

December 24, 2023 – Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Pre-Service "Christmas Carols"
By Holy Cross Winds

A Christmas Carol #50 (vs 1, 2, 4)..... "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.

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.

The Invocation and Responsive Dialogue.....(selected verses from Psalm 96 & Isaiah 9)

P: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

M: Sing to the Lord a new song.

C: Sing to the Lord, all the earth.

M: The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.

C: For those living in the land of the shadow of death, the light has dawned.

M: Sing to the Lord. Praise his name. Proclaim the good news of his salvation from day to day.

C: Tell about his glory among the nations, about his marvelous deeds among all peoples.

M: For to us a child is born. To us a Son is given.

C: The authority to rule will rest on his shoulders.

M: He will be named: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,

C: Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

M: There will be no limit to his authority and no end to the peace he brings.

C: Sing to the Lord a new song. Sing to the Lord, all the earth!

A Christmas Carol #61 vs 1 & 2 "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!"

Refrain:

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!

Refrain

Prayer for Christmas Eve

M: Let us pray.

C: Almighty God, you make this holy night shine with the brightness of the true light. Grant that as we have known on earth the wonder of that light, we may also behold him in all glory in the life to come; through your only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

First Lesson.....Isaiah 9:2-7

To us a Child is born who brings peace without end.

2 The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.

For those living in the land of the shadow of death, the light has dawned.

3 You have multiplied the nation. You have increased its joy.

They rejoice before you like the joy at harvest time, like the celebration when people divide the plunder.

4 For you have shattered the yoke that burdened them.

You have broken the bar on their shoulders and the rod of their oppressor, as you did in the day of Midian.

5 Every boot that marched in battle and the garments rolled in blood will be burned. They will be fuel for the fire.

6 For 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.

7 There 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.

A Christmas Carol Senior Choir....."Jesus Came to Dwell Among Us"

Clara McGowan, French Horn

Second Lesson.....Titus 2:11-14

Jesus came in order to redeem us and purify us as his chosen people.

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all people. 12 It trains us to reject ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope, that is, the glorious appearance of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. 14 He gave himself for us, to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people who are his own chosen people, eager to do good works.

A Christmas Carol #47....."Behold, a Branch Is Growing"

1 Behold, a Branch is growing
Of loveliest form and grace,
As prophets sang, foreknowing;
It springs from Jesse's race
And bears one little flow'r
In midst of coldest winter,
At deepest midnight hour.

2 Isaiah had foretold it
In words of promise sure,
And Mary's arms enfold it,
A virgin meek and pure.
Through God's eternal will
This child to her is given
At midnight calm and still.

4 This flow'r, so small and tender,
With fragrance fills the air;
His brightness ends the darkness
That kept the earth in fear.
True God and yet true man,
He came to save his people
From earth's dark night of sin.

The Christmas Gospel (read in unison).....*Luke 2:1-7*

All: 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.

A Christmas Carol #67 (vs 1 & 2)....."What Child Is This"

1 What child is this who, laid to rest,
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet With anthems sweet
While shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing.
Haste, haste to bring him laud, The babe, the Son of Mary!

2 Why lies he in such mean estate
Where oxen now are feeding?
Good Christians, fear; For sinners here
The silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce him through;
The cross he'll bear for me, for you.
Hail, hail the Word made flesh, The babe, the Son of Mary!

The Christmas Gospel (read in unison).....*Luke 2:8-14*

All: 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."

A Christmas Carol Senior Choir....."Song of the Shepherds"

The Christmas Gospel (read in unison).....*Luke 2:15-20*

All: 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 & 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.

A Christmas Carol Senior Choir....."Glory to God, the Angels Sing"

We invite the congregation to sing the Refrain along with the choir

Refrain:

Glory to God the angels sing,
Praises to Christ the newborn King,
Peace be on earth goodwill to men,
Hear we the angels sing again
Glory to God the angels sing
Praises to Christ the newborn King,
Peace be on earth goodwill to men,
Goodwill to men!

Sermon.....Pastor Piet Van Kampen..... Good News of Great Joy: A Savior Has Been Born!

Luke 2:10-14

A Christmas Carol #46....."Your Little Ones, Dear Lord, Are We"

1 Your little ones, dear Lord, are we
And come your lowly bed to see;
Enlighten every soul and mind
That we the way to you may find.

2 With songs we hasten you to greet
And humbly fall before your feet.
Oh, blessed hour, oh, sweetest night
That gave you birth, our souls' delight.

3 Oh, draw us wholly to you, Lord,
And to us all your grace accord;
True faith and love to us impart
That we may hold you in our heart.

4 Until at last we, too, proclaim,
With all your saints, your glorious name;
In paradise our songs renew
And praise you as the angels do.

Offering

Offertory Music

Cindy Natvig, Piano & Diane Baxter, Flute (2:30)....."Gesù Bambino"

Jack DePrey, Piano & Ian Apps, Cello (4:30)..... "Angels We Have Heard on High"

Prayer for Christmas Eve

M: Lord God Almighty, we come before You on this most holy night in awe at the wonder and majesty of the birth of your Son. The Savior of the nations has come, and with joy we greet our newborn King. Let the proclamation of His birth sound forth throughout the world, and give us willing ears to hear and believe the good news.

C: Enable us to share the glad tidings of Jesus' arrival, that others may also join us in praising your holy Name. Into your hands, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who has also taught us to pray:

The 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.

The Ceremony of the Candles *(Please light your candles at this time.)*

Readings of Light

A Christmas Carol #60..... "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.

Blessing

M: May He, who by His incarnation gathered things earthly and heavenly into one, fill us with such joy that comes with the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins and the hope of eternal life.

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.

C: Amen.

Candles may be extinguished.

MANY THANKS - To all who provided special music for this service tonight!
Please join us tomorrow morning at 9:00am for our Christmas Day Worship!

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