

CHRISTMAS EVE

DECEMBER 24, 2020

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH HERMISTON, OREGON



The Promise of the Child – Isaiah 9:2, 6-7 ESV

The Candles in the Sanctuary are lit as our first Scripture reading is chanted
The Congregation is invited to light their candles as well

*The people who walked in darkness
Have seen a great light
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shone.*

*For to us a Child is born,
to us a Son is given;
and the government shall be upon His shoulder,
and His name shall be called*

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

*Of the increase of His government
and of peace there will be no end,
on the throne of David and over His kingdom,
to establish it and to uphold it*

*with justice and with righteousness
from this time forth and forevermore.*

*The zeal of the LORD of hosts
will do this.*

Processional Carol – please turn and face the cross

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

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:

REFRAIN: O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,

O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

Highest, most holy, Light of Light eternal, Born of a virgin, a mortal He comes;

Son of the Father Now in flesh appearing! **REFRAIN**

Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation, Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!

Glory to God In the highest: **REFRAIN**

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, Born this happy morning; Jesus, to Thee be glory giv'n!

Word of the Father Now in flesh appearing! **REFRAIN** Public domain

Lighting the Christ Candle

Family: In the darkness of this night, a Child is born.

Congregation: The birth of a child is a special occasion
meant to bring joy and gladness.

Family: This Child, as human as every other child, is special – He is the fulfillment of God’s promise of salvation for all humanity.

Family: Into a world benighted by sin, sorrow and death the true Light of God is born.

Congregation: Tonight we light The Christ Candle

Family: Saint John wrote: “. . . In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. John 1:1-5 ESV

Pastor: Let us pray . . . O God, You make this most holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light – Jesus Christ.

Grant that as we have known the mysteries of that Light on earth we may also come to the fullness of His joys in heaven;

through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Congregation: Amen.

The Christ Candle is lit as the Congregation sings a capella. Tune: “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

O Light Eternal, Light Divine,
Come shine Your light on all mankind.
You chase the night of sin away
And bring salvation’s glorious Day!
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel HAS come to thee, O Israel!

Verse written by Mark Adams

Pastor: Lord, may the light of the Christ Candle, as it dispels the darkness around it, help to remind us that You have dispelled the darkness of death and sin in the world and in our lives and declared us to be the light of the world.

Congregation: Help us we pray to be Your faithful light to the lost. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

The Radiance of the Glory of God Hebrews 1:1-6 NIV

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”?

Or again, “I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son”?

And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God’s angels worship him.”

Gradual Isaiah 9:6; Psalm 98:1a

Elder: To us a Child is born, to us a Son is given;

Congregation: and the government shall be upon His shoulder.

Elder: And His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,

Congregation: Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Elder: Sing to the Lord a new song,

Congregation: for He has done marvelous things!

The Congregation’s Candles are now extinguished

Oh, that Birth Forever Blessèd

Luke 2:1-7 KJV

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

Carol “Joy to the World”

Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive its 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.

No more let sin and sorrow grow nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow Far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found, Far as, far as the curse is found.

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. Public domain

Good Tidings of Great Joy

Luke 2:8-20 KJV

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, 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, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

Carol “Of the Father’s Love Begotten”

Of the Father’s love begotten Ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega, He the source, the ending He,
Of the things that are, that have been, And that future years shall see
Evermore and evermore.

Oh, that birth forever blessèd, When the virgin, full of grace,
By the Holy Ghost conceiving, Bore the Savior of our race,
And the babe, the world’s Redeemer, First revealed His sacred face
Evermore and evermore.

Δ Christ, to Thee, with God the Father, And, O Holy Ghost, to Thee
Hymn and chant and high thanksgiving And unending praises be,
Honor, glory, and dominion, And eternal victory
Evermore and evermore. Public domain

The Sermon

Offering

The Prayer of the Church

Pastor: The Christmas season is, sadly, a time we often neglect to pray.

Congregation: **We become too busy, too distracted by the glitter,
and too focused on ourselves to lift up our hearts to the Lord.**

Pastor: On this holy night it is good and proper for us to include in our celebration of Christ's birth petitions for our families, our neighbors, and our world.

