

Christmas Eve

December 24, 2021
5:00 & 10:30 p.m.

Please note: The 5:00 p.m. worship service is live streamed and recorded.

AS WE GATHER

God's love was promised and fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. Despite ongoing sin and sinfulness by His human creatures, God loved us so much that our Lord was born as one of us so that He could die for us. When He appeared on the scene of human history, it marked the start of His fulfilling the very promises He had made centuries before. But His love was not finished for us until He was born in our hearts. That took the gracious gift of faith by which we receive His great love and are enabled to share it with others. We now celebrate the start of Christ's love at His birth in Bethlehem and His finishing it as He is born anew in our hearts in time and into eternity.

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

The congregation turns and faces the cross as the procession approaches the altar reminding us that Christ leads us into the presence of God.

PREPARATION

Please stand

OPENING CAROL

379 O Come, All Ye Faithful

- 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)

(continued on next page)

Refrain:

O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

2 Highest, most holy, Light of Light eternal,
Born of a virgin, a mortal He comes;
Son of the Father Now in flesh appearing! (Refrain)

3 Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God In the highest: (Refrain)

4 Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, Born this happy morning;
Jesus, to Thee be glory giv'n!
Word of the Father Now in flesh appearing! (Refrain)

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INVOCATION

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

Pastor: For to us a child is born,

People: to us a son is given;

Pastor: And He will be called

People: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,

Pastor: Everlasting Father,

People: Prince of Peace.

Pastor: "Glory to God in the highest,

People: and on earth peace to men on whom His favor rests!"

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Pastor: On this most holy night, we gather in awe, preparing to worship the Christ child. As we consider the birth of our Savior, we recognize our great need for Him. We confess before God and to one another that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We examine our lives according to the perfect Law of God and recognize our many sins against God and one another. In humble adoration, we bow before Jesus, the sinless Lamb of God, who was sent to be our substitute, sacrifice, and the atonement for the sins of the whole world.

People: Dear Lord, Jesus Christ,
for us sinners, You became a child. Since we could not fulfill the Father's just and holy will, You fulfilled it for us. We bow before You, humbly confessing our sinfulness that separates us from You. We repent of our sins in thought, word, and action that oppose and neglect Your righteous ways. Forgive us our sin that we may be reconciled to You, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Pastor: On this night, I announce good news of great joy: Almighty God in His mercy has given the gift of His Son to be born into this world for us. He was born to live among us, to die for us, and to rise in victory for us. For the sake of the Christ, the Babe born in Bethlehem, we are forgiven and reconciled to God. Rejoice in this good news!

People: **Amen! Thanks be to God!**

CAROL OF PRAISE

375 Come, Your Hearts and Voices Raising vv. 1, 2, 5 & 6



1 Come, your hearts and voices raising, Christ the
2 Christ, from heav'n to us de - scend - ing And in



Lord with glad - ness prais - ing; Loud - ly sing His love a -
love our race be - friend - ing; In our need His help ex -



maz - ing, Wor - thy folk of Chris - ten - dom.
tend - ing, Saved us from the wi - ly foe.

5 Oh, the joy beyond expressing When by faith we grasp this blessing,
And to You we come confessing That Your love has set us free.

6 Gracious Child, we pray, O hear us, From Your lowly manger cheer us,
Gently lead us and be near us Till we join Your choir above.

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PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Let us pray –

Gracious Father, we gather on this night to thank and praise You for the gift of Your Son. In the humble beginnings of Bethlehem's manger we see our King who came to save us from our sins. Enable us with true faith and gratitude to receive the gift You give in our Savior, Jesus Christ. It is in His name that we pray.

People: Amen.

WORD

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Isaiah 7:14; Isaiah 9:2, 6-7; Micah 5:2

(Prophecies of the Christ Child, the promised Messiah)

Isaiah 7:14

¹⁴Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

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. ⁶For to us a child is born, to us 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.

Micah 5:2

²"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."

