

Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion 2020

AVAILABLE LIGHT



December 24, 2020

CENTERING WORDS

Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness flees as the light grows in power and beauty.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

OFFERING

Offerings sent in this evening through our website will go out from our church to help the ministries of Act in Faith, a local social work agency that our church helped to found, and Man of Peace Ministry, a mission in Ecuador started by a daughter of our church, Amber Allen. Thank you for your generous gifts.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Rejoice and sing.

A child is born!

Sing songs of praise.

For the Prince of Peace is in our midst.

Rejoice and sing.

Christ is born! Hallelujah. Amen.

CAROL

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

no. 218, vs. 1, 4

**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, good will to all, from heaven's all-gracious King."
The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.**

**For lo! the days are hastening on, by prophet seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold
when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
and the whole world send back the song which now the angels sing.**

OPENING PRAYER

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, be born in our hearts this night. Shine your light into the darkness of our world, that all the earth might know your glorious presence and that all people might find hope in your love and grace. In your glorious name, we pray. **Amen.**

MUSIC

O Holy Night

Adolphe Adam

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**When the shadows of sin and sorrow surround us, shine on us with the light of your comfort and your grace.
When the despair of the world overwhelms us, lift us with your promise of hope. When we forget the good news of your presence, cry out with your message of love, that we might hear and remember anew.
Christ is born. Christ is with us. We are not alone. In your beloved name, we pray. Amen.**

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

We are not alone. We who were walking in darkness have seen a great light. Light has dawned, and the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to us, salvation to all. Thanks be to God.

PASSING OF THE PEACE OF CHRIST

As the Prince of Peace has blessed us with grace, so now we are invited to bless one another with Christ's message of peace. Please share the peace of Christ with those around you.

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 9:2-7

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light. On those living in a pitch-dark land, light has dawned. You have made the nation great; you have increased its joy. They rejoiced before you as with joy at the harvest, as those who divide plunder rejoice. As on the day of Midian, you've shattered the yoke that burdened them, the staff on their shoulders, and the rod of their oppressor. Because every boot of the thundering warriors, and every garment rolled in blood will be burned, fuel for the fire. A child is born to us, a son is given to us, and authority will be on his shoulders. He will be named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be vast authority and endless peace for David's throne and for his kingdom, establishing and sustaining it with justice and righteousness now and forever. The zeal of the LORD of heavenly forces will do this.

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

Advent hope moves us; Advent love leads us; Advent joy stirs us; Advent peace stills us, that we might affirm our King Jesus.

It is time we set flame to this Advent affirmation by lighting the Christ Candle.

We believe that Jesus is the Son of God. He was born of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem of Judea. He was the long-awaited Messiah whose coming was prophesied. The same Jesus lives today in our hearts. He deserves our highest loyalty and total commitment. In Jesus Christ our hope is fulfilled; our love is consummated; our joy is complete; and our peace is sealed. Rejoice, a Savior is born.

A savior is born, indeed.

Sung Response

Joy to the world!

no. 246, vs. 1

**Joy to the world, the Lord is Come! Let earth receive her King;
let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.**

CHRISTMAS PRAYER FOR THOSE IN NEED

Let us remember those for whom life is hard this Christmas- the hungry, the poor, those in ill health, those who mourn, those that are away from their families, and those who do not know the love of Christ. Offer silent prayers for them throughout the service.

GOSPEL

Luke 2:1-20

In those days Caesar Augustus declared that everyone throughout the empire should be enrolled in the tax lists. This first enrollment occurred when Quirinius governed Syria. Everyone went to their own cities to be enrolled. Since Joseph belonged to David's house and family line, he went up from the city of Nazareth in Galilee to David's city, called Bethlehem, in Judea. He went to be enrolled together with Mary, who was promised to him in marriage and who was pregnant. While they were there, the time came for Mary to have her baby. She gave birth to her firstborn child, a son, wrapped him snugly, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the guestroom. Nearby shepherds were living in the fields, guarding their sheep at night. The Lord's angel stood before them, the Lord's glory shone around them, and they were terrified. The angel said, "Don't be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people. Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord. This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great assembly of the heavenly forces was with the angel praising God. They said, "Glory to God in heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors." When the angels returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go right now to Bethlehem and see what's happened. Let's confirm what the Lord has revealed to us." They went quickly and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. When they saw this, they reported what they had been told about this child. Everyone who heard it was amazed at what the shepherds told them. Mary committed these things to memory and considered them carefully. The shepherds returned home, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. Everything happened just as they had been told.

MESSAGE

Available Light

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

May God be with you. **And also with you**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to our God.**

Let us give thanks to the Holy One. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

We thank you, Holy One, for you are the creator of darkness and light, dwelling in silence and known in thunder, mighty in power and come among us as a helpless infant. To announce your coming you sent your messengers to a peasant girl, to shepherds with their flocks, to the poor and the homeless.

Therefore, joining our voices with the morning stars who sang at creation and the angels and archangels, and all the beasts of the land, we sing: *Tune: Angels We Have Heard on High*

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of hosts, all praise be given!

All your glory fills the earth; all your power fills the heavens.

Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Holy are you, and blessed is your child Jesus Christ, whose birth we remember this night, and whose coming again in justice and peace we await. On the night before he was betrayed to death, Jesus sat at supper with his friends. He took bread, gave you thanks for it, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "Take and eat. This is for you. Do this in memory of me."

And after supper he took the cup, gave you thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Take and drink from this, all of you. This is the new covenant for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in memory of me."

Remembering, therefore, his birth and his life, his suffering and death, his resurrection and ascension, we offer these gifts of the earth and of human labor: this bread, this wine, ourselves. Pour out your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine that they may be for us the living presence of Christ. May we live in his presence until the final fulfillment of all things when all creation will once again sing and dance for joy. Through your child Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory is yours, Holy One, now and forever. **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. Amen.

GIVING OF THE BREAD AND CUP

MUSIC

Still, Still, Still

arr. Norman Luboff

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

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. Amen.

PASSING OF THE LIGHT

CAROL

Silent Night, Holy Night

no. 239, vs. 1-3

**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.**

The RINGING IN OF CHRISTMAS

CAROL

Joy to the World

no. 246, vs.2

**Joy to the world, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ;
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy.**

BENEDICTION

Go forth and shine light in the darkness.

Go and bring peace into our troubled world. Proclaim hope in the midst of despair.

Go with God's blessings—for a child has been born to us, who is Love for the nations and Light for the world. **Amen.**

POSTLUDE

Now Sing We, Now Rejoice

arr. Zachau

Bold text indicates congregational response.



**The Great Thanksgiving is from "The Church In Her House: A Feminist Emancipatory Prayer Book for Christian Communities," Pilgrim Press, c2008 Marjorie Procter-Smith. It is used with permission.

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