Men: **We need to pray for those who are homeless, hungry, or living in poverty.**

Pastor: Father, look with mercy upon those who have little to nothing in their lives. Provide the homeless with safety and shelter. Open Your gracious hand to feed those who hunger. Grant the poor their daily needs. Make Your people a compassionate extension of Your ministry and care for the world – seeing the needs of those around us and responding with mercy;

Congregation: **through Jesus Christ, our Lord, amen.**

Women: **We need to pray for those who are mourning, alone, or brokenhearted.**

Pastor: Jesus, look with mercy upon those whose hearts and souls are hurting. Comfort, with the hope of the resurrection, those who mourn the death of friends and family. Remind all who find themselves alone that You are ever-present with Your love and care. Bind up the hearts of those wounded and shattered by this world. Put the words of Your forgiveness, life, and salvation on the lips of Your people – that we, in turn, may bring healing and restoration into the lives of the hurting;

Congregation: **through Your name, amen.**

Men: **We need to pray for those who are living in the chains of addiction.**

Pastor: Spirit, look with mercy upon those who bound by the demons of addiction. By Your gracious power, free them from that which is destroying them. Pull them out of their shame and freely forgive them their sins. Restore their health, their minds, and their relationships. Help us to be a people ready to step in to help, to reconcile, and to restore;

Congregation: **through Jesus Christ, our Lord, amen.**

Women: **We need to pray for those who serve in positions of authority in our country and all nations.**

Pastor: Father, guide all those whom You have placed in positions of authority to be Your worthy servants for the sake of their people. Give us times of peace and stability. Grant us leaders who will strive to be like You and to heed Your holy will. Govern our present days, as You have the past, to bring Your plan of salvation to the world. Help Your people to be good citizens and neighbors wherever they may dwell;

Congregation: **through Jesus Christ, our Lord, amen.**

Men: **We need to pray for those who struggle with mental illness and depression.**

Pastor: Jesus, You were born into this world of struggle and brokenness. Bring healing to the minds and souls of those battling mental illness. Give them strength for the facing of this day and every day, confident that You have not and never shall abandon them. Restore and sustain joy in the hearts of those dealing with depression. Let Your redeemed people share the message that our salvation is secure because of You and Your actions and is not based on how we feel;

Congregation: **through Your name, amen.**

Women: **We need to pray for all of our brothers and sisters in the faith who are imprisoned, suffering, or persecuted.**

Pastor: Spirit, look with mercy upon those Christians who are suffering because of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Give them both the strength to stand up under the pressure and the heart to love their enemies. Move the hearts of those persecuting the Church that, like Paul long ago, they might come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved. Open the eyes of Your people who dwell in physical safety to be aware of our persecuted brothers and sisters in the faith and defend them via prayer and advocacy;

Congregation: **through Jesus Christ, our Lord, amen.**

Men: We need to pray for those who are living in the darkness of unbelief.

Pastor: Jesus, You were born to be the Light of the world. Shine upon all those living in darkness and unbelief. We especially pray for those members of own families who have not yet believed in You. Replace their hearts of stone with hearts of flesh and let Your word dwell within them richly. Help us to be both bold and gentle as we share the Good News of salvation with whomever You place in our path;

Congregation: through Your name, amen.

Women: We need to pray for all of our families.

Pastor: Spirit, look with mercy upon all of our families and marriages. Bless our homes to be safe havens and places filled with mutual love and joy. Move all husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the Church, and all wives to respect their husbands as we honor Jesus. Help us to teach our children the true fear, knowledge, and love of the Lord. May our families be built on the Rock, which is Christ the Lord;

Congregation: through Jesus Christ, our Lord, amen.

Pastor: Let us close our petitions this Christmas Eve with a prayer so simple that small children easily learn it, and yet a prayer also so rich that we should daily attend to it and learn it anew. Let us pray the prayer given to us by Jesus Christ:

All:

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.

Candlelight Worship

O Little Town of Bethlehem

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 wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the king and peace to all the earth!

How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heav'n.
No ear may hear His coming; But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him, still the dear Christ enters in. Public domain

Away in a Manger

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.
I love Thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
And take us to heaven to live with Thee there. Public domain

Go Tell It On the Mountain

REFRAIN: Go tell it on the mountain, Over the hills and ev'rywhere;
Go tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born!

