

room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture
ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his

sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748
Music: ANTIOCH, English melody, 18th cent.; arr. Lowell Mason, 1792–1872

DISMISSAL

Together we have heard the story of the birth of Jesus, the Incarnation of God. We have sung carols to the glory of God. We have shared in the Lord's Supper. We have given, and have been forgiven. We have seen the flickering light of the silent and holy night. But now our service of worship is ending, and our joyous service to the world is beginning! Live the love of Christmas as you go and serve the Lord!

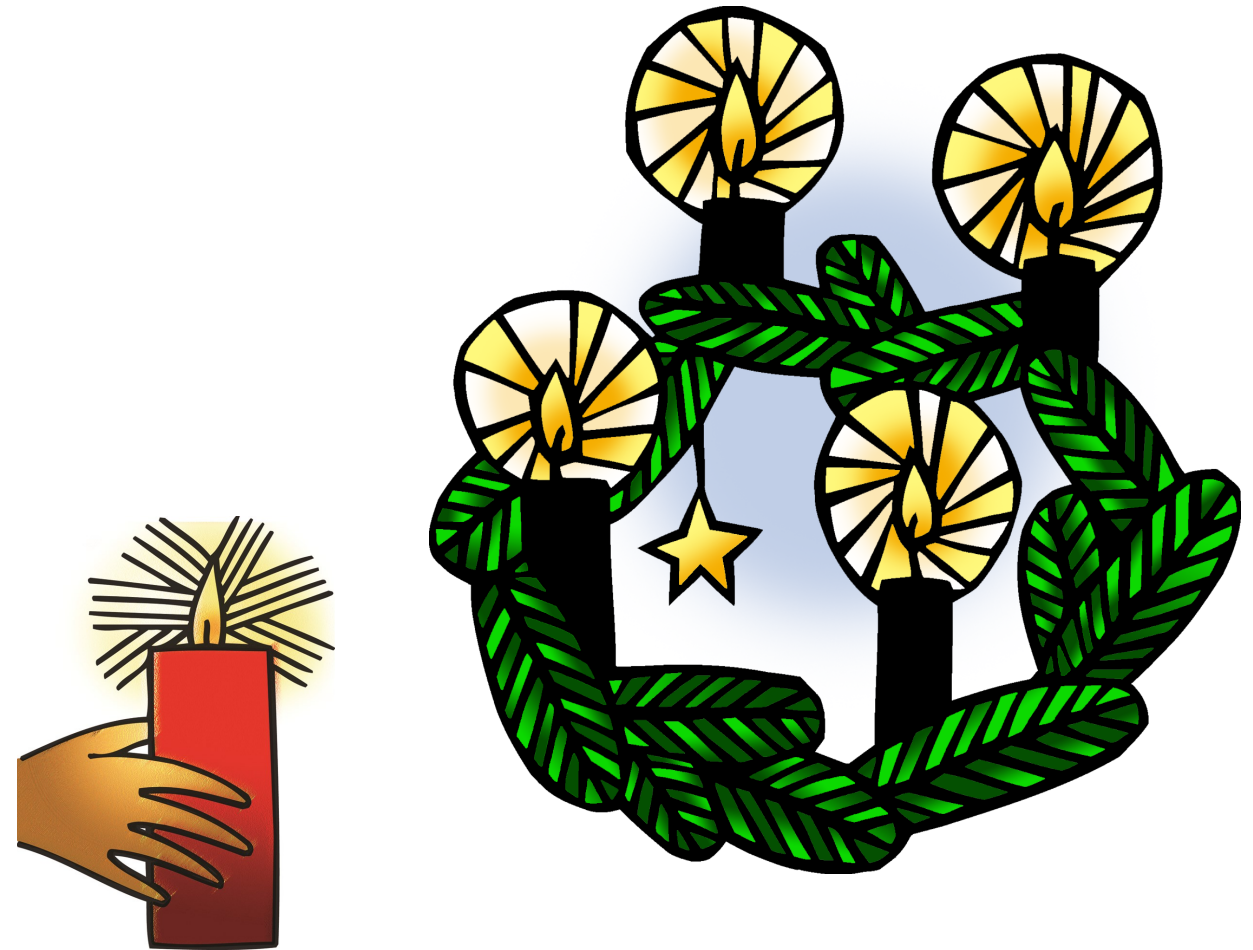
Congregation: Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

