

Christmas Eve Candle-Light Service
The Baby Jesus-- The Light to the World
December 24, 2023 at 10:00 pm

Opening Prayer

Opening Hymn: *"O Holy Night" Solo*

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

Candle-Light Litany:

P: He came to bring Light into the darkness **C:** *He came to bring forgiveness and hope!*

P: Jesus came in the darkness of night **C:** *He brought eternal Light into the world!*

P: The Father sent His Son into the world **C:** *That on the darkness of sin would come the Light of His grace.*

P: Jesus came in humble means into this world **C:** *Yet the glorious Light of heaven was revealed by the angels in the sky!*

Christmas Eve Psalmody: *Psalm 27 vs. 1, 4, 7, 11, 14*

P: The Lord is my Light and my Salvation; whom shall I fear? **C:** *The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid.*

P: One thing that I have asked of the Lord, that I will seek after: **C:** *That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in His temple.*

P: Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud; **C:** *Be gracious to me and answer me!*

P: Teach me Your way, O Lord, **C:** *And lead me on a level path because of my enemies.*

P: Wait for the Lord; **C:** *Be strong and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!*

ALL: *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.*

O. T. Pointing to the Light:

1. Isaiah 2: 1 – 5

This is what Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem: In the last days the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and all nations will stream to it.

Many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the temple of the God of Jacob. He will teach us His ways, so that we may walk in His paths."

The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore. Come, descendants of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the LORD.

2. Isaiah 7: 14 *Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a Son, and^l will call Him Immanuel.*

3. Isaiah 9: 2 – 7 *The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as warriors rejoice when dividing the plunder. For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor. Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire. For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of His government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over His kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.*

Hymn: "O Little Town of Bethlehem" 361

The Spirit gave John insight to His Light:

4. John 1: 4 - 5 *In Him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*

5. John 1: 9 - 13 *The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him. He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him. Yet to all who did receive Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.*

6. John 9: 4 – 7 *As long as it is day, we must do the works of Him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."*

After saying this, He spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. "Go," He told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means "Sent"). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

Hymn: "O Come All Ye Faithful" 379

7. I John 1: 5 – 7 *This is the message we have heard from Him and declare to you: God is light; in Him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin.*

8. I John 2: 8 – 11 *Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining.*

Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister is still in the darkness. Anyone who loves their brother and sister lives in the light, and there is nothing in them to make them stumble. But anyone who hates a brother or sister is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness. They do not know where they are going, because the darkness has blinded them.

Hymn: “Joy to the World” 387

God’s Promised Light has Come to earth:

9. Luke 2: 1 – 7 *In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register.*

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

10. Luke 2: 8 – 14 *And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Christ, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”*

11. Luke 2: 15 – 20 *When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”*

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen Him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Hymn: “*It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*” 366

The Light of God’s Star, Guides Those who were Wise, to the Eternal Light:

12. Matthew 2: 1, 2 *After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the One who has been born king of the Jews? We saw His star when it rose and have come to worship Him.”*

13. Matthew 2: 9 – 12 *After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with His mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped Him. Then they opened their treasures and presented Him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.*

Hymn: “*Now Sing We, Now Rejoice*” 386

Sermon **Confession of Faith:** *Nicene Creed (back of hymnal)*

Prayers **Lord’s Prayer**

Confession and Absolution

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.

Admonition to Communicants: I exhort you in Christ, that you give attention to the Testament of Christ in true faith, and above all take to heart the Words with which Christ presents His body and blood to us for forgiveness. That you take note of, and give thanks for, the boundless love that He showed us when He saved us from the wrath of God, sin, death, and hell by His blood; and that you then externally receive the bread and wine, that is, His body and blood, as a guarantee and pledge. Let us then in His name, according to His command, and with His own Words administer and receive His Sacrament.

Blessing of Elements:

Distribution: *“Continuous Flow”- one final blessing!*

Communion Hymn: 358

Closing Hymn: *“Silent Night” 363 (acapella)*

*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!*

*Silent Night, Holy Night Son of God Loves pure Light
Radiant beams from Thy Holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace
Jesus Lord at Thy birth! Jesus Lord at Thy birth!*

*Silent Night, Holy Night! Star of God Shines so bright
With the angels let us sing
Alleuias to our King
Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born!*

Benediction

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**Kirk Horstmeyer, Pastor
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