

CHRISTMAS EVE FAMILY

**December 24, 2023
(7:00 P.M.)**

PRE-SERVICE (6:30 pm)

HYMN No. 379 “O Come, All Ye Faithful”

**Oh, come, All ye faithful, joyful and triumphant
Oh come Ye, Oh come ye to Bethlehem
Come and behold Him, born the King of angels
O Come let us adore Him,
O Come let us adore Him,
O Come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!**

**Highest, most holy, Light of light eternal,
Born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;
Son of the Father Now in flesh appearing!
Oh, come, let us adore Him,
Oh, come, let us adore Him
Oh, come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!**

**Sing Choirs of angels, sing in exultation
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God... In the highest:
Oh, come, let us adore Him,
Oh, come, let us adore Him
Oh, come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!**

**Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, Born this happy morning;
Jesus, to Thee.. be .. glo....ry giv’n!
Word of the Father, Now in flesh appearing!
Oh, come, let us adore Him,
Oh, come, let us adore Him,
Oh, come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!**

INVOCATION

**P: In the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C: Amen.**

OPENING SENTENCES *John 1:14; Psalm 96:3; Psalm 98:1*

P: And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,
C: and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

P: Declare His glory among the nations,
C: His marvelous works among all the peoples!

P: Oh sing to the LORD a new song, for He has done marvelous things!
C: His right hand and His holy arm have worked salvation for Him.

HYMN INTRODUCTION

P: All through December we have prepared our hearts with repentance and faith, awaiting the arrival of the Son of God. Today we celebrate the embodiment of our forgiveness and the means by which we attain peace with God. Today we suspend our confession of sins to give full throttle to our praise of God, who wrapped Himself in our humanity so that we might be swaddled in His Son's righteousness, embraced in love by the Father strong arms.

The Christmas Gospel according to St. Luke records that the first angel who brought the good news of the birth of the Savior was suddenly joined by a multitude of the heavenly host who praised God together. What an amazing sound that must have been! The sound of that "glorious song of old" must have resounded off the rocks in the fields there outside of Bethlehem in an unforgettable way! Through our singing we echo that praise this day.

Although our Christmas hymns come from as far back as the fourth century (such as "Of the Father's Love Begotten"), a sizeable number of the songs we love to sing are from the nineteenth century, primarily from Great Britain and the United States. Reverend Edmund Sears, who served congregations in the Boston area in the mid-1800s, wrote the text of "It Came upon the Midnight Clear" in 1849 and sent it to a popular magazine called *The Christian Register*. It was published in the following year, and about forty years later the text by Sears was linked to a melody by Richard Willis, a musical editor who lived in New York City. Through this carol we are invited to hear the angels as they announce and rejoice in the birth of the Prince of Peace.

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.

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.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray.

O God, You make us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Grant that as we joyfully receive Him as our Redeemer, we may with sure confidence behold Him when He comes to be our Judge; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

ANTHEM "Gloria" by Michael W. Smith, arr. By John Purifoy
Adult Choir – Directed by Marty Lintvedt

OLD TESTAMENT READING *Isaiah 7:10–14*
(Immanuel will be born to a virgin mother.)

Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz: "Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test." And he said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM "Song of the Shepherds" by Lloyd Larson
Adult Choir - Directed by Marty Lintvedt

EPISTLE *1 John 4:7–16* (God sent His Son into the world as Redeemer.)

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

VERSE *Matthew 1:21*

P: Alleluia. She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus,

C: for He will save His people from their sins. Alleluia.

HOLY GOSPEL Luke 2:1–7. (The Birth of Jesus Christ)

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the first chapter.

C: Glory to You, O Lord.

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.

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ.

HYMN No. 384 “Of the Father’s Love Begotten” (vss. 1, 2, 5)

**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.**

**Oh, that birth forever blessed,
When the virgin full of grace,
By the Holy Ghost conceiving,
Bore the Savior of our race,
And the babe, the world’s Redeemer,
First revealed His sacred face
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.**

**O ye heights of heav’n adore him;
Angel hosts, his praises sing;
Pow’rs, dominions, bow before him
And extol our God and King;
Let no tongue on earth be silent,
Ev’ry voice in concert ring
Evermore and evermore.**

**Christ, to Thee, with God the Father
And, O Holy Ghost, to Thee
Hymn and chant and high thanksgiving
And unending praises be,
Honor, glory, and dominion
And eternal victory
Evermore and evermore!**

SERMON “Let Every Heart Prepare Him Room!” Pastor Vern

OFFERING

✠ SCRIPTURE & CAROLS ✠

P: We now join in singing a variety of Christmas songs interspersed with the Good News from the Gospel according to St. Luke, chapter 2. Following each reading, we will sing a Christmas song that complements it.

READING *Luke 2:1–5*

P: 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.