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CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE



DECEMBER 24, 2021

On a long winter evening we gather to proclaim the coming of the light. Isaiah announces that the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. In the familiar account of Christ's birth, the evening sky is bright with the heavenly host singing, "Glory to God in the highest." Amid our broken world we proclaim that the prince of peace is born among us. God comes to us in human flesh—in Christ's body and blood—so that we may be bearers of divine light to all the world.

Some Practical Things:

Pandemic Protocols: We expect all those present to wear a mask whenever moving through the Sanctuary and when engaged in close conversation with anyone outside of your household. We also recommend that the mask be worn throughout the service, especially while singing. We ask you to respect the social distancing created by our seating arrangements. We will attempt to keep the Sanctuary well-ventilated; we apologize if the air and noise from outside is distracting.

Restrooms are located to the left out of the doors you entered in to the narthex or lobby; ushers can further direct you.

Holy Communion: All baptized Christians are welcome at this, the Lord's Table. Our ushers will guide you.

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

1812 North Highland Avenue

Clearwater, Florida 33755

Ministers: The People of Grace Lutheran Church

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Pastor: Rev. Jefferson Cox

Those Serving This Evening:

Presiding Minister: Pastor Jefferson Cox

Director of Music:

Organist: Wendy Roth

Communion Assistants: The Deacons of Grace Lutheran Church

Sound Engineer: Mike Smutko



Hold - er Kna - be im lok - ki - gen Haar, schlaf in himm - li - sche.
 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.

Text: Joseph Mohr, 1792–1849; tr. John F. Young, 1820–1885
 Music: STILLE NACHT, Franz Gruber, 1787–1863

BLESSING

May Christ, who by his incarnation has filled us with grace and truth, give you peace this Christmas and always. Almighty God, Father, † Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. **Congregation: Amen.**

SENDING SONG

Joy to the World



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the



ceive her king; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him
 na - tions prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous -

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.

SPECIAL MUSIC

Away in a Manger Arr. Sanders (Handbell Choir)

God Rest ye, Merry Gentlemen (Mike Smutko, vocal solo with guitar)

Joy to the World Arr Kern (Grace Choir)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray. Radiant God, with our eyes we have seen your salvation, and in this meal we have feasted on your grace. May your Word take flesh in us, that we may be your holy people, revealing your glory made known to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Congregation: Amen.

CANDLE LIGHTING HYMN *Silent Night, Holy Night!: Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht!*

The lights are lowered as we begin lighting our candles. Please keep the lit candles upright, and tilt the unlit candle towards the flame to light the candle. As the candles are being lit, the Gospel of the Incarnation (John 1:1-14) will be read aloud. Once all candles are lit, we will sing the Candle Lighting Carol. We will start by singing the first verse in German, and then we will continue by singing all three verses in English.



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,

PRELUDE

Christmas Medley (Wendy Roth, piano)

Angels We Have Heard on High Arr: Sanders (Handbell Choir)

Before the Marvel of This Night by Schalk (Kaitlyn Magee, soprano & Ellen Dupaul, alto)

O Holy Night arr: Hayes (Kaitlyn Magee)

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

This contemporary version of an ancient proclamation places the birth of Christ into human history yet avoids a literalistic accounting of time. The last phrase makes it clear that the nativity of Jesus is not only then but now, today, in our own time.

