

Christmas Eve

December 24, 2020

Opening Hymn and Litany: We Wait in Hope

Special Music sings:

All Creation lies in waiting,
in the stillness of the night,
with hope anticipating
the Advent of Eternal Light.

P: Advent is a time to proclaim.

C: **Joy to the world, the Lord is come!**

P: We proclaim a hope that is stronger than any trial.

C: **Joy to the world, the Lord is come!**

P: We proclaim a victory that is stronger than any defeat.

C: **Joy to the world, the Lord is come!**

P: We proclaim a peace that is stronger than any conflict.

C: **Joy to the world, the Lord is come!**

P: We proclaim a freedom that is stronger than any bondage.

C: **Joy to the world, the Lord is come!**

P: Tonight we light all of the candles. The first candle reminds us that Advent is a time to wait upon the Lord with faithful endurance. The second candle reminds us that Advent is a time to watch for God's presence with hopeful expectation. The third candle reminds us that Advent is a time to prepare for the Lord in heart, soul and mind. The fourth candle reminds us that the One we wait for, watch for, and prepare for is Jesus Christ, who is Emmanuel, meaning "God with us." Tonight we light the Christ candle. This candle reminds us that we are to proclaim the message of Christmas by celebrating what Christ has done, and by sharing it with others. As the light from each candle fills this room, so may the Light of Christ fill our world!

Refrain (congregation)

We proclaim with hope for the morning Light,
For the love of Christ to illuminate the night.
We proclaim with joy for the Savior's birth;
We proclaim with hope for peace on earth

Exhortation and Prayer

P: Beloved in Christ: In this Christmas season it is our duty and delight to hear again the message of the angels and, in heart and mind, to go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us, the Christ-child, lying in a manger.

C: **Let us read and learn in Holy Scripture the story of the loving purposes of God from the first days after our fall into sin to the glorious redemption brought to us by this Holy Child.**

P: But first, let us pray for people all over the world, who would delight with us to know the good news of Jesus Christ and who would join with us in singing his praises. Let us pray for the people of this city/place and for all those in our own congregation.

C: **And because this would please our Lord, let us remember, in his name, the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry, and the oppressed; the sick and those who are sad, the lonely and the unloved, the elderly and the little children. We especially remember all those who do not know the Lord Jesus, or who do not love him, or who by sin have grieved his heart of love.**

P: Finally, let us remember before God all those who rejoice with us in heaven, who live in greater light than we, that multitude which no one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, who died in faith, and who live before the throne of God and praise him each day in his temple. We confess that we are united with them as we are united with one another.

Hymn 55 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 God from true God, and Light from Light eternal,
Born of a virgin, to earth he comes,
Only begotten Son of God the Father.

Refrain:

Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come, let us adore him,
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

3 Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation;
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above.
Glory to God, all Glory in the highest.

Refrain:

Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come, let us adore him,
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

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

Refrain:

Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come, let us adore him,
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Text: John F. Wade, c. 1711-86; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802-80, alt.

First Lesson — Genesis 2:8-9; Genesis 3:1-15

Genesis 2:8-9

⁸The LORD God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. ⁹Out of the ground the LORD God made every kind of tree grow—trees that are pleasant to look at and good for food, including the Tree of Life in the middle of the garden and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Genesis 3:1-15

3 Now the serpent was more clever than any wild animal which the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Has God really said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree in the garden’?”

²The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees of the garden, ³but not from the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden. God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it. You shall not touch it, or else you will die.’ ”

⁴The serpent said to the woman, “You certainly will not die. ⁵In fact, God knows that the day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

⁶When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was appealing to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took some of its fruit and ate. She gave some also to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷The eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized that they were naked. They sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for their waists. ⁸They heard the voice of the LORD God, who was walking around in the garden during the cooler part of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

⁹The LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?”

¹⁰The man said, “I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid myself.”

¹¹God said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?”

¹²The man said, “The woman you gave to be with me—she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

¹³The LORD God said to the woman, “What have you done?”

The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

¹⁴The LORD God said to the serpent:

Because you have done this,
you are cursed more than all the livestock,
and more than every wild animal.
You shall crawl on your belly,
and you shall eat dust all the days of your life.

