golden heights of Heaven,
Comes in lowly birth, Comes in lowly birth.

The Prayers and The Lord's Prayer

Silent night, holy night! Shows to each His great might.
Love descends from Heaven above; Dwells with us in brotherly love,
Hailed by nations afar, Hailed by nations afar.

Silent night, holy night! Grants us grace, from sin's plight;
Stills God's wrath as was foretold By His prophets in days of old.
Peace, goodwill to all, Peace goodwill to all.

Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight;
Glories stream from Heaven afar, Heav'nly hosts sing "Alleluia!"
Christ, the Saviour, is born! Christ, the Saviour, is born!

The Benediction

Pastor: May Almighty God our Father, and Jesus His Son, our Messiah, and Holy Spirit, keep you in His light, truth, and love now and always.

C: Amen

(The worshipper's candles are extinguished when the Pastor's candle is extinguished.)

The Recessional Hymn: 380 "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

The Postlude

Please return the candles and their holders to the ushers as you leave.

All Are Invited!

Christmas Day Communion Service at 10:00 a.m.

New Year's Eve Service, Sunday, December 31 at 9:30 a.m.

We invite you to worship Jesus the Messiah with us throughout the coming year!

Our Sunday Service is at 9:30 a.m.



MERRY CHRISTMAS!