

3 & 7 PM

December 24, 2023

CHRISTMAS EVE



CONNECT CARDS

Guests and members, please:

- ♦ fill out a Connect card, or
- ♦ scan the QR code to connect with us online

Cards are in the pew racks in front of you. These methods include a space to share prayer requests with our pastors.

We look forward to praying for and connecting personally with YOU!

Serving Tonight...

Message:
Pastor Brad Stoltenow

Musicians:
Gail Black, organ
Sara Zillinger, piano
Shepherd's Chorale
Deb Saline, flute

2023-24 at Shepherd of the Hills
Celebrating Our 60th Anniversary Year!



✠ IN THE NAME OF JESUS ✠

RINGING OF THE BELL ~ CALL TO WORSHIP

PRELUDE

HYMN # 375:1, 3-5 "Come, Your Hearts and Voices Raising"
Come, your hearts and voices raising, Christ the Lord with gladness praising;
Loudly sing His love amazing, worthy folk of Christendom.

Jacob's star* in all its splendor beams with comfort sweet and tender,
Forcing Satan to surrender, breaking all the pow'rs of hell.

*Jacob's star = Jesus

From the bondage that oppressed us, from sin's fetters that possessed us,
From the grief that sore distressed us, we, the captives, now are free.

Oh, the JOY beyond expressing when by faith we grasp this blessing,
And to You we come confessing that Your love has set us free.

INVOCATION

Matthew 28:19b

Pastor (P): In the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Congregation (C): Amen!

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS OF SINS

Hebrews 10:22; Psalm 124:8, 32:5

P: Beloved in the Lord, joined in worship on this sacred night, let us make confession to our heavenly Father, confident of His forgiveness for Jesus' sake.
(silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination)

P: O almighty God, merciful Father,

C: we confess that we are sinners from birth. We sin in thought, word, and deed. We have not always given You the best of what we have and are. We have not fully made room for You in our lives. With repentant hearts, we turn to You for mercy, seeking Your grace. In Your loving kindness forgive, restore, and lead us, so that we may be renewed and live with JOY, to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

P: With JOY I announce God's Good News to you! Our gracious God in His mercy has given His Son to be born, to live, and then to die for you and to rise again in glory. For His sake God forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Be at peace and rejoice in the Lord!

C: Amen!





God Is With Us!

Where shepherds
lately knelt and
kept the angel's word,
I come in half-belief,
a pilgrim
strangely stirred;
but there is room
and welcome there
for me.

In that unlikely place
I find Him as they said:
sweet newborn babe,
how frail!
And in a manger bed:
a still, small voice
to cry one day
for me.

Can I, will I forget
how Love was born
and burned its way
into my heart—unasked,
unforced, unearned,
to die, to live,
and not alone **for me?!**
~Jaroslav J. Vajda

Rejoice,
that the immortal God
is born,
so that mortal man
may live in eternity.
~Jan Huss

SALUTATION AND PRAYER FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

P: The Lord be with you!

C: **And also with you!**

P: We pray: O God, You make us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Grant that as we JOY-fully receive Him as our Redeemer, we may with sure confidence behold Him when He comes to be our Judge; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen!**

HYMN RESPONSE # 379:1-3 "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

**O come, all ye faithful, JOY-full and triumphant! O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold Him born the king of angels:**

*Refrain: O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!*

**Highest, most holy, Light of Light eternal, born of a vir—gin, a mortal He comes;
Son of the Father now in flesh appearing! Refrain:**

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

GUESTS AND MEMBERS CONNECT *Let's get to know each other better!*

Please fill out the Connect Card, either by hand or with the QR code. Thank you!



OFFERING *For giving options, please see: ShepherdHillsChurch.org*

Stewardship Thought:

This CHRISTmas season, the JOY aspect of our 2023-24 theme is: **Giving JOY-fully!**
We celebrate this very night how God gave joyfully to us: *God loved the world so much He sent His one and only Son! John 3:16* How can we give with JOY...JOYfully...of ourselves—our time and the talents God gives us—and our wealth (for we are most certainly some of the wealthiest folks on the planet!)? I'll bet we're all giving JOYfully as we thoughtfully consider gifts for others and carefully wrap and deliver them. We may have given to charities with JOY because we have a special connection to the work they do. Let's also give JOYfully to our dear Lord for all He has given to us—especially our most cherished treasure: salvation through Jesus and the home in heaven He is even now preparing for us!