¹⁵I will put hostility between you and the woman,
and between your seed and her seed.

He will crush your head,
and you will crush his heel.

Hymn 28 vv 1, 4, 5 Let the Earth Now Praise the Lord

1. Let the earth now praise the Lord,
Who has truly kept his word
And at last to us did send
Christ, the sinner’s help and friend.
- 4 Welcome, O my Savior, now!
Joyful, Lord, to you I bow.
Come into my heart, I pray;
Oh, prepare yourself a way.
5. Crush for me the serpent’s head
That, set free from doubt and dread,
I may cling to you in faith,
Safely kept through life and death,

Text, Tune, Setting: public domain.

Second Lesson — Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

Isaiah 9:2

²The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.
For those living in the land of the shadow of death, the light has dawned.

Isaiah 9:6-7

⁶For to us a child is born.
To us a son is given.
The authority to rule will rest on his shoulders.
He will be named:

Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God,
Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace.

⁷There will be no limit to his authority
and no end to the peace he brings.
He will rule on David's throne and over his kingdom,
to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness
from now on, into eternity.
The zeal of the LORD of Armies will accomplish this.

Hymn 61 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

1. Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all you nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With th' angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"
2. Christ, by highest heav'n adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold him come,
Offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail th' incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with us to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel!
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

3. Hail, the heav'nly Prince of Peace!
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Ris'n with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that we no more may die,
Born to raise us from the earth,
Born to give us second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Text, Tune, Setting: public domain. Descant and harmony for st.3 by David Willcocks. Reprinted by permission of Oxford University Press.

Third Lesson — Micah 5:2-4

Micah 5:2-4

²But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
though you are small among the clans of Judah,
from you, will go out the one who will be the ruler for me in Israel.
His goings forth are from the beginning, from the days of eternity.
³Therefore the LORD will give them up,
until the time when the woman who is in labor bears a child.
Then the remaining survivors from his brothers will return to the people of
Israel.
⁴He will stand and shepherd with the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.
They will dwell securely, for at that time he will be great to the ends of the
earth.

Hymn 50 Once in Royal David's City

1 Once in royal David's city
Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby
In a manger for his bed;
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.

- 2 He came down to earth from heaven
Who is God and Lord of all,
And his shelter was a stable,
And his cradle was a stall;
With the poor and mean and lowly
Lived on earth our Savior holy.
- 3 But our eyes at last shall see him
Through his own redeeming love,
For that child, so dear and gentle,
Is our Lord in heav'n above,
As he leads his children on
To the place where he is gone.
- 4 Not in that poor, lowly stable
With the oxen standing by
Shall we see him, but in heaven,
Set at God's right hand on high.
Then like stars his children crowned,
All in white, his praise will sound.

Text: Cecil Frances Alexander, 1818-95, abr., alt.

Fourth Lesson — Luke 1:26-35, 38

Luke 1:26-35

²⁶In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin pledged in marriage to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women."

²⁹But she was greatly troubled by the statement and was wondering what kind of greeting this could be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, because you have found favor with God. ³¹Listen, you will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will never end."

³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

³⁵The angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.

Luke 1:38

³⁸Then Mary said, "See, I am the Lord's servant. May it happen to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

Small Group — Magnificat / My Soul in Stillness Waits.

My soul proclaims, My soul proclaims, My soul proclaims.

My soul now glorifies my spirit sings in God my savior.
For he is mindful of the humble state of his servant.
From now on all generations will call me blessed.

My soul proclaims, my soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord.
For the Mighty One has done great things and holy is his name.
His mercy touches all who live in reverence and fear
from generation to generation.

Refrain

For you , O Lord, my soul in stillness waits, truly my hope is in you.

O Lord of Light, our only hope of glory,
Your radiance shines in all who look to you.
Come, light the hearts of all in dark and shadow.

Refrain

For you , O Lord, my soul in stillness waits, truly my hope is in you.

O Spring of Joy, rain down upon our spirits.
Our thirsty hearts are yearning for your Word.
Come, make us whole, be comfort to our hearts.

Refrain

For you , O Lord, my soul in stillness waits, truly my hope is in you.

