

SPIRIT OF GRACE
Christmas Eve Service with Holy Communion
December 24, 2022

The congregation's parts are in **bold**.

GATHERING

PRELUDE

In the Bleak Midwinter

Denise Hobbs

WELCOME

BLESSING OF THE NATIVITY SCENE

O Lord our God, with Mary and Joseph, angels and shepherds, and the animals in the stable, we gather around your Son, born for us. Bless us with your holy presence, and inspire us to help those who have no place to dwell. Be with us that we might share Christ's love with all the world, for he is our light and salvation. Glory in heaven and peace on earth, now and forever. **Amen.**

GATHERING SONG

Hark the Herald Angels Sing

ELW 270



1 Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new - born king;
2 Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord,
3 Hail the heav'n - born Prince of peace! Hail the Sun of righ - teous - ness!



peace on earth, and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled."
late in time be - hold him come, off - spring of a vir - gin's womb.
Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with heal - ing in his wings.



Joy - ful, all you na - tions, rise; join the tri - umph of the skies;
Veiled in flesh the God - head see! Hail, in - car - nate de - i - ty!
Mild he lays his glo - ry by, born that we no more may die,



with an - gel - ic hosts pro - claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"
Pleased as man with us to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el!
born to raise each child of earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.



Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new - born king!"

GREETING AND PRAYER OF THE DAY

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

And also with you.

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

WORD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 9:2-7

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness--on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder.

For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL: Luke 2:1-20

**Read by Bishop Elizabeth Eaton,
Presiding Bishop of the ELCA**

Open your hearts and your minds to the Good News as it is recorded in Luke the second chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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.

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 Savior, 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." 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 favors!"

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. 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.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SONG AFTER THE SERMON

What Child Is This

ELW 296



1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar - y's lap is sleep - ing?
 2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - ing?
 3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas - ant, king, to own him.



Whom an - gels greet with an - thems sweet while shep - herds watch are keep - ing?
 Good Chris - tian, fear; for sin - ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.
 The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; let lov - ing hearts en - throne him.



This, this is Christ the king, whom shep - herds guard and an - gels sing;
 Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;
 Raise, raise the song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by;



haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
 hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
 joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y!

Text: William C. Dix, 1837–1898

Music: GREENSLEEVES, English ballad, 16th cent.

APOSTLES CREED

With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

With wonder and thanksgiving for Christ's coming into the world, we pray for the church, the life of the earth, and the whole human family.

A brief silence.

Your infinite love is born to us this night. With choirs of angels the church proclaims the good news. Send us out as messengers of the hope that has come to all people.

God of grace,

hear our prayer.

You are pleased to dwell with your creatures and the whole earth sings for joy. Renew the splendor of creation from the smallest cell to the widest galaxies. Guide us to be wise stewards of your gifts for the sake of generations to come. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Your authority is over the nations. Break the rod of oppression in every land and free all people from fear. Bring compassion where there is suffering, healing where there is disease, and peace where there is war especially in Russia and the Ukraine. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

You cherish those who are most vulnerable. Protect infants and children, and bless those who care for them. Watch over women giving birth, attend the dying, and relieve any who are in pain, especially bugs B., Deborah, Leila, and Susan and those we name in our hearts. Shelter refugee families and those who have no homes. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Your lovingkindness embraces everyone in need. Help any for whom this season is lonely or joyless. Comfort those among us, or known to us, who are experiencing distress of body or mind, missing loved ones, or grieving especially the Prasad family and the White family. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

It is Christmas and millions and millions AND millions of gifts will be wrapped with bright colored paper and foil and bows and ribbons. These will soon be gone and forgotten. But we thank you for wrapping the only gift that has eternal value in a manger. And because of that baby boy, it is truly a Merry Christmas. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

You welcome those who have died into the joyous light of glory. We give thanks for the saints of every time and place who have praised you with lives of faith and humility. Inspire us by their example to love you by serving others. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Pondering the mystery of eternal love made flesh in Christ Jesus, we commend all for whom we pray to the mercy of God.

Amen.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, the Word made flesh,
our life and our salvation.

Amen.

Trusting the goodness and lovingkindness of God our Savior,
let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

**God of life, you promise good news of great joy for all people,
and call us to be messengers of your peace.**

We confess that too often we hoard our joy, our resources, and our security.

We nurture conflict and build barriers.

We neglect the needs of our neighbors and ignore the groaning of creation.

Have mercy on us.

Where we are self-centered, open our hearts.

Where we are reluctant, give us courage.

Where we are cynical, restore our trust.

Renew us with your grace and give us again the hope of eternal life in you.

Amen.

Hear the good news:

We are children of God and heirs of God's promises
through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

In † Jesus we are forgiven and redeemed.

Sing with joy, for all the ends of the earth
shall know the salvation of God.

Amen

THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you.

And also with you.

MEAL

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray together.

**God of abundance, receive and bless these gifts we have offered.
Join our hearts with the song of the angels and gather us at your table of
celebration. Strengthen us to share with all the world the abundance of your grace
upon grace, poured out in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. Amen.**

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory, that, beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HYMN OF PRAISE

Angels We Have Heard on High

ELW 289

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.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

We give you thanks, Father, through Jesus Christ, your beloved Son,
whom you sent in this end of the ages
to save and redeem us and to proclaim to us your will.

