

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

When the service is to begin, the sanctuary is completely darkened.

Pastor: Lord, Hear the cries of your people.
We stumble in the darkness of our sin.
We fear what we cannot see.
Our lives, hopes, joys, our very beings have been consumed in blackness.

The Church is only dimly lighted.

Reader: (Isaiah 59:9b) We wait for light, and lo! There is darkness;
and for brightness, but we walk in gloom.

HYMN: O COME, O COME EMMANUEL 257 (one verse)

**O come, O come, Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.**

PROCESSION OF LIGHT

Pastor: John 1:1-5 ¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it,

The Pascal candle is carried slowly from the back to the front of the church.

Reader: ⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.
¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him.
¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become

children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

Church candles are lit.

Pastor: Isaiah 60 1-3 ¹Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. ²For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you.

³Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

THE SPREADING OF THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

Pastor: Behold the light of the world!

Jesus spoke saying, "I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk-in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

HYMN: Silent Night **281**

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

Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia,

Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born

Silent night, holy night! Son of God love's pure light.

Radiant beams from Thy holy face

With dawn of redeeming grace,

Jesus Lord, at Thy birth Jesus Lord, at Thy birth

VERSICLE

Reader: 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.

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

People: We have beheld Christ's glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.

Reader: For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given.

People: In him was life, and the life was the light of all human kind.

(More lights in the sanctuary are lit)

HYMN: What Child Is This? 296

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!

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; come, peasant, king, to own him.
The Kings 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!

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Let us pray:

Almighty God, you 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 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. Amen

HYMN: Angels We Have Heard on High 289

1 Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains.

Refrain

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

The Christmas Story Luke 2:1-20

¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered.
²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph 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. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And 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.
⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.
⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see — I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior,

who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

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

¹⁵When 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." ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Homily

Reader: (1 John 1 5-7)

⁵This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; ⁷but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

HYMN: O, Come, All Ye Faithful 283

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

Sing, alleluia, all ye choirs of angels;
O sing, all ye blissful ones of heav'n above.
Glory to God in the highest glory!
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to Thee be the glory giv'n;
Word of the Father, now in the flesh appearing,
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

PRAYERS

A: This night the eternal Word of God is born in us. We pray for Christ's light of life to take flesh in the church, the creation, and all people of God.

We bring to the manger our longing for the visible unity of the church of Jesus Christ, that undivided it proclaim the one whose birth brings good news of glad tidings to all people, Lord in your mercy,

C. Hear our prayer.

A. We bring to the manger hope for the well-being of creation, that every valley be exalted and every rough place be made plain so that every living thing may flourish. Lord, in your mercy,

C. Hear our prayer.

A. We bring to the manger a vision of the reign of the Prince of Peace, that the nations, tribes and peoples of this world will see and cherish in each other the very image of Christ, whose scepter is mercy and whose judgment is love. Lord, in your mercy.

C. Hear our prayer.

A. We bring to the manger concern for those who have no place to lay their heads this night and for those who dwell in the shadow of loneliness, despair, illness, or death (*especially*). We come begging that the child for whom there was no room will open the doors of our hearts to the needs of our neighbors and ourselves. Lord, in your mercy

C. Hear our prayer.

A. We bring to the manger all people who, like the holy family, gather with children in the splendor of this most holy night, that the gift of faith be lavished on another generation. Lord, in your mercy

C. Hear our prayer.

A. We bring to the manger the hopes and dreams of all the year, that with Mary and Joseph, angels, and archangels, saints and martyrs. Loved ones of every time and every place, our prayers and praises join in a common song uniting heaven and earth in a single peace. Lord, in your mercy,

C. Hear our prayer.

P. Into your outstretched arms, O God, we commend ourselves and all for whom we pray, trusting in Jesus Christ, the light and life of the world.

Amen.

THE 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.**

A. We are filled with joy for we have heard good news of great joy.
We are filled with love for we have tasted the sign of God's great love.
We are filled with hope for the angels still sing in our world
and there is a Light for us to follow.

C. Amen

Reader (Isaiah 42:16) ¹⁶I will lead the blind by a road they do not know,
by paths they have not known I will guide them.
I will turn the darkness before them into light,
the rough places into level ground.

These are the things I will do, and I will not forsake them.

(John 12:35-36) ³⁵Jesus said to them, "The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. If you walk in the darkness, you do not know where you are going. ³⁶While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of light."

BENEDICTION

P. May the light of this child light your way forever. May the blessings which broke through the darkness on this night be yours always. May you always have cause to sing praises, give thanks, and celebrate the true light of the world, our Savior, Jesus Christ.

C: Amen

HYMN: Joy to the World 267

Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King;
Let every 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 sins and sorrows 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.

(Paschal Candle is carried slowly from the front to the back of the church)

P. Let the light of the Christ Child go with you as you go out into the world. Go in Joy! Fear the Darkness No More!

C. Thanks Be to God!

On behalf of the congregation, Merry Christmas.

Pastor & Mrs. Aucker