CAROL

361 O Little Town of Bethlehem

- 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.**
- 4 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;
O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!**

Text: Public domain

(The birth of Jesus)

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the Entire Roman world. ² (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³ And everyone went to his own town to register. ⁴ So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

CAROL

364 Away in a Manger

- 1** **Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the 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.**

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CHRISTMAS GOSPEL (Part 2)

Luke 2: 8-14

(The shepherds and the angels)

⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

CAROL

368 Angels We Have Heard on High

- 1 **Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply,
Echoing their joyous strains. (Refrain)**

- ref **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)**

Text: Public domain

(The baby Jesus is worshipped and adored)

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." ¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

CAROL

370 What Child Is This

- 1** What child is this, who, laid to rest, On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet While shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the king, Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring Him laud, The babe, the son of Mary!
- 2** Why lies He in such mean estate Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here The silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce Him through, The cross be borne for me, for you;
Hail, hail the Word made flesh, The babe, the son of Mary!
- 3** So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh; Come, peasant, king, to own Him.
The King of kings salvation brings; Let loving hearts enthrone Him.
Raise, raise the song on high, The virgin sings her lullaby;
Joy, joy, for Christ is born, The babe, the son of Mary!

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SERMON

Sermon Notes:

Please stand

NICENE CREED

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

GATHERING OF THE OFFERINGS

If you are visiting with us this evening, your presence with us is your contribution. Thank you For sharing this night with us. During the offering, please sign the fellowship register found at the end of each pew. Pass the pad on and when it reaches the end of the pew, pass it back, noting the names of others.

ANTHEM

“Bring a Torch, Jeannette Isabella”

Arranged by John Leavitt

*Bring a torch, Jeannette Isabella,
Bring a torch, come swiftly and run.
Christ is born, tell the folk of the village,
Jesus is sleeping in His cradle,
Ah, ah, beautiful is the mother,
Ah, ah, beautiful is her Son.*

*Hasten now, good folk of the village
Hasten now, the Christ Child to see.
You will find Him asleep in the manger,
Quietly come and whisper softly,
Hush, hush, peacefully now He slumbers,
Hush, hush, peacefully now He sleeps.*

*Softly to the little stable,
Softly for the moment come;
Look and see how charming is Jesus,
How He is pure, His cheeks are rosy,
Hush, hush, see how the Child is sleeping,
Hush, hush, see how He smiles in dreams.*

Please stand

CHRISTMAS PRAYER

Pastor: We greet Your coming, Lord, with wonder.

People: You come to be with us, yet You remain far greater than we can ever imagine.

Pastor: You are near, yet Your wisdom sets You so far apart from us.

People: You appear among us, yet we cannot describe Your glory.

Pastor: We greet Your coming, Lord, with repentance.

People: So often we are satisfied with ourselves, but Your presence exposes our sins and our failures.

Pastor: We are often self-confident, but You challenge our confidence in ourselves and cause us to look to You.

People: We are proud of our understanding, but You show us that we know so very little.

Pastor: We greet Your coming, Lord, with joy.

People: We had no true idea of what You are like, but You have shown us Yourself in Jesus Christ.

Pastor: We sometimes feel that our human life is of no importance to You, but You have shown its great value by appearing among us as a human being.

People: We are aware of the gulf between us and You, but You have bridged it with love by sending our Savior, Jesus Christ, and promising that He will come again in glory.

(continued on next page)

Pastor: We pray that Your great promises of peace, hope, and joy would fill the hearts of the sick, the aged, the troubled, and the dying. Assure them that their Savior cares for them and loves them.

People: **Let all people find joy in worshipping their new-born Savior and King! Give them strength to sing: "Glory to God in the highest!"**

Pastor: Oh Lord, we greet Your coming in Jesus Christ with wonder, with repentance, and with joy.

People: **We are grateful for our Savior - for His love and His rich forgiveness and gift of salvation and we find joy in praying in His name. Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father 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 and ever. Amen.

