



Lessons and Carols on the Eve of the Nativity of Our Lord

December 24, 2021 (7 PM)

WELCOME

P: A very merry Christmas to all who come to worship the Christ Child.

Our liturgy this evening tells the story of the manger in lessons, responsive readings, and prayers. At the service's high point, the Procession of the Christ Child comes to the manger where the gospel of Christ's birth is read and the Christ Child is placed in the creche.

We come tonight believing that Christ is indeed, the Light of the World. And we watch as the light gradually spreads from the Advent Wreath to our own hand held candles, reminding us that the Child of Bethlehem has come to bring light to us and to the entire world.

Candles, processions, colorful adornments, carols and songs, all combine to witness to the beauty and awe of this holy night.

HYMN No. 379 "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

INVITATION TO WORSHIP

P: Beloved in Christ, we are gathered together on this Eve of Christmas to prepare our hearts for the coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ; to meditate upon the mystery of that Incarnation by which our nature is redeemed, and to receive with joy the message of our salvation.

C: Rain down, you heavens, from above,
And let the skies pour down righteousness;
Let the earth open, let them bring forth salvation. *Isaiah 45:8*

P: Let us pray.
Almighty God, You have given your only-begotten Son to take our nature upon Him, and to be born of a pure virgin. Grant that we, who have been born again and made Your children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by Your Holy Spirit; through our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with You and the same Spirit be honor and glory, now and forever.

C. Amen.

I. AT THE MANGER: MARY

Solo "Mary, Did You Know" **Mary Stake**
(During the hymn, the Christ candle and the Advent Wreath are lighted.)

THE STORY OF MARY St. Luke 1:26-35 **(Brian)**

L: In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words, and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name Him Jesus. 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 ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." And Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to 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 holy; he will be called the Son of God. " Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to Your word."

L: This is the Word of the Lord
C. Thanks be to God.

RESONSORY (Brian)

L: The Lord himself will give you a sign.
C: Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son.

L: And they shall name him Emmanuel,
C. Which means, God is with us. Isaiah 7:14

PRAYER (Brian lead in)

L: Women of Faith, we pray together:
All Women: Almighty God, in choosing the virgin Mary to be the mother of your Son,
You made known your gracious regard for the poor and lowly.
Grant us grace to receive your Word in humility, and so to be made one with your
Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one
God, now and forever.

C. Amen

II. AT THE MANGER: JOSEPH

HYMN No. 361 "O Little Town of Bethlehem" (vss 1 - 4)

During the hymn, the votive candles on the altar are lit.

THE STORY OF JOSEPH

St. Matthew 1:18-21

(Gus)

L: Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do 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 as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

L: This is the Word of the Lord

C. Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORY: (Gus)

L: A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse.

C: And a branch shall grow out of his roots.

L: The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him.

C: The spirit of wisdom and understanding.

L: The spirit of counsel and might.

C: The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. Isaiah 11:1-2

PRAYER (Gus lead in)

L: Men of God, we pray together:

All Men: O God, who from the family of your servant David raised up Joseph to be the guardian of your incarnate Son and the spouse of his virgin mother: Give us grace to imitate his uprightness of life and his obedience to your commands; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

III. AT THE MANGER: THE STAR

ANTHEM

"The First Noel"

During the hymn, the candelabras next to the Altar are lit.

The First Noel the angel did say
Was to certain poor shepherds
in fields as they lay;
In fields as they lay, keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.

Refrain: **Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,**
 Born is the King of Israel.

They looked up and saw a star
Shining in the east beyond them far,
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night. (Refrain)

And by the light of that same star
Three wise men came from the country far;
To seek for a King was their intent,
And to follow the star wherever it went. (Refrain)

THE STORY OF THE STAR: St. Matthew 2:1-2,7-10 (**John**)

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him." Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star appeared; and he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." When they had heard the king they went their way; and lo, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.

L: This is the Word of the Lord

C. Thanks be to God.



RESPONSORY **(John)**

L: Arise, shine, for your light has come.
C: And the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

L: For darkness shall cover the earth,
C: And thick darkness the peoples.

**L: But the Lord will arise upon you,
C: And his glory will appear over you.** Isaiah 60:1-2

PRAYER **(YOUTH)**

A Youth: Let us pray.

