

December 24, 2023
Christmas Eve: Kneel in Awe at the Manger
Lord of Life Lutheran Church



PRELUDE

Still, Still, Still

Suzanne Bowen

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

There is room for you here.
If you're weary and worn,
or hopeful and patient.

**If you're tired and lost,
or wrapped up in hope.**

If you're new to this place,
or have been here before.

There is room for you here.

The angels are singing,

"Be not afraid."

The angels are singing,

"Good news and great joy!"

So come in, come in!

There is room for us here.

CHRISTMAS CAROL

O Come, All Ye Faithful

vss. 1, 3-4

#283

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:

Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God
in the highest: *Refrain*

Refrain

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

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*

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Loving Christ,
Scripture tells us that you were placed in a manger
among livestock and hay
because there was no place in the guest room.

**The space was full, and yet—
your parents made room.**

Scripture tells us that shepherds arrived
from the fields beyond town.

**The space was full, and yet—
they made room.**

Scripture tells us that Mary pondered
what the shepherds had to say.

**Her heart was full, and yet—
she made room.**

Too often we assume there is no more room.

Too often we choose exclusion and close off our hearts.

Teach us how to make room for one another.

Teach us how to make room for you.

**Carve out space in our hearts to love as you love,
for we do not want to build hostility here.**

We want to build your promised day.

Guide us forward.

With hope and honesty we pray,

Amen.

Friends, the angels say, “Be not afraid,” but they also say, “Unto you a child is born.”

Christ is born for you.

Christ walked this earth for you.

Christ forgives you.

That’s what love does.

It makes room. It offers grace. It learns your name.

So repeat these words of hope after me:

Unto us a child is born.

Unto us a child is born.

Unto us grace is given.

Unto us grace is given.

May this good news change the very fabric of our lives.

Christ has made room for all of us. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC

The Little Drummer Boy

The Kunder Family

PRAYER OF THE DAY

We have heard this story before— the story of a star in the sky and a baby who was laid in a manger. We have heard this story before—passed down in hopeful whispers through the generations. So, this night, as we lean our hearts and our ears closer to you, we ask that you would make room in our souls to hear this story again. Make room in us for awe. Make room in us for wonder. Make room for heartache and compassion. Make room in our hearts for you. Pull us into the narrative, that we might hear the truths in this ancient Word as if it were the first time. For we know that you are still speaking. So, speak to us again this night. We are listening. Amen.

ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING

How does a weary world hold onto hope,
practice peace, spread joy, or know love?

How does a weary world combat cruelty?

How does a weary world shine a light into
our bleakest night?

We do all these things with God’s help.

For tonight, a child is born in Bethlehem.

**Tonight, Christ draws near. Tonight, we light
the Christ Candle. Tonight, we are not alone.**

God is near. Love has drawn close.

Rejoice! For God loves this weary world.

Amen.

HOLY BAPTISM

Carter, Cody, and Oliver McClung

Profession of Faith

Do you believe in God the Father?

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.*
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.**

Thanksgiving at the Font

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Welcome

Let us welcome the newly baptized.

**We welcome you into the body of Christ and into the mission we share:
join us in giving thanks and praise to God
and bearing God's creative and redeeming word to all the world.**

CHILDREN'S SERMON

CHRISTMAS CAROL

O Little Town of Bethlehem

vss. 1 & 2

#279

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!

SCRIPTURE READING: Luke 1:1-7

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

SPECIAL MUSIC

Breath of Heaven (Mary's Song)

Lisa Symonds

SCRIPTURE READING: Luke 1:15-20

There were shepherds in a field nearby, suddenly the whole heavens was filled with angels proclaiming to them the birth of Christ. The angels told them where they could find Mary, Joseph, and the new baby Jesus.

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

CHRISTMAS CAROL

What Child is This

vss. 1 & 3

#296

What child is this, who, laid to rest,
on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the king,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud,
the babe, the son of Mary!

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;
come, peasant, king, to own him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
let loving hearts enthrone him.
Raise, raise the song on high,
the virgin sings her lullaby;
joy, joy, for Christ is born,
the babe, the son of Mary.

SCRIPTURE READING: Matthew 2:9-11

The Magi followed a bright star a great distance to find the newborn Messiah. They wanted to honor this tiny baby who they had been praying for.

...they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹ On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

CHRISTMAS CAROL

The First Noel

vss. 3 – 5

#300

And by the light of that same star
three wise men came from country far;
to seek for a king was their intent,
and to follow the star wherever it went.

This star drew near to the northwest,
o'er Bethlehem it took its rest;
and there it did both stop and stay
right over the place where Jesus lay. *Refrain*

Refrain

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel!
Born is the King of Israel.

Then entered in those wise men three,
full rev'rently upon their knee,
and offered there in his presence
their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense.

Refrain

SERMON

CHRISTMAS CAROL

Good Christian Friends Rejoice! vss. 1 & 3

#288

Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
give ye heed to what we say:
Jesus Christ is born today;
ox and mule before him bow,
and he is in the manger now.
Christ is born today!
Christ is born today!

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 the everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save!
Christ was born to save!

THE PRAYERS

OFFERING

OFFERTORY CAROL

Joy to the World

The Moe-Lobeda Family

OFFERTORY PRAYER

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER AND WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

CAROLS DURING COMMUNION

Lyrics for the Communion Carols are on the last page of the bulletin.

Angels We Have Heard on High

#289

Away in a Manger

#277

I Am So Glad Each Christmas Eve

#271

Love Has Come

#292

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

#282

COMMUNION BLESSING

BENEDICTION

CANDLELIGHT CAROL

Silent Night

#281

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.

SENDING

Liturgy and Prayers are adapted from a prayer by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.

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Communion Carols

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.

Away in a Manger

Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;
the stars in the bright 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 you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky
and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

I Am So Glad Each Christmas Eve

I am so glad each Christmas Eve,
the night of Jesus' birth!
Then like the sun the star shone forth,
and angels sang on earth.

The little child in Bethlehem,
he was a king indeed!
For he came down from heav'n above
to help a world in need.

He dwells again in heaven's realm,
the Son of God today;
and still he loves his little ones
and hears them when they pray.

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*

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay
close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care
and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

I am so glad each Christmas Eve!
His praises then I sing;
he opens now for ev'ry child
the palace of the king.

And so I love each Christmas Eve,
and I love Jesus too;
and that he loves me ev'ry day
I know so well is true.

Text: Marie Wexelsen,; tr. Peter A. Sveeggen
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Love Has Come

Love has come—a light in the darkness!
Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it;
hear how their song of joy arises:
Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior!
Love! Love! Glory to God on high.

Love is born! Come, share in the wonder.
Love is God now asleep in the hay.
See the glow in the eyes of his mother;
what is the name her heart is saying?
Love! Love! Love is the name she whispers;
Love! Love! Jesus, Immanuel.

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

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'n's all-gracious king."
The world in solemn stillness lay
to hear the angels sing.

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.

Love has come and never will leave us!
Love is life everlasting and free.
Love is Jesus within and among us.
Love is the peace our hearts are seeking.
Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas;
Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

Text: Ken Bible, b. 1950

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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!

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.