

Christmas Eve Service of Celebration and Joy
Friday December 24, 2021 at 7:00pm

Prelude

Words of Welcome

Call to Worship

Leader: Enlightened one! All loving-sharing one!

People: **Counseling one! Peace-bringing one!**

Leader: Forever-and-ever one! Knit-us-together one!

People: **The heavens are glad, fields exult, and trees sing out! The earth rejoices at your coming, Holy Child of Bethlehem!**

Opening Prayer **Unison**

Holy One, Parent, Christ, and Spirit, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, we stand in awe of your greatest mystery once again: that you would come to us as one of us, full of smiles and tears, strengths and weaknesses, growing pains and griefs, joys and Good News. A child is given indeed! A child is given so that we know that heaven and earth are forever joined, that no matter what we do, no matter who we are, no matter what we feel, we are never alone. For the joy and amazing miracle of this birth of Jesus we give you our greatest thanks. Amen.

Hymn #1: O Come, All Ye Faithful

(Please see separate attachment for the score)

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.

2) Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation, Sing, all ye citizens, of heaven above! Glory to God, all glory in the highest; (refrain)

3) Child, for us sinners poor and in the manger, We would embrace thee, with love and awe; Who would not love thee, loving us so dearly? (refrain)

4) Yes, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning, Jesus, to thee be all glory given; Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing; (refrain)

Advent Candle Lighting and Reading

David & Rachel Alexander

Reader: We now light all four of our Advent candles representing Hope & Faith, Peace, Joy, and Love.

Pastor: Arise and celebrate: God loves the world, a child is born.

People: The glow of the Divine lightens our hearts like an infant stepping to love.

Pastor: Here we are together in a world caught between anxiety and hope, celebrating what God has done in Christ. We will never be alone. May our remembering and celebrating change how we live and open our hearts and communities, so that all can together live and share in fullness of life.

People: Because God loves, holiness continues to break into the messiness of our lives.

Christmas Eve Reflection (Advent Candle Reader): Words are simply inadequate as we experience the hope, faith, peace, joy, and love flowing through us this evening. May we deeply allow this flowing river of life you gave to us Jesus to stream through us tonight in thought, mood, feelings, and song. Mystery uplifting us, Sacredness completing us, Presence enlivening us tonight we share in your glory.

Lighting of the Christ Candle

Advent Calendar Reader: God-always-with-us, we thank you for your love that keeps faith alive within us and encourages us to imagine a world where the power of love can loosen the grip on restrictive ways to embrace a new life of flourishing possibilities. Through Jesus stir us by the light of your love so that we may return to your way of fullness of life you intend for all. Amen

Our Christmas Litany

Pastor: Every life in its particularity is precious to God, who came to us in a particular body, in a particular time.

People: For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all!

Pastor: All who face oppression, discrimination, war, hunger, and tumult are precious.

People: All are blessed as children by the love of our Living God creating us in diverse ways with the splendor of God's creative touch blessing us with differences enriching us all. All are precious to our God!

Pastor: All who find themselves outside of the inns of our society, lonely and outcast are precious.

People: All those who, like the shepherds, labor and especially those who labor during this day of celebration are precious.

Pastor: Salvation is here! Taste and see!

People: For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all!

Passing of the Peace (unmute for Passing of the Peace)

Pastor: The Peace of Christ be with you

People: **And also with you!**

Hymn #131: It Came upon the Midnight Clear

(Please see separate attachment for the score)

- 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 all, great news of joy we bring.”
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.
- 3) And you, beneath life’s crushing load, whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way, with painful steps and slow,
Look now, for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing;
O rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing!
- 4) For lo, the days are hastening on, by prophet bards foretold,
when with the ever-circling years comes round the age of gold;
When peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
and the world send back the song which now the angels sing.

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord’s Prayer

Offering Invitation/Christmas Fund

Glory to God in the highest heaven! God brings peace, good news, and great joy!
Let us offer our gifts to our God and our Savior born into this world to show us all
the closeness of God’s presence always in all things. God bless all those who
have served our faith communities with such love and diligence. Bless these
gifts to the Christmas Fund.

Offering and Dedication **Unison**

God of peace and joy, you bind us together as if in swaddling bands of our own cloth. We are meant to be together, meant to be active participants in your great story, the story of humanity's redemption. We give these gifts with open eyes that can see, if for but a moment, strands of linen gently guiding us all toward one another. Amen.

Special Music

"Bring a Torch, Jeannette, Isabella"

Laura Knutson, Rachel Alexander, Jan Knutson

First Lesson

Karen Jones

Isaiah 9 excerpts

9:2 The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness on them light has shined.

9:3 You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest....

9:6 For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

9:7 His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Special Music

"Gesù Bambino"

Tom Gill, Carol Bellamy, Keith Johnson

Second Lesson

Karen Jones

Luke 2:1-7

2:1 In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered.

2:2 This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.

2:3 All went to their own towns to be registered.

2:4 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.

2:5 He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.

2:6 While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child.

2:7 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 for them in the inn.

Special Music *“Sing We Now of Christmas - All Through the Night”*
Laura Knutson, Rachel Alexander, Jan Knutson

Third Lesson

Karen Jones

Luke 2: 8-20

2:8 In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.

2:9 Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

2:10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see--I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people:

2:11 to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

2:12 This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger."

2:13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

2:14 "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

2:15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us."

2:16 So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

2:17 When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child;

2:18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them.

2:19 But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.

2:20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Special Music

“Emmanuel, God With Us”

Keith Johnson, Carol Bellamy

Christmas Reflection: Let Us Go See This Thing Taking Place

Sharing the Light

Pastor: We come to a special part of tonight’s service.
As Christ comes bringing the light of God’s love,
we light our individual candles
to signify our individual and collective commitment
to live as Christ’s faithful in the world.
As the candles are lit we will join in singing.

Hymn #2: Silent Night, Holy Night

(Please see separate attachment for the score)

- 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.
- 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!
- 3) Silent night, holy night, Song 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.

Blessing and Benediction Unison

**Given-for-us one! Peace-bringing one! Forever-and-ever one! Knitting-us-together
one! The heavens are glad, fields exult, and trees sing out! The earth rejoices at
your coming, Holy Child of Bethlehem! Send us out with joy to announce your
presence: Glory to God in the Highest, and to all people, Peace. Christ is born! A
blessed Christmas to all!**

Hymn #4: Joy to the World! The Lord is Come!

(Please see separate attachment for the score)

- 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.
- 2) Joy to the world! The Savior reigns: Let men their songs employ; While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat the sounding joy.
- 3) He rules the world with truth and grace, And makes the nations prove The Glories of his righteousness, And wonders of his love, And wonders, And wonders, wonders of his love.