CHORAL VOLUNTARY *God's Son to Whom the Heavens Bow*

Martin Luther/L.C. Shute

*God's Son to whom the heavens bow is cradled by a virgin now,
We listen for Your infant voice while angels in Your heav'n rejoice.
A little child You came our guest to all the weary give us rest,
Forlorn and lowly was Your birth that we might rise to heav'n from earth.
Your coming in the darkest night shall make us children of the light,
Enabling us in realms divine like all Your angels bright to shine!
All this for us Your love has done! And thus our love for You is won!
For this with JOY our songs we sing, incessant praises echoing!
Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah!*

PRAYER

OLD TESTAMENT READING Isaiah 7:10-14

Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, "Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test." And Isaiah said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel [which means: God With Us]."

RESPONSE

Isaiah 9:6

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God!**

L: To us a Child is born!

C: **To us a Son is given!**

HYMN # 361:1, 3, 4 "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

**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.**

How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heav'n.
No ear may hear His coming; but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him, still the dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel!

EPISTLE READING 1 John 4:7-16

L: Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God,

C: **because God is love!**

L: In this the love of God was made known among us:

ALL: God sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him!

L: In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation¹ for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us,

C: **we also ought to love one another.**

L: No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and His love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. And we have seen and testify:

ALL: The Father has sent His Son to be the Savior of the world.

L: Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us.

C: **God is love,**

L: and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

RESPONSE

Isaiah 9:6

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God!**

L: To us a Child is born!

C: **To us a Son is given!**

HYMN # 364 "Away in a Manger"

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed, 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 cattle are lowing, the baby awakes, but little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.

I love Thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky, and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay close by me forever and love me, I pray.

Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care, and take us to heaven to live with Thee there.

ACCLAMATION

L: The Holy Gospel, according to St. Matthew, the 1st chapter.

C: **Glory to You, O Lord!**

THE HOLY GOSPEL Matthew 1:18-25

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).

When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called His name Jesus.

RESPONSE

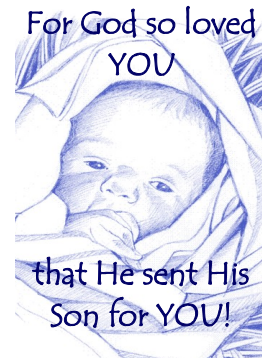
Isaiah 9:6

L: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: **Praise to You, O Christ!**

L: To us a Child is born!

C: **To us a Son is given! Hallelujah!**



Christmas, my child,
is love in action.
~Dale Evans

¹ the act of gaining or regaining the favor or goodwill of someone; Christ is "the propitiation," because by His becoming our substitute and assuming our obligations, he covered our guilt by the punishment which he endured on our behalf



An exhausted mother, unexpected guests— God often interrupts our routine with His plan. So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ~Luke 2:16



A **Creed** is a statement of faith and can be a great outline for sharing HIST^ory of with others!

Christ came as a baby to be one of us, to die for the sins of all, and to rise again to give us the hope of eternal life with Him in heaven. Thanks be to God for this indescribable gift!



The true beauty of this season is that Christmas is a story of hope for the broken.
~Christine Trevino

CHORAL ANTHEM *How Great Our Joy*

traditional German carol

*While by the sheep we watched at night, glad tidings brought an angel bright...
There shall be born, so he did say, in Bethlehem a Child today...
There shall the Child lie in a stall, this Child who shall redeem us all...
This gift of God we'll cherish well, that ever JOY our hearts shall fill...
How great our JOY! JOY, JOY, JOY! Praise we the Lord in heav'n on high!*



STATEMENT OF FAITH ~ THE APOSTLES' CREED

ALL: I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell.

The third day He rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body,

and the life ✠ everlasting. Amen!

HYMN # 368:1 & 3 "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.

