

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Prayer Upon Entering

Dear God, on this, the night of Jesus' birth, please come to me with the power of Your Holy Spirit. I need so much the forgiveness, the love, the joy and peace which Jesus brings. Please fill my heart with Jesus. Please give me the joy of my salvation. I ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Organ and Piano Prelude

A Word of Welcome

Hymn: No. 41, "Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful"

Lighting of Advent Wreath, Invocation, and Responsive Reading

P: We begin this Christmas Eve Candlelight Service in the wonderful name of God the Father who created us, God the Son who redeemed us, and God the Holy Spirit who makes us alive in Christ Jesus.

C: Heavenly Father, we confess that we have often taken the brilliant LIGHT of Your Son for granted. At times we have been blind to the LIGHT of Jesus wanting rather to see the things of this world. Father, forgive us these and all our sins for the sake of the suffering and death of Your Son. Open our eyes to see Jesus this evening. Lord Jesus, lead us to the crib, to the cross, and ultimately to Your throne in heaven. Amen.

P: Rejoice! God declares you not guilty. He has called you out of darkness into His marvelous LIGHT. He has written your names on the Book of Life and promises that you will live with Him forever in His House.

Christmas Creed

I believe in God the Father, Creator of all things, who sent His Son as my Savior. I believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, announced by angels, worshiped by the Wise Men, who lived to suffer, die, and rise again to free me from sin, death, and the power of the devil. I believe in the Holy Spirit who has brought me to faith in Christ, and by whose continuous work in my heart I am ever led to lay before the feet of Christ my worship, my life, my love, to live under Him as my King both now and forevermore. Amen.

Hymn: No. 49, "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

The Christmas Gospel: Luke 2:1-20

Pastor: 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.

All O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie!
Sing: 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.

Pastor: 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."

All **Angels we have heard on high, Sweetly singing o'er the plains!**
Sing: And the mountains in reply, Echoing their joyous strains.
 Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Pastor: 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 and 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.

All Away in a manger, no crib for a bed.
Sing: 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 Children's Talk

Hymn: No. 56, "I Am So Glad when Christmas Comes"

The Message

As Our Gifts to the Lord are received, we sing Hymn No. 53, "Joy to the World."

Prayer

Lord's Prayer: (Tune: "Away in a Manger" LW 64)
Our Father in heaven, all praise to Your name! Your Kingdom among us, Your will done the same By mortals and angels. Come, Lord, reign alone; Oh, hear us and bless us from heavn's high throne.

The bread that we yearn for provide us each day; As we forgive others, our sins take away; In times of temptation, to lead us be near; From evil deliver Your children most dear.

For Yours is the Kingdom, o'er all things your reign. And yours is the power; all things You maintain. To You be the glory, resounding again From all of creation, forever! Amen.

The Candle Lighting: It is requested that no lit candles be dipped. Dip *only an unlit candle when lighting your candle from your neighbor's.* Be careful with children holding a lit candle.

All Pray: Almighty God, on this, the anniversary of Your Son's first coming in greatest humility, we anxiously await His second coming in great glory and power. We remember Your promise of Heaven: "*The* city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its

gates ever be shut, for there is no night there" (Revelation 21:23-25). Your promise was sealed at Bethlehem and on Calvary. We believe Your promise. We believe in Jesus as our Savior, our Lord, and the only Way to heaven. We now ask that, until the dawn of eternal day, You guide and protect us by the radiant light of Jesus, Your Son and our Savior. Amen.

Hymn: "Silent 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, loves pure light. Radiant beams from Thy holy face, With the dawn of redeeming grace, Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

Candles Are Extinguished

Hymn of Thanksgiving: No. 53, "Joy to the World"

The Benediction (Tune: "Oh, Come All Ye Faithful")

P: The Lord bless and keep you, Look with love upon you. Be gracious and cause His face to shine with peace!
C: *Glory to Father, Son and Holy Spirit! The Savior close beside us, God's love from harm to hide us, The Spirit's pow'r to guide, evermore!*

Note #1 --- We encourage the use of some of the more contemporary Christmas songs in the service. #2 --- **For the Children's Talk** --- Ask a Young child and his/her mother to bake a birthday cake for Jesus with one candle in the middle. At the service ask all the children to come forward except this child. With lights dimmed, have the child **proceed down the center isle (with mom's assistance) carrying the cake.** Set it down on a small table. Pastor or teacher give the talk, 3 to 4 minutes. **Then light candle and ask everyone to sing, "Happy Birthday" to Jesus.** # 3 --- Consider giving a bag of fruit and candy to each child at the end of the service. #4 --- **Try not to have any "dead spots** in the service. Keep things moving along. #5 --- Have light refreshments after the service in the fellowship hall. #6 --- All lights should be off for the candle lighting and "Silent Night."