



## The Order of Celebration and Worship of God

*Christmas Eve Candlelight Service*

December 24, 2020

*To all who are spiritually weary and seek rest; to all who mourn and long for comfort; to all who struggle and desire victory; to all who sin and need a Savior; to all who are strangers and want fellowship; to all who hunger and thirst after righteousness; and to all who will come— this church opens wide her doors and offers welcome in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

### Opening Prayer

#### Greeting and Call To Worship

**Leader:** The Lord be with you.

**People:** *And also with you.*

**Leader:** In the story of Abraham, in the psalms of David, in the words of the prophets, in the dream of Joseph, your promise is spoken, eternal God, and takes flesh at last in the womb of the virgin.

**People:** *May Emmanuel find welcome in our hearts, take flesh in our lives, and be for all peoples the welcome advent of redemption and grace.*

**Leader:** We ask this through him whose coming is certain, whose Day draws near; your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**People:** *Amen.*

#### The First Candle and Old Testament Reading | Isaiah 9:2–7

- [2] 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.
- [3] You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest,  
as they are glad when they divide the spoil.
- [4] For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder,  
the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.
- [5] For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult  
and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire.
- [6] 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.

[7] 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.

## **Opening Hymn | O Little Town of Bethlehem**

*Words by Phillips Brooks, 1868*

*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.*

*For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above,  
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.  
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,  
And praises sing to God the King, and peace to all on earth.*

*How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given!  
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven.  
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;  
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.*

## **The Second Candle and Epistle Reading | Titus 3.4-7**

[4] But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, [5] he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, [6] whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, [7] so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

## The Third Candle and Psalm | Psalm 96

**Leader:** The LORD reigns, let the earth rejoice;

**People:** *Let the many coastlands be glad!*

**Leader:** Clouds and thick darkness are all around him;

**People:** *Righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.*

**Leader:** Fire goes before him

**People:** *And burns up his adversaries all around.*

**Leader:** His lightnings light up the world;

**People:** *The earth sees and trembles.*

**Leader:** The mountains melt like wax before the LORD,

**People:** *Before the Lord of all the earth.*

**Leader:** The heavens proclaim his righteousness,

**People:** *And all the peoples see his glory.*

**Leader:** All worshipers of images are put to shame,

**People:** *Who make their boast in worthless idols; worship him, all you gods!*

**Leader:** Zion hears and is glad,

**People:** *And the daughters of Judah rejoice, because of your judgments, O LORD.*

**Leader:** For you, O LORD, are most high over all the earth;

**People:** *You are exalted far above all gods.*

**Leader:** O you who love the LORD, hate evil!

**People:** *He preserves the lives of his saints; he delivers them from the hand of the wicked.*

**Leader:** Light is sown for the righteous,

**People:** *And joy for the upright in heart.*

**Leader:** Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous,

**People:** *And give thanks to his holy name!*

## Hymn of Praise | Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

*Traditional Polish Carol*

*Infant holy, infant lowly,*

*For his bed a cattle stall;*

*Oxen lowing, little knowing*

*Christ, the babe, is Lord of all.*

*Swift are winging angels singing,*

*Noels ringing, tidings bringing:*

*Christ the babe is Lord of all, Christ the babe 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 babe was born for you. Christ the babe was born for you.*

## **The Fourth Candle and Gospel Reading | Luke 2:1-17**

[1] In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. [2] This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. [3] And all went to be registered, each to his own town. [4] 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, [5] to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. [6] And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. [7] 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.

[8] And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. [9] 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. [10] 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. [11] For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. [12] And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." [13] And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

[14] "Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

[15] 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." [16] And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. [17] And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child.

## **The Christ Candle and Homily | Blessed Rest**

**Rev. Benjamin Wheeler**

### **Homily Text | Exodus 20.8-11**

[8] "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. [9] Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, [10] but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. [11] For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

## Concluding Hymn with Candle Lighting | Silent Night

Words and Music by Joseph Mohr

*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 the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth! Jesus Lord, at thy birth!*

*Silent night! Holy night!  
Wondrous star, lend thy light;  
with the angels let us sing  
Alleluia to our King:  
"Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born."*

## Benediction & Dismissal

**Leader:** Almighty God, you have poured upon us the new light of your incarnate Word: Grant that this light, enkindled in our hearts, may shine forth in our lives, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

**People:** *Amen and Amen.*