Glo—ria in excelsis Deo! Glo—ria in excelsis Deo!

Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing;

Come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn King.

Glo—ria in excelsis Deo! Glo—ria in excelsis Deo!



MESSAGE: "The Wait Is Over! Mary Had Her Baby!" text: Isaiah 7:10-14

HYMN # 393 "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly"

Infant holy, infant lowly, for His bed a cattle stall;
Oxen lowing, little knowing Christ the child is Lord of all.
Swiftly winging, angels singing, bells are ringing, tidings bringing:
Christ the child is Lord of all! Christ the child is Lord of all!

Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping vigil till the morning new
Saw the glory, heard the story, tidings of a Gospel true.
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow, praises voicing, greet the morrow:
Christ the child was born for you! Christ the child was born for you!

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

1 Timothy 2:1-4

HYMN # 377:1 & 4 "On Christmas Night All Christians Sing"

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!

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 and peace to men now— and— for—evermore. Amen!"

CANDLE LIGHTING

*The sanctuary lights are dimmed.
As the CHRISTmas Gospel is read, candles are lit.
Please tip unlit candle toward lit candle.*

HISTory of CHRISTmas

from Chapter 2 of the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid Him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear.

And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great JOY that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!"

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

HYMN # 363 "Silent Night, Holy 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.

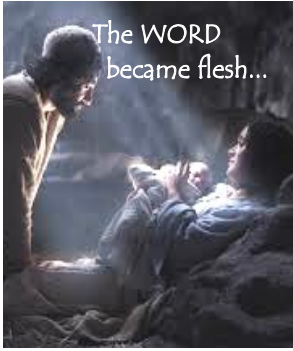
Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight;
Glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing, Alleluia!
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!



Love came down
at Christmas,
Love all lovely,
Love Divine;
LOVE
was born
at Christmas!
~Christina Rossetti



Sing for JOY,
O heavens, and exult,
O earth;
break forth,
O mountains,
into singing!
For the LORD has
comforted His people
and will
have compassion
on His afflicted.
Isaiah 49:13



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.

CLOSING PRAYER

P: O God, You make this most holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that as we have known the mysteries of that Light on earth we may also come to the fullness of His JOYs in heaven; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4

ALL: 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!

BENEDICTION ~ GOD'S GOOD-CREATING WORD OF BLESSING

Numbers 6:24-26

P: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and ✠ give you peace.

C: Amen!

CHRISTMAS PROCLAMATION

Isaiah 9:6; Psalm 98:1

P: Hallelujah! To us a Child is born,

C: **to us a Son is given! Hallelujah!**

P: Sing to the Lord a new song, for He has done marvelous things!

C: **Hallelujah! AMEN**

Please extinguish the candle in your hand.

Carry Jesus, the Light of the World, with you in your heart!

HYMN # 380 "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
JOY-full, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies;
With th' angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

Christ, by highest heav'n adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold Him come, offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, hail th' incarnate Deity!
Pleased as Man with man to dwell, Jesus, our Immanuel!
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

Hail, the heav'n-born Prince of Peace! Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings, ris'n with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by, born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

POSTLUDE

✠ TO GOD ALONE ALL GLORY! ✠

MERRY CHRISTMAS

From our Shepherd Family
to yours:

We wish you
a Blessed CHRISTmas
and a Christ-filled New Year!

JOY

JOY

JOY

Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship 3, 5, 7pm
Christmas Eve Candlelight Vigil 11pm
Christmas Day 10am (no Bible Class/Sunday School)
New Year's Eve Day 8 & 10:45am (no Bible Class/Sunday School)
Epiphany January 6, 2024 | 6:30pm

*Benediction: We leave this house of worship to live out our JOY in the Lord in our life together with each other, our neighbors, and the world.
Merry CHRISTmas!
Go and tell the Good News of Great JOY!*



LORD,
LAY SOME SOUL
UPON MY HEART
AND LOVE THAT SOUL
THROUGH ME;
AND MAY I GLADLY
DO MY PART
TO WIN THAT SOUL
FOR THEE.
AMEN!



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