While shepherds kept their watching O'er silent flocks by night,
Behold, throughout the heavens There shone a holy light.
Go tell it on the mountain, Over the hills and ev'rywhere;
Go tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born!

The shepherds feared and trembled When lo, above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus That hailed our Savior's birth.
Go tell it on the mountain, Over the hills and ev'rywhere;
Go tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born!

Down in a lonely manger The humble Christ was born;
And God sent us salvation That blessèd Christmas morn.
Go tell it on the mountain, Over the hills and ev'rywhere;
Go tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born!. Public domain

O Holy Night *sung a capella*

at 6:00 p.m. service: Verse 1 – the Adams family Verse 2 – everyone sings!

O holy night, the stars are brightly shining It is the night of the dear Savior's birth
Long lay the world in sin and error pining Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth
A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn
Fall on your knees! Oh, hear the angel voices!
O night divine! O night when Christ was born!
O night divine! O night, O night divine!

Truly He taught us to love one another His law is love and His gospel is peace
Chains shall He break, for the slave is our brother
And in His name all oppression shall cease
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we
Let all within us praise His holy name
Fall on your knees! Oh, hear the angel voices!
O night divine! O night when Christ was born!
O night divine! O night, O night divine! Public domain

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 heav'nly song? **REFRAIN**

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

The Word was God

John 1:1-14 NIV

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made. 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.

There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him. He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him. Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God — children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

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.

Blessing

Romans 15:13, Numbers 6:24-26 & Isaiah 9:2 ESV

Pastor: May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

Congregation: Amen.

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

Congregation: Amen.

Pastor: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,

Congregation: ON THEM HAS LIGHT SHONE!

Departing Carol “Silent Night, Holy Night!”

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 Your holy face
 With the dawn of redeeming grace,
 Jesus, Lord, at Your birth, Jesus, Lord, at Your birth. Public domain

Created by Lutheran Service Builder © 2006 Concordia Publishing House.

A Christmas Reflection from St. Augustine

(November 13, 354 – August, 28 430 A.D.)

Awake, mankind! For your sake God has become man. Awake, you who sleep, rise up from the dead, and Christ will enlighten you. I tell you again: for your sake, God became man.

You would have suffered eternal death, had he not been born in time. Never would you have been freed from sinful flesh, had he not taken on himself the likeness of sinful flesh. You would have suffered everlasting unhappiness, had it not been for this mercy. You would never have returned to life, had he not shared your death. You would have been lost if he had not hastened to your aid. You would have perished, had he not come.

Let us then joyfully celebrate the coming of our salvation and redemption. Let us celebrate the festive day on which he who is the great and eternal day came from the great and endless day of eternity into our own short day of time.

Truth, then, has arisen from the earth: Christ who said, I am the Truth, was born of the Virgin. And justice looked down from heaven: because believing in this new-born child, man is justified not by himself but by God.

Truth has arisen from the earth: because the Word was made flesh. And justice looked down from heaven: because every good gift and every perfect gift is from above.

Truth has arisen from the earth: flesh from Mary. And justice looked down from heaven: for man can receive nothing unless it has been given him from heaven.

Justified by faith, let us be at peace with God: for justice and peace have embraced one another. Through our Lord Jesus Christ: for Truth has arisen from the earth. Through whom we have access to that grace in which we stand, and our boast is in our hope of God's glory. He does not say: "of our glory", but of God's glory: for justice has not come out of us but has looked down from heaven. Therefore he who glories, let him glory, not in himself, but in the Lord.

For this reason, when our Lord was born of the Virgin, the message of the angelic voices was: Glory to God in the highest, and peace to men of good will.

For how could there be peace on earth unless Truth has arisen from the earth, that is, unless Christ were born of our flesh? And he is our peace who made the two into one: that we might be men of good will, sweetly linked by the bond of unity.

Let us then rejoice in this grace, so that our glorying may bear witness to our good conscience by which we glory, not in ourselves, but in the Lord. That is why Scripture says: He is my glory, the one who lifts up my head. For what greater grace could God have made to dawn on us than to make his only Son become the son of man, so that a son of man might in his turn become son of God?

Ask if this were merited; ask for its reason, for its justification, and see whether you will find any other answer but sheer grace.