SACRAMENT

In the Lord's Supper we receive Christ's body and blood in and with the bread and wine. The two great blessings of the Lord's Supper are the forgiveness of sins and strength to live an improved Christian life. In response to the Lord's command we are to examine ourselves privately prior to partaking of the Sacrament. There are three basic questions on which we should examine ourselves, all of which we should be able to answer in the affirmative if we are to partake of the Sacrament worthily: 1) Am I truly sorry for my sins? 2) Do I believe Jesus Christ is my Savior? 3) Do I promise with God's help to live a Christian life? If you agree with the above statement, we invite you to the Sacrament.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Pastor: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: Take, eat; this is my body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of me.

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: Drink of it, all of you; this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

A "continuous communion table" will be the method of distribution this day. Communicants will come forward down the center aisle at the direction of the usher. You will receive the wafer from the pastor at the center and then proceed to the right or left (depending on which side of the church you are sitting) to receive the wine. You will then return to your pew. As is our custom, communion will be brought to people in the pews who have difficulty walking to the chancel. If you wish to take communion in the pew, please raise your hand when the communion assistant comes down the aisle. Also young children will receive a word of blessing.

DISTRIBUTION CAROLS

377 On Christmas Night All Christians Sing

1 On Christmas night all Christians sing To hear the news the angels bring,
On Christmas night all Christians sing To hear the news the angels bring,
News of great joy, news of great mirth, News of our merciful King's birth.

Men only:

2 Then why should men on earth be so sad, Since our Redeemer made us glad,
Then why should men on earth be so sad, Since our Redeemer made us glad,
When from our sin He set us free, All for to gain our liberty?

(continued on next page)

Women only:

3 When sin departs before His grace, Then life and health come in its place,
When sin departs before His grace, Then life and health come in its place;
Angels and men with joy may sing, All for to see the newborn King.

4 All out of darkness we have light, Which made the angels sing this night,
All out of darkness we have light, Which made the angels sing this night:
“Glory to God and peace to men Now and forevermore. Amen.”

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366 It Came upon a Midnight Clear

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, goodwill to all, From heav’n’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 heav’nly music floats O’er all the weary world.
Above its sad and lowly plains They bend on hov’ring wing,
And ever o’er its babel sounds The blessèd angels sing.

3 All you, beneath your heavy load, By care and guilt bent low,
Who toil along a dreary way With painful steps and slow:
Look up, for golden is the hour, Come swiftly on the wing,
The Prince was born to bring you peace; Of Him the angels sing.

4 For lo, the days have come to pass By prophets seen of old,
When down into the circling years Came Christ as was foretold.
His word of peace shall to the earth God’s ancient promise bring,
And all who take this gift will hear The song the angels sing.

Text: Public domain

359 Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

- 1** Lo, how a rose e'er blooming From tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming As prophets long have sung,
It came, a flow'ret bright, Amid the cold of winter,
When half-spent was the night.

Men only

- 2** Isaiah 'twas foretold it, The rose I have in mind;
With Mary we behold it, The virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright, She bore to us a Savior,
When half-spent was the night.

Women only

- 3** This flow'r, whose fragrance tender With sweetness fills the air,
Dispels with glorious splendor The darkness ev'rywhere.
True man, yet very God, From sin and death He saves us
And lightens ev'ry load.
- 4** O Savior, child of Mary, Who felt our human woe;
O Savior, King of glory, Who dost our weakness know:
Bring us at length we pray To the bright courts of heaven,
And to the endless day.