He is your Word, inseparable from you, through whom you created all things,
and in whom you take delight.

He is your Word, sent from heaven to a virgin's womb.

He there took on our nature and our lot and was shown forth as your Son,
born of the Holy Spirit and of the virgin Mary.

He, our Lord Jesus, fulfilled all your will and won for you a holy people;
he stretched out his hands in suffering in order to free from suffering those who
trust you.

He is the one who, handed over to a death he freely accepted,
in order to destroy death, to break the bonds of the evil one,
to crush hell underfoot, to give light to the righteous,
to establish his covenant, and to show forth the resurrection,
taking bread and giving thanks to you, said:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

In the same way he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, then, his death and resurrection, we take this bread and cup,
giving you thanks that you have made us worthy
to stand before you and to serve you as your priestly people.

Send your Spirit upon these gifts of your church;
gather into one all who share this bread and wine;
fill us with your Holy Spirit to establish our faith in truth,
that we may praise and glorify you through your Son Jesus Christ;
through whom all glory and honor are yours, almighty Father,
with the Holy Spirit, in your holy church, both now and forever.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**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, for ever and ever.
Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Glory to God in the highest! Come to the table of peace.

All are welcome at the table. Hold your hand under the touch-less dispenser to receive a wafer. Return to your seat to eat it. If you would like to receive a blessing only, place your arms across your chest. Please come forward at the direction of the ushers.

COMMUNION SONGS Emmanuel (Hallowed Manger Ground)

What hope we hold this starlit night
A King is born in Bethlehem
Our journey long we seek the light
That leads to the hallowed manger ground

What fear we felt in the silent age
Four-hundred years can He be found
But broken by a baby's cry
Rejoice in the hallowed manger ground

*Emmanuel Emmanuel
God incarnate here to dwell
Emmanuel Emmanuel
Praise His name Emmanuel (Praise His name Emmanuel)*

The Son of God here born to bleed
 A crown of thorns would pierce His brow
 And we beheld this offering
 Exalted now the King of kings
 Praise God for the hallowed manger ground

CCLI Song # 5601640 Chris Tomlin | Ed Cash CCLI License # 204771

O Little Town of Bethlehem

ELW 279



O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!
 For Christ is born of Mar - y, and, gath - ered all a - bove
 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is giv'n!
 O ho - ly child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;



A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by;
 while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - d'ring love.
 So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heav'n,
 cast out our sin, and en - ter in, be born in us to - day.



yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light.
 O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth,
 No ear may hear his com - ing; but, in this world of sin,
 We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;



The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.
 and prais - es sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!
 where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in,
 oh, come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Im - man - u - el!

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835–1893
 Music: ST. LOUIS, Lewis H. Redner, 1831–1908

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

Amen.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray together.

God our redeemer, you have fed us at this table with gifts of grace, truth, and life. As you have gathered us in joy, send us forth as messengers of your peace. Make us shine with the good news of your glory, born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

CANDLELIGHT SONG

Silent Night, Holy Night

ELW 281



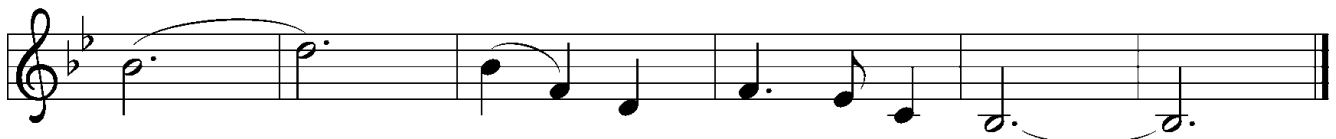
Stil - le Nacht, hei - li - ge Nacht! Al - les schläft,
1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm,
2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake
3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God,



ein - sam wacht nur das trau - te, hoch - hei - li - ge Paar.
all is bright round yon vir - gin moth - er and child.
at the sight; glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far,
love's pure light ra - diant beams from your ho - ly face,



Hold - er Kna - be im lok - ki - gen Haar, schlaf in himm - li - scher
Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and mild, sleep in heav - en - ly
heav'n - ly hosts . . . sing, al - le - lu - ia! Christ, the Sav - ior, is
with the dawn of re - deem - ing grace, Je - sus, Lord, at your



Ruh, schlaf in himm - li - scher Ruh.
peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!
birth, Je - sus, Lord, at your birth.

SENDING

BLESSING AND BENEDICTION

God bless you and keep you,
✠ Jesus grant you grace and truth,
and the Spirit send peace upon your hearts,
now and forever.

Amen.

SENDING SONG

Go Tell It On The Mountain

ELW 290

Refrain



Go tell it on the moun - tain, o-ver the hills and ev - 'ry - where;



go tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born!



- 1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,
- 2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when, lo, a - bove the earth
- 3 Down in a lone - ly man - ger the hum-ble Christ was born;

Refrain



be - hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.
rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless-ed Christ-mas morn.

Text: African American spiritual, refrain; John W. Work Jr., 1872–1925, stanzas, alt.
Music: GO TELL IT, African American spiritual

DISMISSAL

Christ the Savior is born! Go in peace. Proclaim this good news.

Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

Silent Night

Denise Hobbs

Celebrant: Pastor Peggy Rose
Music Minister: Denise Hobbs
Worship Minister: Janet Timmons
Altar Guild: Maggie Rexford
Acolyte: Leonard Novak



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