

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

[Please pick up a candle (or make sure you have your Christingle with you) as you find your seat]

Prelude

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Carol

#119, "Hark the Herald Angels Sing"

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King:
peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
join the triumph of the skies;
with th'angelic hosts proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Refrain:

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King"

Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of the Virgin's womb:
veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
hail th'incarnate Deity,
pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel.

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
risen 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.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1739, alt.

Music: Felix Mendelssohn, 1840; arr. William Hayman Cummings, 1855

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THE DARKNESS- CREATION

First Reader

Prayer of Confession

All: Almighty and merciful God, we confess that we sin against you and one another, in both our actions and our inactions. Lord, even though we recognize that in Jesus Christ your light has come, too often we choose to walk in the shadows and ignore your light as we go about our days. Gracious God, forgive our sins and remove from us the veil of darkness that shrouds our lives. Illumined by your Word, allow us to rise to the radiance of Christ's glory. Amen.

A TINY FLAME: GOD MAKES A PROMISE

Second Reader

Carol

#88, "O Come O Come Emmanuel," vs. 1, 6, 7

O come, O come, Immanuel,
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.

Refrain:

Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer
Our spirits by thy advent here
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night
And death's dark shadows put to flight

O come, Desire of nations, bind
All peoples in one heart and mind
Bid envy, strife and discord cease
Fill the whole world with heaven's peace

Text: Latin prose, pre-9th cent.; trans. composite

Music: Plainsong; adapt. Thomas Helmore, 1852; arr. John Weaver, 1988

Copyright: music arr, 1990 John Weaver

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Lighting the Advent Candles: God's Promises

[Isaiah 61: 1-2, Isaiah 9: 6-7, Isaiah 7: 14, Isaiah 11: 1-3, 6, John 1: 14, 4-5]

[Various Readings Remembering the Messianic Promises of the Old Testament]

Leader: Tonight we light the Christ candle because Jesus, the light of the world, has come. Let us proclaim together John 1: 14, 4-5.

People: 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. 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.

THE WARMING LIGHT

Special Music

"A Strange Way to Save the World"

Third Reader

8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 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. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 14 "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

15 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."

16 So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. 17 When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, 18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. 19 But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. 20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Carol

#113, "Angels We Have Heard on High"

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

Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heavenly song?

Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing,
Come, adore on bended knee,
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.

Text: French carol; trans. James Chadwick, 1860, alt.
Music: French carol; arr. Edward Shippen Barnes, 1937
Copyright: Music: 1937, ren. 1965 H. Augustine Smith, Jr. (admin. Fleming H. Revell Company, a div. of Baker Publishing Group)
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[During the 3rd verse Children can come forward for the Children's Message]

Time With Young Disciples

The Christingle Song

The Christingle begins with an orange,
Telling us of the world God made.
For creation is full of his glory;
All around we see his love displayed.

Praise the Father! Praise the Father!
Praise the Father, for the gift of Christ.
Praise the Father! Praise the Father!
Christingle means "light of Christ."

God of love, now we give thanks for Jesus;
We remember his birth again.
But the red ribbon round the Christingle
Reminds us of his cross and pain.

On top o'the Christingle is a candle,
Shining out in the darkest night.
Christ promises to lead and to guide us;
Let us celebrate the one true light!

The toothpicks are here to remind us
That the Spirit gives us fruit to share.
Let us share the Good News of Jesus,
And show the love of God everywhere.

Sung to "Give me Oil in My Lamp"
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Christmas Prayer

Leader: Gracious God, when the world was dark and the city was quiet, you came.
You crept in beside us. And few knew.

People: Only the few who dared to believe that God might do something different.

Leader: Will you do the same this Christmas, Lord?

People: Will you come into the darkness of today's world; not the friendly darkness as when sleep rescues us from tiredness, but the fearful darkness, in which people have stopped believing that strife can end or that things can change or that the church cares?

Leader: Lord, will you come into that darkness and do something different to save your people from death and despair?

People: Will you come into the quietness of this city, not the gentle quietness where loved ones hold hands, but the fearful silence when the phone has not rung, the letter has not come, and the doctor's face says it all?

Leader: Lord, will you come into that darkness, and do something different, to embrace your people? Will you come into the dark corners and the quiet places of our lives?

People: Loving God, we ask this because we know that experiencing what we long for depends on us opening up and trusting you— like you did to us, when you came, wearing no more than diapers, and trusting human hands to hold their Maker.

Leader: God, will you come more fully into our lives, if we open them up to you and allow you do something different in us?

People: When the world was dark and the city was quiet we believe you came and crept in beside us. We ask that you would do the same this Christmas, Lord, Amen.

[Based on "Christmas Prayer" from Cloth for the Cradle, p. 92-93 by the Wild Goose Resource Group, © 1997, 2000 Wild Goose Resource Group, Iona Community, Scotland, GIA Publications, Inc., exclusive North American agent].

THE SPREADING GLOW

New Testament Scripture Reading 2 Corinthians 4: 1-6

4:1 Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. 2 Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. 3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus 'sake. 6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Christmas Message

Special Music

"O Holy Night"

Lighting of the Christingles/ Candles

Carols

#122, "Silent Night," 1, 2, 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,
heav'nly 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.

Text: Joseph Mohr, 1816; stanzas 1-3, English trans. John Freeman Young, 1863
Music: Franz Xaver Gruber, 1818
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Ringling of the Bell

#134, "Joy to the World," 1, 2, 4

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let ev'ry 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.

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.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1719, alt.

Music: Attr. George Frederick Handel, 1742; arr. Lowell Mason, 1836
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Benediction

Postlude