O Root of Life, implant your seed within us,
And in your advent draw us all to you, Our hope reborn in dying and in rising.

Refrain

For you , O Lord, my soul in stillness waits, truly my hope is in you.

O Key of Knowledge, guide us in our pilgrimage,
We ever seek, yet unfulfilled remain. Open to us the pathway of your peace.

Refrain

For you , O Lord, my soul in stillness waits, truly my hope is in you.

My soul proclaims, My soul proclaims,

He has done mighty deeds; he has scattered those who are proud within their thoughts. He's brought down rulers from their thrones and lifted up the meek. He has filled the hungry with good things and the rich are empty.

My soul proclaims, my soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord
For he has come to Israel to remember mercy.

My soul proclaims, my soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord
For he has come to Israel to remember mercy.
The promise made to Abraham to his sons forever.

Fifth Lesson — the Christmas Gospel — Luke 2:1-7

Luke 2:1-7

2 In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governing Syria. ³And everyone went to register, each to his own town. ⁴And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the town of Nazareth, into Judea, to the town of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was from the house and family line of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, his wife, who was pledged to him in marriage and was expecting a child.

⁶And so it was that while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son, wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Hymn 707 Peace Came to Earth

- 1 Peace came to earth at last that chosen night
When angels clove the sky with song and light
And God embodied love and sheathed his might-
Who could but gasp: Immanuel!
Who could but sing: Immanuel!
- 2 And who could be the same for having held
The infant in their arms and later felt
The wounded hands and side, all doubts dispelled-
Who could but sigh: Immanuel!
Who could but shout: Immanuel!

- 3 You show the Father none has ever seen,
In flesh and blood you bore our griefs and pain,
In bread and wine you visit us again-
Who could but see: Immanuel!
Who could but thrill: Immanuel!
- 4 How else could I have known you, O my God!
How else could I have loved you, O my God!
How else could I embrace you, O my God!
Who could but pray: Immanuel!
Who could but praise: Immanuel!

The picturesque language of this Jaroslav Vajda hymn vividly illustrates the weighty significance of God becoming man in Christ.

Text: Jaroslav J. Vajda, 1919-2008 © 1984 Concordia Publishing House. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Sixth Lesson — Luke 2:8-14

Luke 2:8-14

⁸There were in the same country shepherds staying out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock at night. ⁹An angel of the Lord appeared to 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 behold, I bring you good news of great joy, which will be for all people: ¹¹Today in the town of David, a Savior was born for you. He is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this will be a sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” ¹³Suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude from the heavenly army, praising God and saying, ¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward mankind.”

Hymn 53 vv 1-3 To Shepherds as They Watched by Night

- 1 To shepherds as they watched by night
Appeared a host of angels bright;
“Behold the tender babe,” they said,
“In yonder lowly manger laid,
- 2 “At Bethlehem, in David’s town,
As Micah did of old make known.
It is the Christ, your Lord and King,
Who will to all salvation bring.”

3 Oh, then rejoice that through his Son
God is with sinners now at one;
Made like yourselves of flesh and blood,
Your brother is th' eternal God.

Text: Martin Luther, 1483-1546; tr. Richard Massie, 1800-87, alt.

Seventh Lesson — John 1:1-14

John 1:1-14

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2**He was with God in the beginning. **3**Through him everything was made, and without him not one thing was made that has been made. **4**In him was life, and the life was the light of mankind. **5**The light is shining in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

6There was a man, sent from God, whose name was John. **7**He came as an eyewitness to testify about the light so that everyone would believe through him.

8He was not the light, but he came to testify about the light.

9The real light that shines on everyone was coming into the world. **10**He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not recognize him. **11**He came to what was his own, yet his own people did not accept him. **12**But to all who did receive him, to those who believe in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. **13**They were born, not of blood, or of the desire of the flesh, or of a husband's will, but born of God.

14The Word became flesh and dwelled among us. We have seen his glory, the glory he has as the only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Sermonette

Hymn 60 Silent Night! Holy 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.

Text: Franz Joseph Mohr, 1792-1848, abr.; tr. John F. Young, 1820-85.

Prayers

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

Blessing

The grace of our Lord Jesus + Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

Small Group — Joyful Joyful to the World