



The Worship Of the Lord

December 24, 2023

Preservice Music

String Trio

Prelude

O Come All Ye Faithful Karen Sawyer
ADESTE FIDELES

Greeting

Rev. J. Kenneth Byrd, Jr.

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

Prayer of Invocation

*Opening Carol

Once in Royal David's City IRBY
Stanzas 1 & 2 - Solo
Stanza 3 - Choir
Stanza 4 - Congregation

*Call to Worship & Candle Lighting: Anthony and Kathryn Engrassia

We gather to celebrate the birth of the one who is the light of the world.

We are here to worship God and his Son Jesus Christ, born this night in Bethlehem of Judea.

We light the candle of hope to remind us of the promises made by all the prophets that God would raise up a saviour for his people Israel and through Him bless all the nations.

Let the heavens and the earth rejoice. Our Lord has come.

~Lighting the candle of Hope

We light the candle of peace to remind us that the Prince of Peace comes to enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.

Let the heavens and the earth rejoice. Our Lord has come.

~Lighting the candle of Peace

We light the candle of joy to remind us that the Lord has made known his salvation and that grace is poured out upon us.

Let the heavens and the earth rejoice. Our Lord has come.

~Lighting the candle of Joy

We light the candle of love to remind us that God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might have eternal life.

Let the heavens and the earth rejoice. Our Lord has come.

~Lighting the candle of Love

We light the Christ candle to celebrate and rejoice that the light of the world is born this night...

~Lighting the Christ Candle (Congregational Response)

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness - on them a light has shined. You, O Lord, have multiplied the nation. You have increased its joy. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given. And the government shall be upon his shoulder. He is called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

Glory be to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to all people of good will. Alleluia!

Instrumental Meditation

String Trio

Still, Still, Still

Trad.

SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

First and Last Stanzas only of Carols

The First Lesson: Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

Ramsey Murphy

The prophet foretells the coming of the Savior

*The Carol

(77) *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus* HYFRYDOL

The Second Lesson: Micah 5:2-4

Rosemarie Evans

The prophet Micah foretells the glory of little Bethlehem

*The Carol

(86) *O Little Town of Bethlehem* ST. LOUIS

The Third Lesson: Luke 1:26-35, 38

Sandra Manning

The angel Gabriel salutes the Virgin Mary

*The Carol

(94) *Angels from the Realms of Glory* REGENT SQUARE

The Fourth Lesson: Luke 2:1-7

Pam Bass

St. Luke tells of the birth of Jesus

*The Choral

(103) *Away in a Manger* MUELLER

The Fifth Lesson: Luke 2:8-16

Sarah Hinton

The shepherds go to the manger

*The Carol

(88) *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

MENDELSSOHN

The Sixth Lesson: John 1:1-14

Nick Murphy

St. John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation

*The Carol

(85) *The First Nowell*

THE FIRST NOWELL

CHRISTMAS PRAYER AND OFFERING

A Responsive Christmas Prayer:

Rev. Byrd

Let us affirm the love that God has for us - a love that was not, and cannot, be hindered.

We thank God for coming unto us; We praise him for Christ's birth into our world.

It was cold and Mary and Joseph were fearful.

But that did not stop the birth.

They were poor and had no place fitting for their child.

But that did not stop the birth.

They were uncertain about what God wanted from them.

But that did not stop the birth.

And today we are still sometimes cold and fearful, certainly poor in many ways.

We often feel that we have no place and are unclear about what God wants of us.

But these things did not stop the birth of Jesus then, nor will they do it now. To all who are open to God's leading, He comes.

Lord Jesus be born in us tonight. Amen.

*Carol

(93) *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*

First and Last Stanza

CAROL

*Offertory Prayer

Loving God, like Mary and Joseph, who trusted in your grace despite their fear, their poverty, their lack of certainty, we offer ourselves and our gifts to you. Bless our offering and hallow our every thought and action, that Christ may be born in us and through us be revealed to those who yet walk in darkness.
Amen.

Sharing God's Blessings: The Offering is Received

Offertory Duet

O Holy Night

Adolphe Adam

*A Doxology

THE FIRST NOWELL

CELEBRATING THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST

Communion Litany

The peace of the Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift your hearts up to the Lord.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Let us proclaim our faith in God and in His son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, our Master, and our Saviour.

We come before him, thankful for all his love and mercy.

A Christmas Confession

I believe in Jesus Christ and the beauty of the gospel begun in Bethlehem.

I believe in the one whose spirit glorified a little town; and whose spirit still brings joy to people all over the world in towns both large and small.

I believe in the one for whom the crowded inn could find no room, and I confess that my heart still sometimes wants to exclude Christ from my life today.

I believe in the one who the rulers of the earth ignored and the proud could never understand; whose life was among common people, whose welcome came from persons of hungry hearts.

I believe in the one who proclaimed the love of God to be invincible:

I believe in the one whose cradle was a mother's arms, whose modest home in Nazareth had love for its only wealth, who looked at people and made them see what God's love saw in them, who, by love, brought sinners back to purity, and lifted human weakness up to meet the strength of God.

I confess the many things that stand in the way of true celebration of God's love.

I confess those things in my life that have caused me to become separated from my God, my neighbors, and myself

I confess my ever-lasting need of God:

The need of forgiveness for selfishness and greed, the need of new life for empty souls, the need of love for hearts grown cold.

I believe in God who gives us the best of himself.

I believe in Jesus, the son of the living God, born in Bethlehem this night, for me and for the world. I believe that in and through Him comes God's gift of forgiveness and new life, both here and in the world to come.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Words of Institution

Blessing of the Elements

Receiving the Elements:

(The Musicians & Worship Leaders will receive Communion first, then everyone is asked to come forward to receive Communion. You will be directed by the ushers, starting from the rear of the sanctuary. Alternating pews will come forward down the center aisle. You are asked to return to your pew by the outside aisle.)

*Departing Prayer (The Canticle of Simeon)

Let us pray:

Lord, let your servants now depart in peace, according to your word; for our eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light to shine for all people and to the glory of our Lord. **Amen!**

~ *Lighting of the congregational candles* ~

*Carol:

Silent Night

STILLE NACHT

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,
heavenly hosts sing Alleluia,
Christ, the Saviour, is born, Christ, the Saviour, is born.

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.

Sending Forth

Rev. Byrd

Christ the Savior is born. Go and spread the good news everywhere.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Clyde Patterson and Karen Sawyer

O Little Town of Bethlehem

arr. Frank Hussey

**Congregation stands, who are able*

The Ministry of Worship

Rev. J. Kenneth Byrd, Jr., Pastor
Blaine Pittman, Director of Music & Education
Clyde Patterson, Organist
Karen Sawyer, Pianist

String Trio

Sanda Hight
Lori Mizelle
Anna Jane Murray

