

**CHRISTMAS MIDNIGHT
COMMUNION AND CANDLELIGHT SERVICE**

DECEMBER 24-25, 2022

11:30 P.M.

INVOCATION

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

C: Amen.

INTRODUCTION

L: At Christmas time we delight again to hear the story of the journey to Bethlehem, the song of the angels, the surprise of the shepherds, and their joy as they found Jesus in the manger.

L: But lest we forget He was born to poverty,

C: we remember at this season all who are hungry or cold.

L: And lest we forget He became a refugee,

C: we remember now the stranger and the lonely among us.

L: And lest we forget He felt the pain of life and death,

C: we remember now those who are ill, or anxious, or bereaved.

L: And because we know He came for our salvation,

C: let us in heart and mind go once again to Bethlehem, to hear the message of the angels and worship afresh the Son of God.

HYMN No. 361 "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

**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.**

**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!**

PRAYER OF REPENTANCE

**P: Christ the light of the world has come to dispel the darkness of our hearts.
In His light let us examine ourselves and confess our sins.**

Silence is kept.

**P: Lord of grace and truth, we confess our unworthiness
to stand in your presence as Your children.**

C: We have sinned: forgive and heal us.

**P: The Virgin Mary accepted your call to be the mother of Jesus.
Forgive our disobedience to Your will.**

C: We have sinned: forgive and heal us.

**P: Your Son our Savior was born in poverty in a manger.
Forgive our greed and our desires for worldly things.**

C: We have sinned: forgive and heal us.

**P: The shepherds left their flocks to go to Bethlehem.
Forgive our self-interest and lack of vision.**

C: We have sinned: forgive and heal us.

**P: The wise men followed the star to find Jesus the King.
Forgive our reluctance to seek You.**

C: We have sinned: forgive and heal us.

**P: May the God of all healing and forgiveness
draw *us* to Himself,
and cleanse *us* from all *our* sins
that we may behold the glory of his Son,
the Word made flesh,**

C: Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

HYMN No. 359 “Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming”. (vss. 1 & 2)

**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.**

**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.

OLD TESTAMENT Isaiah 9:2,6,7

The people who walked in darkness
 have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
 on them has light shone.

For to us a child is born,
 to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
 and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
 Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and of peace
 there will be no end,
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,
 to establish it and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
 from this time forth and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

HYMN No. 384 "Of the Father's Love Begotten" (vss. 1-3)

Of the Father's love begotten
Ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega,
He the source, the ending He,
Of the things that are, that have been,
And that future years shall see
Evermore and evermore.

This is he whom seers in old time
Chanted of with one accord,
Whom the voices of the prophets
Promised in their faithful word;
Now He shines, the long expected;
Let creation praise its Lord
Evermore and evermore.

PRAYER

P: Lord our God,

C: on the first day of creation

You made the light that scatters all darkness.

Let Christ, the light of lights, hidden from all eternity,

shine at last on Your people and free us from the darkness of sin.

Fill our lives with joy as we go out to welcome Your Son at his coming.

We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord. Amen.

HYMN No. 368 “Angels We Have Heard on High”

Angels we have heard on high, Sweetly singing o’er the plains,

And the mountains in reply, Echoing their joyous strains.

Glo----- ria, in excelsis Deo . Glo----- ria, in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?

What the gladsome tidings be Which inspire your heav’nly song?

Glo----- ria, in excelsis Deo. Glo----- ria, in excelsis Deo.

Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing;

Come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn King.

Glo----- ria, in excelsis Deo. Glo----- ria, in excelsis Deo.

CHRISTMAS READING Luke 2:1-16 (The Birth of Jesus Christ)

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. 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, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. 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.

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 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. 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. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths 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 with whom he is pleased!”**

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.” And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger.

HYMN No. 365 “Away in a Manger”

**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.**

**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.**

CHRISTMAS READING Matthew 2.1-11. (Wise men are led by the star to Jesus)

Now after 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 saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; And assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:

**“And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel.”**

Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had 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.” After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

MESSAGE “From You Shall Come a Ruler” Matthew 2:1-6 Pastor Vern

OFFERING

A LITANY FOR CHRISTMAS

P: Blessed are you, Lord God.