O God, by the leading of a star You revealed your only Son to the people of the earth: Lead us, who know You now by faith, to Your presence, where we may see Your glory face to face; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen

IV. AT THE MANGER: ANGELS

ANTHEM "Away in a Manger" The Manger Singers

THE STORY OF THE ANGELS St. Luke 2:8-14 **(Ed)**

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see -- I am bringing you good news of a great joy for all the people; to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and 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 among those whom he favors!"

**L: This is the Word of the Lord
C. Thanks be to God.**

RESPONSORY (Ed)

L: Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings.
C. Lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings.

L: Lift it up, do not fear.
C. Say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" Isaiah 10:9

PRAYER (YOUTH)

A Youth: Let us pray.

Almighty God, you have made yourself known in Your Son, Jesus, redeemer of the world. We pray that his birth as a human child will set us free from the old slavery of our sin; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

V. THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

PROCESSION OF THE CHRIST CHILD

HYMN No. 368 "Angels We Have Heard on High,"

During the hymn, the Christ Child is brought in procession to the manger.

THE STORY OF JESUS' BIRTH St. Luke 2:1-7 (Brian)

In those days a decree went out from the Emperor 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 for them in the inn.

L: This is the Word of the Lord
C. Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM "Christmas Hymn" Michael W. Smith & Amy Grant
The Manger Singers

BLESSING OF THE CRECHE**(PV)**

P. Blessed are you, O Lord our God, king of the universe. You have enriched our lives with every good and perfect gift; You have commanded us to show Your splendor to our children and to praise You with lives of love, justice, and joy. Be with us this night, and bless + this creche, that it may be a visible sign of Your saving grace and love in all our Christmas celebrations; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, to whom with You and the Holy Spirit be all honor and glory, now and forever.

C. Amen.

SERMON “**The Seed that Bears Fruit to Eternal Life!**” **Pastor Vern**

HYMN No. 370 “**What Child is This**”

OFFERING (The offering will be received in the Foyer)

OFFERTORY PRAYER



P: Let us pray together. Lord of Christmas,

C. We are mindful of the supreme gift that you gave us in a manger at Bethlehem.

Humbly we offer our gifts of service and possessions in joyful thanksgiving for the love you have shown us. Accept these gifts for the sake of your Son who was born to us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

VI. THE LIGHT OF CHRIST FILLS OUR HEARTS**DISTRIBUTION OF THE LIGHT**

*As the acolytes pass the light to members of the congregation,
pass it to the person next to you.
DO NOT TIP a lighted candle.*

LESSON OF LIGHT

St. John 1:1-14 **(Gus)**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. In him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him.

But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth.

SONG OF SIMEON (Gus lead in)

L: We pray together with Simeon

C Lord, now let your servant go in peace; Your word has been fulfilled. My own eyes have seen the salvation which You have prepared in the sight of every people: a light to lighten the nations and the glory of Your people Israel. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen St. Luke 2:29-32

HYMN No. 363 "Silent Night"

CLOSING PRAYER AND BLESSING (PV)

P: Let us pray. Almighty God, You have made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of His glory; through Your only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen

**P: The Lord bless you and keep you on this hallowed night.
The Lord make His face shine upon you just as His light
radiated from the face of the Christ Child, God incarnate.
The Lord smile upon you with favor as He showed favor to the Virgin Mary
implanting in her with Holy Seed,
and give you peace to share with the world; now and forever. Amen**

Please carefully extinguish your candles.

HYMN No. 387 "Joy to the World"

**Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room
And heav'n and nature sing, And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.**

**Joy to the earth, 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, repeat, the sounding joy.**

**No more let sin and sorrow grow
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow
Far as the curse is found Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as the curse is found.**

**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 of His love,
And wonders, wonders of His love.**

Thank You 

**Eric Stake: Commander of our Media Tech Center
Lt. Commanders: Dale Schutte and Dean Krantz**

**The Manger Singers: Andrea Wiesner, Ginger Kieffer, Mary Stake, Eric Stake, Pastor Vern
& Marty Lintvedt, Director**

**The Readers (from our Board of Elders): Brian Lloyd, Ed Brandmeyer, John Lundeby, and
Gus Williams. And also two of our great youth.**

Baby Jesus whose life's story made this worship service infinitely meaningful!