

# Christmas Eve Service – December 24, 2025 - 7:00 PM

Worship words from *Responsive Prayers for Every Week of the Church Year A*<sup>1</sup>  
by David Sparks indicated by \*. Other sources indicated in the footnotes.

## Welcome and Announcements

## A Moment for Reflection

## Lighting the Advent Wreath Candles<sup>2</sup>

*As the candles are lit:*

One candle to remind us of the prophets, the second for John the Baptist, the third for Mary, and the fourth for us. Now, the central candle for Jesus, born today. Jesus is the light of the world.

Mary gave birth to her first son, wrapped him in strips of cloth, and laid him in a manger – there was no room for them to stay in the inn. (*Luke 2:7*)

Let us pray:

**Loving God, we thank you for the birth of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. May we always welcome him into our community, our homes, our lives. Today we celebrate his birth with great joy. Amen.**

## Gathering Hymn “Joy to the World” #267

1. Joy to world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her 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.
2. Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ,  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,
3. 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.
4. 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.

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<sup>1</sup> *Responsive Prayers for Every Week of the Church Year A* © 2019 David Sparks, published by Wood Lake Books, Kelowna, BC

<sup>2</sup> *The Candles of Advent* from *Advent Candle Ceremonies* © Ruth Burgess & The Notting Hill Group Ministry in 1968, from *Candles & Conifers*, published by Wild Goose Publications, Iona Community, Fourth Floor, Savoy House, 140 Sauchiehall St, Glasgow G2 3DH, UK.

### Call to Worship \*

As we celebrate Christmas, we look to the shepherds.

**They listened to the angel voices; they conquered their fears;  
they left the familiar and went to the stable.**

As we celebrate Christmas we look to the angels.

**One angel proclaimed a message of joy.**

**The great angelic choir sang joyful songs.**

**God's glory was heard and experienced.**

As we celebrate our Christmas, we return to the first Christmas.

### Choir Anthem "The Snow Lay All Around" – Christ Lutheran Choir

### Opening Prayer \*

Loving God, the good news was wonderfully, humanly  
expressed in a baby born in a far-off land.

**Good news for those times; good news for our time.**

Food for the hungry, shelter for the homeless,

**Peace where conflict rages,; calm where anger prevails.**

Recognition for the overlooked, joy in every human birth.

**Good news to reflect on,**

good news to tell everyone about.

**Jesus is born, the world is changed. Amen.**

### Hymn "*On Christmas Night*" #274

1. **On Christmas night all Christians sing to hear the news the angels bring.  
On Christmas night all Christians sing to hear the news the angels bring:  
news of great joy, news of great mirth, news of our merciful king's birth.**
2. **Then why should we on earth be sad, since our redeemer made us glad?  
Then why should we on earth be sad, since our redeemer made us glad,  
when from our sin he set us free, all for to gain our liberty?**
3. **When sin departs before his face, then life and health come in its place.  
When sin departs before his face, then life and health come in its place.  
Angels rejoice with us and sing, all for to see the new-born king.**
4. **All out of darkness we have light, which made the angels sing this night.  
All out of darkness we have light, which made the angels sing this night:  
"Glory to God in highest heav'n; peace on earth, and goodwill. Amen."**

### A Prayer for Peace \*

Peace on earth is our Christmas prayer;  
**peace where loneliness is felt, peace amid the noise of celebration.**  
 Peace on earth is our Christmas prayer;  
**peace where conflict rages and calm has been uprooted.**  
 Peace on earth is our Christmas prayer;  
**peace where a friendship is broken and there is no more listening.**  
 Peace on earth is our Christmas prayer;  
**peace where the powerful rule and the downtrodden cower.**  
**"Glory to God, and on earth, peace. Glory to God,**  
**and on earth, peace."**

*(time of silent reflection)*

### Assurance of God's Peace \*

We pray for your deep peace, loving God.  
**Where differences are openly talked out, peace.**  
**Where peacemakers will not give up, peace.**  
**Where a trusted one hears both sides of a disagreement, peace.**  
**Where there is silence and reflection, peace.**  
**Where the commitment to finding understanding is**  
**undertaken in faith, peace.**  
 You can grant us peace, loving God.  
**You call us to work with care and compassion**  
**to make peace a reality. Amen.**

### Hymn "It Came upon the Midnight Clear" #282

1. It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,  
 from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold:  
**"Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heav'ns all-gracious king."**  
 The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.
2. Still through the cloven skies they come with peaceful wings unfurled,  
 and still their heav'nly music floats o'er all the weary world.  
 Above its sad and lowly plains they bend on hov'ring wing,  
 and ever o'er its babel sounds the blessed angels sing.
3. And you, beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low,  
 who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow:  
 look now, for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing;  
 oh, rest beside the weary road and hear the angels sing!

