

Christmas Eve Service 6:00 p.m.

“The Walk to His Birth”

“The Gift of the Eternal Light”

Opening Prayer **Choir:** *“Emmanuel with Joy to the World”*

Invocation: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Offering Brought to the Altar **Hymn:** *“O Come All Ye Faithful”* 379 vs. 1-3
(Sung as the Offerings are brought to the Altar)

Confession of Sins

C: *Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, have mercy upon us. Forgive us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.*

Absolution: Upon this your confession, I by virtue of my office as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Choir: *Christmas Lamb”*

“The Walk Begins”

“Gabriel”

L: The Angel Gabriel came from the Father’s Throne to bring a message to man.

C: *Gabriel came into our world not with his own words, but the Words of the Almighty Father.*

L: The Angel Gabriel was sent by the Father to a small village, named Nazareth.

C: *He came to visit a very young woman, Mary, who was a descendant of King David.*

L: The Angel Gabriel said to Mary, “Greetings, You who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.

C: *Mary was overwhelmed and could not understand what was happening.*

L: The Angel Gabriel explained, “You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; His kingdom will never end.

C: *Mary in amazement responded by making it clear that this could not be, because she had always honored her Lord with her body.*

L: The Angel Gabriel answered Mary, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So, the holy One to be born, will be called the Son of God.” “Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God.”

C: *Mary said to the Angel Gabriel, “I am the Lord’s servant.” “May it be to me as you have said.”*

L: The Angel Gabriel returned to his place beside the Throne of the Heavenly Father.

C: *The walk to the birth of God’s Son, started for Mary.*

Mary’s Walk Continues “Elizabeth”

L: Mary left Nazareth to go to another town in Judah’s hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and her cousin Elizabeth.

C: *When Mary entered the house and gave greetings to Elizabeth, the child in Elizabeth’s womb leaped and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.*

L: Elizabeth proclaimed, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the Child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?”

C: *Elizabeth continued, “As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who has believed, that what the Lord said to her will be accomplished!”*

Hymn: “*Angels We Have Heard on High*” 368

Mary’s Response to all she has heard! Light becomes Brighter

L: And Mary said: “My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for He has been mindful of the humble state of His servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me— holy is His name. His mercy extends to those who fear Him, from generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. He has helped His servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as He said to our fathers.”

C: *Mary stayed with Elizabeth three months and then returned home.*

“Mary’s Walk Continues”
“Joseph- her betrothed husband”
The Light Boldly Shines

- L: Mary, knowing she was with child, had to break the news to her betrothed, Joseph.
C: *Joseph reacted like a reasonable man, he knew the child, was not his own, so he decided to break off the relationship. He showed he was truly honorable by desiring to end it quietly.*
- L: Mary’s walk had become even harder, for now it appeared: she would have to do it alone.
C: *Yet the Lord had a plan, for Joseph as well, so he could walk with Mary to His Son’s birth.*
- L: An Angel from the throne of God came to Joseph in a dream, so he could understand.
C: *The Angel from the Father said, “Joseph, son of David, do be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins.”*
- L: All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said in His Word through the prophet Isaiah,
C: *The Virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call Him Immanuel- which means, “God with us”*
- L: When Joseph woke up he did what the Lord asked and took Mary as his wife.
C: *Joseph continued to honor God and Mary, and made no advances toward Mary.*

Hymn: “O Little Town Of Bethlehem” 361 vs. 1-3

Their Walk Continues
“They walk to Bethlehem”
His Light Fills the Stable

- L: The Roman Government was used by our Lord to accomplish His purpose. The Government demanded that everyone go their “families” home town in order to pay their taxes. This meant Mary and Joseph, both descendants of David, had to travel to David’s home town of Bethlehem.
C: *So Joseph took Mary from Galilee: out of the city of Nazareth, to the city of David, called Bethlehem, to register with her; so they could fulfill their obligation to the Roman government.*
- L: When Joseph arrived, there was no place to stay, there were no rooms available. So they settled for a place that was dry, a stable, a cattle’s stall.
C: *Mary began her labor, in the stall, and the Lord brought the Child into the world.*
- L: Mary wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger.

C: *Mary, Joseph, and Jesus were in the place chosen for them by God, a very humble place, in a very small town.*

L: *God completed their walk not with glorious settings, not with praise and honor, but in the reality of a dirty, smelly, room – made for the housing and care of animals.*

C: *Yet, there has never been a couple with a greater gift, a more remarkable birth, a birth that affected the world in the manner in which their child would. They were given the right to be a part, of the wondrous birth of the Lord.*

Hymn: *“Joy to the World” 387 vs. 1-3*

Lesson: Luke 2: 1-7 *And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, everyone into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, (because he was of the house and the lineage of David:) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and she wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.*

Choir: *“The Christmas Sanctus”*

Lesson: Luke 2: 8-14 *And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone all around them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, “Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign to you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, 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, good will toward men.”*

Luke 2: 15 *And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, “Let us now go even to Bethlehem, and see this thing which has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.”*

Hymn: *“Hark the Herald, Angels Sing” 380 (Acapella)*

Sermon

Prayers

Blessing of the Elements

Distribution

Distribution Hymns: **Choir:** “*A Christmas Hymn for Communion*”;

Congregation: “*We are the Lights in this our World*” (Tune 366)

We are the lights in this our world We shine from His true grace.
We shine because He has blessed us With faith to call His name.
We worship Christ the Savior Born in a lowly stall.
He is our Lord, He is our King, He is Savior of all.