Many ages from the time when God created the heavens and the earth
and then formed man and woman in his own image;
long after the great flood, when God made the rainbow shine forth as a sign of the covenant;
twenty-one centuries from the time the promise was given to Abraham and Sarah;
thirteen centuries after Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt and Miriam danced in
freedom;
eleven hundred years from the time of Ruth and the judges;
one thousand years from the anointing of David as king,
in fulfillment of the times and years and months and days discerned by the prophets;
in the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad;
the seven hundred and fifty-second year from the foundation of the city of Rome;
the forty-second year of the reign of Octavian Augustus;
while the whole world enjoyed a span of peace,
Jesus Christ, eternal God and Son of the eternal Father,
desiring to sanctify the world by his most merciful coming,
being conceived by the Holy Spirit and nine months of growth in the womb of his mother—
now in our own times is the nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, God made flesh.

GATHERING SONG

O, Come, All Ye Faithful



1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant! O
2 The high - est, most ho - ly, light of light e - ter - nal,



come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem;
born of a vir - gin, a mor - tal he comes;

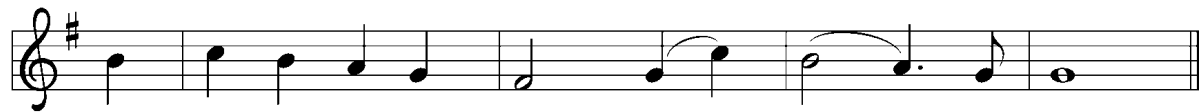


come and be - hold him, born the king of an - gels:
Son of the Fa - ther now in flesh ap - pear - ing!

Refrain



Ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus, ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus,
O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him,



ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus Do - mi - num.
O come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord!

Text: attr. John Francis Wade, 1711–1786; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802–1880, sts. 1, 3–4; tr. unknown, st. 2

Music: ADESTE FIDELES, attr. John Francis Wade

GREETING

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

Congregation: And also with you.

DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.

Congregation: And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

Congregation: We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

Congregation: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

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.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life: Blessed are you for the birth of creation. Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light. Blessed are you for your promise to your people. Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams. Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will. Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, 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.

Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth.

Congregation: Come, Holy Spirit.

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever. **Congregation: Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray in the language closest to our hearts.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

O Little Town of Bethlehem



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



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.



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,



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!

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835–1893

Music: ST. LOUIS, Lewis H. Redner, 1831–1908

CHRISTMAS PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Each petition ends "Lord, in your mercy,"

and we respond, "Hear our prayer."

OFFERING

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray. Good and loving God, we rejoice in the birth of Jesus, who came among the poor to bring the riches of your grace. As you have blessed us with your gifts, let them be blessing for others. With the trees of the field, with all earth and heaven, we shout for joy at the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Congregation: Amen.**

HYMN OF PRAISE

Angels We Have Heard on High



1 An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,
2 Shep-herds, why this ju - bi-lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?



and the moun-tains in re - ply, ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.
What the glad - some tid - ings be which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?

Refrain



Glo

ri - a



in ex - cel - sis De - o; glo



ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

Text: French carol; tr. H. F. Hemy, *The Crown of Jesus Music*, 1864

Music: GLORIA, French carol

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. 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.

Congregation: Amen.

FIRST READING**Isaiah 9:2-7**

This poem promises deliverance from Assyrian oppression, a hope based on the birth of a royal child with a name full of promise. While Judah's king will practice justice and righteousness, the real basis for faith lies in God's passion for the people: The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this!

²The people who walked in darkness
 have seen a great light;
 those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
 on them light has shined.
³You 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.
⁴For 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.
⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors
 and all the garments rolled in blood
 shall be burned as fuel for the fire.
⁶For 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.
⁷His 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.

After the reading...

Reader: The word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

*We Stand***GOSPEL****Luke 2:1-20**

God's greatest gift comes as a baby in a manger. Angels announce the "good news of great joy" and proclaim God's blessing of peace.

The Holy Gospel according to Luke in the 2nd chapter.

Congregation: Glory to you, O Lord.

¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered.
²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph 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. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And 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.

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
 and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

¹⁵When 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." ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

After the reading...

The gospel of the Lord.

Congregation: Praise to you, O Christ.

We Sit