4. **For lo! The days are hast'ning on, by prophets seen of old,  
when with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold,  
when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,  
and all the world give back the song which now the angels sing.**

### **Prayer of the Day**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

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. Amen.**

### **Scripture Reading: Isaiah 9:2-7**

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.

On those living in a pitch-dark land, light has dawned.

You have made the nation great; you have increased its joy.

They rejoiced before you as with joy at the harvest,  
as those who divide plunder rejoice.

As on the day of Midian, you've shattered the yoke  
that burdened them, the staff on their shoulders,  
and the rod of their oppressor.

Because every boot of the thundering warriors,  
and every garment rolled in blood will be burned, fuel for the fire.

A child is born to us, a son is given to us,  
and authority will be on his shoulders.

He will be named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

There will be vast authority and endless peace  
for David's throne and for his kingdom, establishing and sustaining it  
with justice and righteousness now and forever.

The zeal of the LORD of heavenly forces will do this.

Here ends the reading.

**Inspire our understanding, Spirit of God.**

**Special Music** – Hillis String Quartet

### **Scripture Reading: Titus 2:11-14**

The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all people. It educates us so that we can live sensible, ethical, and godly lives right now by rejecting ungodly lives and the desires of this world. At the same time we wait for the blessed hope and the glorious appearance of our great God and savior Jesus Christ. He gave himself for us in order to rescue us from every kind of lawless behavior, and cleanse a special people for himself who are eager to do good actions.

Here ends the reading.

**Inspire our understanding, Spirit of God.**

### **Christmas Gospel Acclamation *"Now the Grace of God Appears"*<sup>3</sup>**

**Now the grace of God appears; Christ is born! Christ is born!**

**Immanuel, God With Us, Christ is born today! *(repeat)***

### **Gospel Reading: Luke 2:1-20**

The holy gospel according to Luke, the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

In those days Caesar Augustus declared that everyone throughout the empire should be enrolled in the tax lists. This first enrollment occurred when Quirinius governed Syria. Everyone went to their own cities to be enrolled. Since Joseph belonged to David's house and family line, he went up from the city of Nazareth in Galilee to David's city, called Bethlehem, in Judea. He went to be enrolled together with Mary, who was promised to him in marriage and who was pregnant.

While they were there, the time came for Mary to have her baby. She gave birth to her firstborn child, a son, wrapped him snugly, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the guestroom.

Nearby shepherds were living in the fields, guarding their sheep at night. The Lord's angel stood before them, the Lord's glory shone around them, and they were terrified.

The angel said, "Don't be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you – wonderful, joyous news for all people. Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord. This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great assembly of the heavenly

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<sup>3</sup> Words by Darrell Harris, Music by Eric Wyse © 2004 Petaluma Music ASCAP and Vine Ridge Music BMI.

forces was with the angel praising God. They said, “Glory to God in heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors.”

When the angels returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, “Let’s go right now to Bethlehem and see what’s happened. Let’s confirm what the Lord has revealed to us.” They went quickly and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. When they saw this, they reported what they had been told about this child.

Everyone who heard it was amazed at what the shepherds told them. Mary committed these things to memory and considered them carefully. The shepherds returned home, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. Everything happened just as they had been told.

The gospel of our Lord.  
**Praise to you, O Christ.**

### **Sermon: O Magnum Mysterium**

#### **Hymn of the Day “*Good Christian Friends, Rejoice*” #288**

1. **Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;  
 give ye heed to what we say: Jesus Christ is born today;  
 ox and ass before him bow, and he is in the manger now.  
 Christ is born today! Christ is born today!**
2. **Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;  
 now ye hear of endless bliss: Jesus Christ was born for this!  
 He has opened heaven’s door, and we are blest forevermore.  
 Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!**
3. **Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;  
 now ye need not fear the grave; Jesus Christ was born to save!  
 Calls you one and calls you all to gain his everlasting hall.  
 Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!**

#### **A Christmas Affirmation of Faith <sup>4</sup>**

**We believe in God, the creator and giver of life,  
 who brought all creation to birth,  
 who mothers us and fathers us,  
 protecting, nurturing, and cherishing us.**

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<sup>4</sup> *A Christmas Affirmation of Faith* written by Nathan Nettleton, posted on <http://laughingbird.net>