The Light shines from hea-ven a-bove It is a light of love.
It shines into the hearts of men To bring hope from above
His light breaks down the dark-ness It brings to light His grace.
His light is of-ferred to all men His light shines on each face.

His Light beams brightly onto man It grants His hope each day.
To make us blessings to the world. In all we do and say.
We know His light is evermore We know it stems from heav’n.
He brought His light unto us all. The Light, His Son was giv’n.

and **Hymns** 358; 367, 370, 373, 393.

Closing Christmas Prayer: *Holy Father, we humbly thank You for the gift of celebrating the Birth of Your Son who brought His life of salvation into the world. He came not in majesty and honor, but in a lowly stall; lead us Father to honor His name, hold Him before the world, always reflect the hope in which we live, and share the joy of His birth with those who You have given to us. We look to You this night and pray this in Jesus name. Amen!*

Closing Hymn: “*Silent Night, Holy Night*” 363 *Choir 1 and 3, Congregation vs. 2*

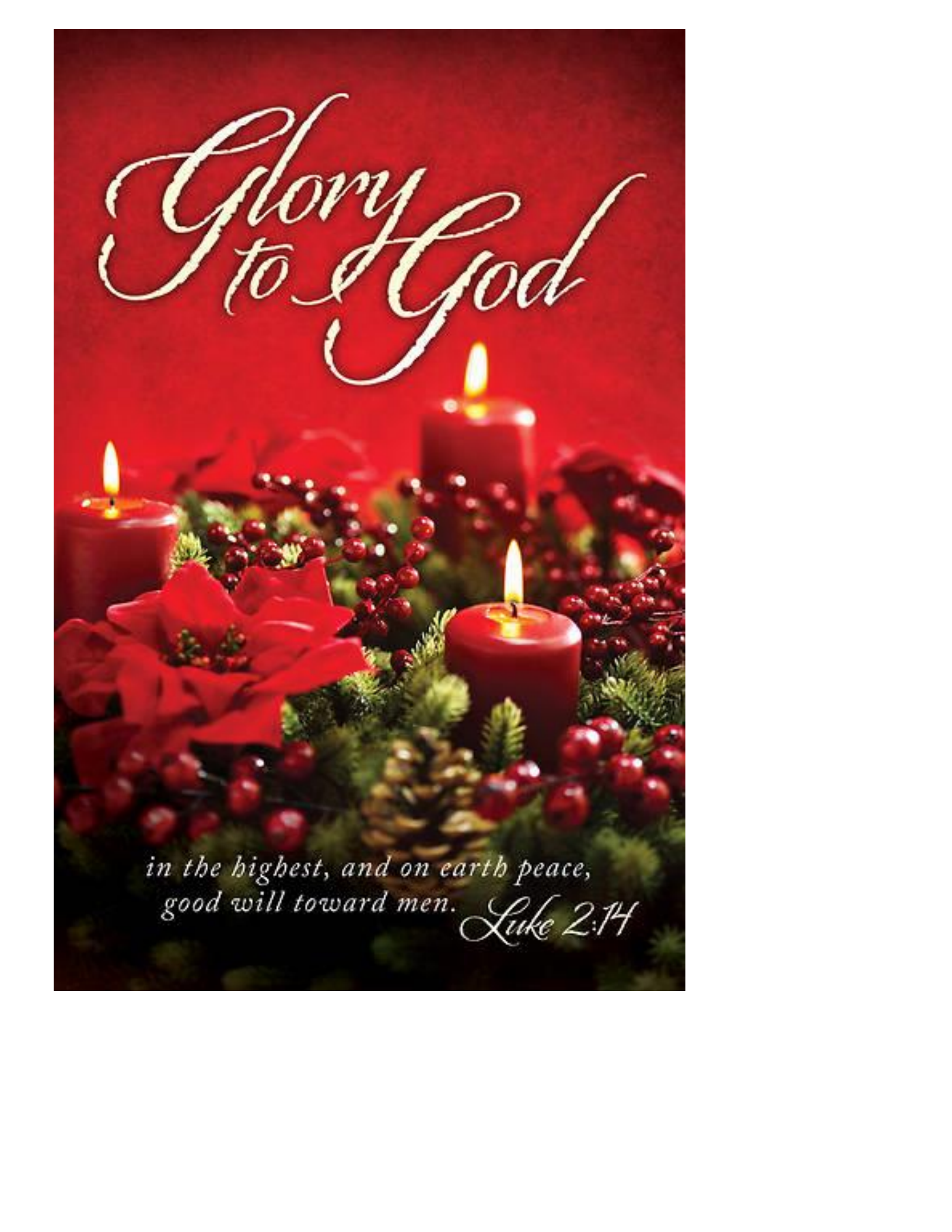
Closing Blessing:

P: May our Gracious Lord touch Your heart and provide You His blessing and goodness!
 May He bring the wonder of His Son’s birth, and touch Your Spirit,
 May He enlighten You and bring you His grace and love.

Choir Benediction: “*The Benediction of Peace*”

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Kirk Horstmeyer, Pastor
Mary Burgeson, Organist

A festive Christmas scene featuring three lit red candles, holly berries, and a poinsettia against a red background. The candles are lit, casting a warm glow. The holly berries are scattered around the candles, and a large red poinsettia is in the foreground. The background is a solid red color.

Glory to God

*in the highest, and on earth peace,
good will toward men. Luke 2:14*

