

Christmas Eve



December 24, 2020

At Home Worship
St. Paul's Lutheran Church
Closter, New Jersey

PRELUDE: Christmas Selections

OPENING HYMN *O, Come All Ye Faithful*

**1. 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:**

REFRAIN:

**Oh, come, let us adore Him,
Oh, come, let us adore Him,
Oh, come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord!**

**2. Highest, most holy,
Light of light eternal,
Born of a virgin, a mortal He comes;
Son of the Father
Now in flesh appearing! REFRAIN**

**3. Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God In the highest: REFRAIN**

**4. Yea, Lord, we greet Thee,
Born this happy morning;
Jesus, to Thee be glory giv'n!
Word of the Father,
Now in flesh appearing! REFRAIN**

INVOCATION

We make our beginning in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION based on Isaiah 9:2 and 9:6

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned. (Isaiah 9:2)

Heavenly Father, as we face darkness, and live in the shadow of death, we ask You to give us Your light. As we face tears, fears and brokenness, we ask You to give us Your hope. As we face sin and failure in our own lives, we ask You to give us Your forgiveness. We ask this in the name of Jesus, Your dear Son. Renew and restore our lives, by the power of Your Holy Spirit.

Be of good cheer. Your sins are forgiven you for the sake of Jesus Christ and His atoning death. For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

**For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of
Peace.**

SOLO: *O Holy Night, Joan Holsten*

THE CHRISTMAS GOSPEL Luke 2:1-20

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

Sing to the Lord, you saints of His. Praise His holy name. For His anger lasts only a moment, but His favor lasts a lifetime.

Weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.

HYMN

Away in a Manger

- 1. 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.**
- 2. The cattle are lowing, the poor Baby wakes,
But little Lord Jesus no crying He makes,
I love Thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle, Till morning is nigh.**
- 3. 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 MESSAGE

THE GOSPEL OF THE INCARNATION - JOHN 1:1-14

(Congregation stands)

The minister, taking a large candle, lights it from an altar candle, which symbolizes Christ, the Light of the world, of whom John's Gospel speaks. The ushers light their candles from the pastor's candle, then light the candle of each worshiper nearest the aisle. The lighted candle is never tilted but is always held upright when giving the light to another.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.

Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

CHRISTMAS PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we thank You for sending Jesus, Your Son. We celebrate the fact that Jesus was born into our world at Christmas. The Word became flesh and moved into our neighborhood. Jesus lived a totally obedient and holy life in our place. Jesus suffered and died on the cross in our place. Jesus rose from the dead to give us the sure hope of everlasting life. In the name of Jesus, by the power of Your Holy Spirit, we come to You with the prayers and petitions of our hearts.

Help all who suffer from Covid-19, and all who care for them. Bless the administration of the Covid-19 vaccines. Keep us safe in worship, in schools, and in our communities. Bring healing to our loved ones in sickness or need. Fill our hearts with the Good News of Your accomplished salvation, through Jesus Christ, Your Son. Bless the sharing of that Good News, by the power of Your Holy Spirit. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen

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.

HYMN *SILENT NIGHT*

- 1. 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.**
- 2. 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.**
- 3. 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.**

BENEDICTION:

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

Amen.

RECESSIONAL HYMN *Go Tell It on the Mountain*

Refrain: Go tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and ev'ry-where;
Go tell it on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born!

1. While shepherds kept their watching
O'er silent flocks by night,
Behold, throughout the heavens
There shone a holy light. *Refrain*

2. The shepherds feared and trembled
When, lo, above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus
That hailed our Savior's birth. *Refrain*

3. Down in a lonely manger
The humble Christ was born;
And God sent us salvation
That blessed Christmas morn. *Refrain*