**We believe in Jesus Christ:**

**God born among us as a fragile baby,  
embodying both love and the need for love,  
and calling us to rest in God as trustingly as a tiny child.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,**

**breathed into us at our birth,  
always drawing us on to be born again,  
encouraging, exhorting, comforting,  
nourishing our growth and inspiring our living.**

**We believe in the reconciliation**

**of the world to God, through Christ.**

**Hunted at birth and humiliated at death,**

**Christ entered our fearful darkness  
so that we might enter his glorious light  
and share the life of his resurrection.**

**And we believe that each new child**

**is a glimpse of the face of God,**

**a sign of the life to come, and a call to live in peace  
and celebrate living together.**

**Glory to God in the highest,**

**and peace to God's people on earth. Amen.**

### **Prayers of Intercession <sup>5</sup>**

Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need.

*A brief silence.*

God of glory, with the shepherds we kneel in adoration before the wonder of your saving love in Christ Jesus. May we too leave rejoicing at your amazing grace. God of grace, **we behold your glory.**

With Joseph and Mary we journey to the city of the shepherd king. Bind us together as one human family. May your redemption touch all with justice and peace. God of grace, **we behold your glory.**

Light of the world, you made your bed in a borrowed manger. Be with all who are in strange places tonight. Guard and keep all refugees and displaced peoples. God of grace, **we behold your glory.**

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<sup>5</sup> *Prayers of Intercession* from **Intercessions for Years, A, B and C** © 2009 Ian Black, published by SPCK, London, UK

Christ the Lord, your loving-kindness brings joy and gladness to the frightened and anxious. Hold in your tender gaze all who are troubled in any way. May the good news of your birth fill us with your light and truth. God of grace, **we behold your glory.**

Lord, the heavens declare your righteousness. Gather to yourself all who are treasured in your heart and whom we see no longer. With the whole host of heaven, bring us as heirs to the hope of eternal life. God of grace, **we behold your glory.**

With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who taught us to pray:

*The Lord's Prayer* (sung)

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

### **Invitation to Offering**<sup>6</sup>

As it once appeared in ancient fields, the mystery of God's glory shines around us again this Christmas Eve. Like shepherds of old, let us respond with good news. With the psalmist, let us bring offerings of our lives and resources. And may the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice.

*(An Offering Plate is placed on the altar)*

### **Offering Prayer** \*

An ordinary gift, the birth of a baby to Joseph and Mary –  
an ordinary gift with wonderful consequences.

**We bring our ordinary gifts for Christmas blessing.**

Our money will provide worship within this faith community.

**Our money will keep this faith community safe and  
make it a creative place for children and youth.**

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<sup>6</sup> *Invitation to Offering* written by Hans Holznagel, from **Abingdon Worship Annual 2025** © 2024 Abingdon Press, Nashville, TN.



Our money will ensure that the sick and shut-ins are not forgotten.  
**Our mission money will be used to provide food to relieve the hunger  
 of those far from here whose names we do not know.**

Volunteering our time will enable this community of  
 God's people to begin projects,  
**and discovering and using our talents will make the work effective.**  
**Money, time, and talent - we ask your blessing on all three gifts,**  
**loving God, in the name of Jesus, your Christmas gift to humankind. Amen.**

### **Hymn "*Once in Royal David's City*" #269**

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 meek and lowly, lived on earth our Savior holy.**
3. **And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own redeeming love;  
 for that child so dear and gentle is our Lord in heav'n above;  
 and he leads his children on to the place where he is gone.**
4. **Not in that poor lowly stable, with the oxen standing by,  
 we shall see him; but in heaven, set at God's right hand on high;  
 there his children gather round, bright like stars, with glory crowned.**

### **Commission \***

Go to your homes taking along the joy of the shepherds.  
**We will hear God's Christmas message and our hearts  
 will sing out in glorious praise.**  
**We will leave the ordinary behind and search for  
 the experience of greatest worth.**  
**We will tell everyone about God's chosen child,  
 and praise God for the prospect of worldwide peace and compassion.**  
 You have the joy of the shepherds; you cannot keep it to yourselves.

### **Closing Hymn "*Silent Night*" #281**

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 your holy face,  
with the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at your birth, Jesus, Lord, at your birth.**

### **Blessing**

The triune God,  
glorious Mystery,  
holy Incarnate One,  
abiding Comforter,  
✠ bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy.  
Amen.

### **Dismissal**

Go in joy, inspired by Christ to love and serve!  
**Thanks be to God.**