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380 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

- 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 the_angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

(continued on next page)

- 2 Christ, by highest heav'n adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold Him come, Offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, Hail the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as Man with man to dwell, Jesus, our Immanuel!
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"
- 3 Hail, the heav'n-born Prince of Peace! Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings, Ris'n with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by, Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

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386 Now Sing We, Now Rejoice

- 1 Now sing we, now rejoice, Now raise to heav'n our voice;
He from whom joy streameth Poor in a manger lies;
Not so brightly beameth The sun in yonder skies.
Thou my Savior art! Thou my Savior art!
- 2 Come from on high to me; I cannot rise to Thee.
Cheer my wearied spirit, O pure and holy Child;
Through Thy grace and merit, Blest Jesus, Lord most mild,
Draw me unto Thee! Draw me unto Thee!
- 3 Now through His Son doth shine The Father's grace divine.
Death was reigning o'er us Through sin and vanity
Till He opened for us A bright eternity.
May we praise Him there! May we praise Him there!

4 **Oh, where shall joy be found? Where but on heav'nly ground?
Where the angels singing With all His saints unite,
Sweetest praises bringing In heav'nly joy and light.
Oh, that we were there! Oh, that we were there!**

Text: Public domain

Please stand

PRAYER

Pastor: May this wonderful gift of Your sacrament, O Lord, strengthen our faith in Your saving grace, that we might live in Christ's peace, that we might confidently speak of Your love to the world, in the name of Him who saved us through the sacrifice of His body and blood, Jesus Christ.

People: **Amen.**

CANDLE LIGHTING

The pastor will give light from his candle to the ushers. They will in turn give light to the worshiper nearest the aisle, who will pass it on to the others in that pew. Please keep the lit candle upright to avoid dripping wax on yourself and the floor.

ANTHEM

"Jesus is Born Tonight"

Carl Schalk

*This is the day, this is the night, Stars in the heavens are bursting with light,
All earth in wonder longs for the sight, Jesus is born tonight.*

*Come to the manger, to Bethlehem's stall, See mid the cattle the Savior of all,
Bring Him your sorrows, your fears and your joy, God's gift to all the world born in this boy.*

*This is the day, this is the night, Stars in the heavens are bursting with light,
Shepherds in wonder kneel at the sight, Jesus is born tonight.*

*Let us then sing our hope and our joy, God the Creator is one with this boy,
Let us then bring our joy and our tears, Let us then sing Him who conquers our fears.*

*This is the day, this is the night, Stars in the heavens are bursting with light,
We too in wonder kneel at the sight, Jesus is born tonight.*

Pastor: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

People: **The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**

Pastor: Those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.

People: **We have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.**

Pastor: For to us a child is born, to us a son is given.

People: **In Him was life, and that life was the light of men.**

Pastor: O God, You make this most holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that as we have known the mysteries of that Light on earth, we may also come to the fullness of His joys in heaven; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: **Amen.**

BENEDICTION

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

People: **Amen.**

CLOSING CAROL

363 Silent Night, Holy Night

- 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, Heav'nly hosts sing, Alleluia!
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!
- 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, Lord, at Thy birth.

Text: Public domain

POST-SERVICE MUSIC

Variations on "Silent Night, Holy Night"

Serving at Chapel

Preacher:	Theodore L. Laesch
Liturgists:	5:00 p.m. Ellory Glenn 10:30 p.m. Theodore L. Laesch
Choirs:	5:00 p.m. Lynda Christian Anne Meyer Kathy Glenn Ellory Glenn Mark Petersen 10:30 p.m. Choral Singers
Director & Organist:	Ryan Meyer
Accompanist:	Carolyn Rusnak
Instrumentalists:	Lynda Christian, oboe Craig Schlichtmann, clarinet Ted & Nate Laesch, trumpets Matt McEuen, percussion
Acolytes:	5:00 p.m. Zeke Laesch 10:30 p.m. Kamia Cleveland

Worship Schedule

Christmas Day Worship – Saturday, December 25th, 10:00 a.m.

New Year's Eve Worship – Friday, December 31st, 6:30 p.m.

Epiphany Service – Thursday January 6th, 6:30 p.m.

Regular Weekend Worship Services:

Saturday, 5:00 p.m. – Sunday, 8:30 & 11:00 a.m.

(No 5:00 p.m. service on December 25th.)