

December 24, 2021

Christmas Eve

We Gather In God's Presence

Prelude: "Away in a Manger" A Medley

Music, J.A.Spilman, L.R. Murray, and W.J.Kirkpatrick, Arr. by Mary Leaf

Opening Hymn: VU 60 "O Come, All Ye Faithful" vss. 1-4

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem:
come and behold him, born the King of angels;
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

God of God, light of light,
lo, he abhors not the virgin's womb;
very God, begotten, not created:
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
glory to God in the highest:
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

See how the shepherds summoned to his cradle,
leaving their flocks, draw nigh with lowly fear;
we too will thither bend our joyful footsteps;
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Lighting the Christ Candle

(the Advent candles are lit)

Enter, with your vulnerabilities and with your whole self just as you are.

We come seeking hope.

Come with your brokenness.

We come seeking peace and healing.

Come with your desire for new life.

We come seeking joy.

Come with your desire to love and to be beloved.

We come seeking love.

We come to prepare the way of love.

Come at God's invitation this night.

*We come to welcome the Christ child. Tonight, hope, peace, love, and joy
are found in a manger and throughout the world.*

(the Christ candle is lit)

Response VU 6 “A Candle Is Burning” vs. 5

We honour Messiah with Christ-candle's flame,
our Christmas Eve candles glad tidings proclaim.
O come, all you faithful, rejoice in this night,
as God comes among us, the Christian's true light.

Opening Prayer

We gather in worship, people of God, to prepare ourselves to hear the song of the angels, to go in heart and in mind to Bethlehem, to see the loving-kindness of our God, the babe lying in the manger. On this night, in the spirit of the God who so loves the world as to take human form, let us pray for the needs of the whole world.

We remember especially those whose lives are disrupted by forces beyond their control.....

We pray for peace and goodwill among the nations.....

Let us pray for the earth, as it longs for the promise of God's new creation.....

Let us remember before God all who are poor, hungry or cold.....

all who are oppressed by circumstances, addictions or by other people.....

all who are sick or dying.....

all who are lonely or frightened, and all for whom Christmas is a time of sadness.....

Lastly, let us remember before God those who have gone before us, whose company and voices we miss, but who, in the grace and goodness of God, still share Christmas with us.

With them, and with the multitude of angels, and God's faithful of every time and place, we celebrate the hope and the mystery that Jesus Christ is born. Amen.

Solo “In The Bleak Midwinter”, Harold Darke

Nancy Quinn

Reading: Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

“O Little Town of Bethlehem” VU 64 (v 1-2)

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.

Reading: Luke 2:8-12

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger."

"While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks" VU 75 (v 1-4)

While shepherds watched their flocks by night
all seated on the ground,
the angel of the Lord came down,
and glory shone around.

'Fear not,' said he, for mighty dread
had seized their troubled mind;
'glad tidings of great joy I bring
to you and humankind.

'To you in David's town this day
is born of David's line
a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord;
and this shall be the sign:

'The heavenly babe you there shall find
to human view displayed,
all meanly wrapped in swaddling bands,
and in a manger laid.'

Reading: Luke 2:13-14

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!"

"It Came Upon the Midnight Clear" VU 44 (v 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 prophets seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold,
when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendours fling,
and the whole world send back the song which now the angels sing.

Reading: Luke 2:15-16

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

Solo "Ave Maria" Giulio Caccini

Nancy Quinn

Reading: Luke 2:17-20

When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

“Angels We Have Heard on High” VU 38

Angels we have heard on high
sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply,
echoing their joyous strains.

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?

Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

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

Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

See him in a manger laid,
whom the choirs of angels praise;
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid,
while our hearts in love we raise.

Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Sharing of the Christ Light

Benediction

May the God of the stable help us to see the wonder of Christmas:

the wonder of children who can hardly wait,

the wonder of Mary and Joseph who feel the power of God's love,

the wonder of the shepherds who hear the Good News,

the wonder of the Magi who kneel and offer their gifts,

the wonder of the ages that God would come in such a simple birth.

Amen

“Silent Night, Holy Night” VU 67

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 Hallelujah,

Christ the Saviour is born, Christ the Saviour 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.