P: Although “O Little Town of Bethlehem” is an American carol, written by the Reverend Phillips Brooks of Pennsylvania in 1865, it was inspired by his visiting the actual town where Jesus was born in what we call the Holy Land. On this holy evening, we all go in heart and mind to that little town that became so special in God’s plan of salvation.

HYMN No. 361 “O Little Town of Bethlehem” (vss. 1, 3, 4)

**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.**

**How silently, how silently The wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts To human hearts The blessings of His heav'n.
No ear may hear His coming; But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him, still The dear Christ enters in.**

**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!**

READING *Luke 2:6–7*

- P:** 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.
- P:** The carol “Infant Holy, Infant Lowly” is a translation of a Polish Christmas song that appeared in its original language in a song collection in 1838. As with many traditional folk songs, the text author and musical composer are not known. An adaptation in the American version we sing is the repetition of the last phrase of each stanza: “Christ the child is Lord of all!” and “Christ the child was born for you!”—both lines are certainly worthy of being repeated!

HYMN No. 393 “Infant Holy, Infant Lowly”

Infant holy, Infant lowly,
For His bed a cattle stall;
Oxen lowing, Little knowing
Christ the child is Lord of all.
Swiftly winging, Angels singing,
Bells are ringing, Tidings bringing:
Christ the child is Lord of all!
Christ the child is Lord of all!

Flocks were sleeping, Shepherds keeping
Vigil till the morning new
Saw the glory, Heard the story,
Tidings of a Gospel true.
Thus rejoicing, Free from sorrow,
Praises voicing, Greet the morrow:
Christ the Child was born for you!
Christ the Child was born for you!

READING *Luke 2:8–12*

- P:** 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 fear. And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a 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.”

CAROL INTRODUCTION

ANTHEM **“Away in a Manger”** **Adult Choir Directed by Marcie Monaco**
Accompanied by Charlie and Otto Monaco.

READING *Luke 2:13–16*

P: 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.

CAROL INTRODUCTION

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.

READING *Luke 2:17–20*

P: And when [the shepherds] saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

CAROL INTRODUCTION

HYMN No. 359 “Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming”

**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.**

**This flow’r whose fragrance tender With sweetness fills the air,
Dispels with glorious splendor The darkness ev’ry where.
True man, yet very God, From sin and death He saves us
And lightens ev’ry load.**

**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.**

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

P: God, our Creator, we offer this humble prayer on Christmas Day. We come to worship with a song of thanks in our hearts—a song of redemption, a song of hope and renewal. We pray for joy in our hearts, hope in our God, love to forgive, and peace upon the earth. We ask for the salvation of all our family members and friends, and we pray your blessings on all people. May there be bread for the hungry, love for the unlovable, healing for the sick, protection for our children, and wisdom for our youth. We pray for the forgiveness of sinners and abundant life in Christ. Holy Spirit, fill our hearts with your love and power. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

C: Amen.

LIGHTING OF CANDLES

(Please share the light with the next person in your pew by allowing them to dip their candle into your light. Care must be taken not to tip a lit candle as it might drip wax on clothing or skin.)

Pastor: With renewing faith, growing hope, and expanding love on this most holy night, we sing “Silent Night, Holy Night.”

HYMN No 363 “Silent Night, Holy Night” (3 Verses)

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!
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!

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.

CLOSING PRAYER

P: Let us pray.

O Lord Jesus Christ, who by Your coming among us united earth and heaven, fill us with peace and good will. Grant that we always have room for You in our lives and in all our daily plans and grant that we be joyfully joined with the heavenly host in praising Your graciousness and Your glory this evening and always; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.

C: Amen.

BLESSING OF THE LORD

P: The blessing of God Almighty—the Father, who gave His Son to redeem the world; the Son, who has revealed to us God's grace, mercy, and love; and the Holy Spirit, by whose blessed work in us we live our lives as children of God—be and remain with you, now and forever.

C: Amen.

**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.**

SENDING

**P: Our God sends us out as His beloved family to celebrate and share the Good News
with people far and near.**

C: We go in the peace of the Christ Child to share "the wonders of His love."

THANK YOU!!

**While this special night brings glory to God and to Him alone, we want to thank and
give our appreciation to those who gave of their talents to honor the birth of our
Lord and Savior, Jesus:**

**Marcie Monaco – "Nöel Nouvelet" arr. By Brant Adams, Flute solo
Marcie also conducted the Adult Choir on "Away in a Manger"
Charlie & Otto Monaco, accompanied on the Violin & Cello.**

Eric Stake, Dale Schutte, Media

Cheryl Vohlken, Organist

Marty Lintvedt, Choir Director

Nancy Schmidt, Office Manager

Kristen Lintvedt – Sanctuary and narthex decorations