C: Blessed are you forever.

P: Holy is your name.

C: Blessed are you forever.

P: You have sent your Son to be one of us, our brother.

C: Blessed are you forever.

P: You chose Mary the Virgin to be his mother.

C: Blessed are you forever.

P: You love your people with deepest love.

C: Blessed are you forever.

P: You have sent your Son to save us from sin.

C: Blessed are you for ever.

P: Great is your mercy for your people.

C: Blessed are you for ever.

P: You fill your children with joy and peace.

C: Blessed are you for ever.

P: You call us to praise your name.

C: Blessed are you for ever.

P: Look with love upon your holy Church.

C: Blessed are you for ever.

P: Send the Spirit of your Son into our hearts.

C: Blessed are you forever.

P: Let us bring glory and praise to your name.

C: Blessed are you forever.

P: Through Jesus Christ your Son.

C: *Blessed are you forever.*

P: And in the love of your Holy Spirit.

C: *Blessed are you forever.*

✠ SACRAMENT ✠

PREFACE

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them up to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

P: It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. You created light out of darkness and brought forth life on the earth. You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast. You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God, and spoke to us through your prophets. In the fullness of time you gave your only Son Jesus Christ to be our Savior, and at his birth the angels sang glory to you in the highest and peace to your people on earth. And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

SANCTUS "A Great and Mighty Wonder" (vs. 1)

A great and mighty wonder,

A full and holy cure:

The virgin bears the infant

With virgin honor pure! Refrain

Refrain:

Proclaim the Savior's birth:

"To God on high be glory

And peace to all the earth!"

PRAYER

P: Holy are you, and blessed is Your Son Jesus Christ.

**As Mary and Joseph went from Galilee to Bethlehem
and there found no room,
so Jesus went from Galilee to Jerusalem and was despised and rejected.
As in the poverty of a stable Jesus was born,
so by the baptism of His suffering, death, and resurrection
you gave birth to Your Church,
delivered us from slavery to sin and death,
and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.**

Remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

THE LORD'S PRAYER

ALL: Our Father who art in heaven...

THE WORD OF OUR LORD

**P: Loving Father, as your Word became flesh, born of woman, on that night long ago,
so, on the night in which He gave Himself up for us, He took bread,
gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:
"Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me."**

**When the supper was over He took the cup,
gave thanks to You, gave it to his disciples, and said:
"Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant,
poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.**

P: Come you, beloved of God, to taste and see that the Lord is good!

DISTRIBUTION

POST THANKSGIVING PRAYER

**P: By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all
the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at His heavenly banquet.
Through Your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in Your holy Church, all honor
and glory is Yours, almighty Father, now and forever.**

C: Amen.

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.)*

BEHOLDING THE LIGHT

P: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. *Isaiah 9: 2*

C: **The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness has not overcome it.** *John 1:5*

P: Those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.
Isaiah 9:2b

C: **We have seen his glory,
glory as of the only Son from the Father.** *John 1:14b*

P: For to us a child is born, to us a son is given. *Isaiah 9:6*

C: **In him was life, and that life was the light of men.** *John 1:4*

P: **Receive the blessing of the Lord.**

BLESSING

P: **May the Father,
who has loved the eternal Son from before the foundation of the world,
shed that love upon you His children.**

C: **Amen.**

P: **May Christ,
who by His incarnation gathered into one things earthly and heavenly,
fill you with joy and peace.**

C: **Amen.**

P: **May the Holy Spirit,
by whose overshadowing Mary became the God-bearer,
give you grace to carry the good news of Christ.**

C: **Amen.**

P: **And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the ☩ Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be upon us and remain with us always.**

C: **Amen.**

HYMN No. 363 "Silent Night" (vss. 1 & 4)

**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, loves pure light

**Radiant beams from thy holy face With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.**

SENDING

P: Go in the Light of the Lord to be the light of the world.

C: Thanks be to God.