

Christmas Day - 2020
From Heaven Above - A Christmas Day Service

GATHERING SONG: **ELW # 275** *Angels from the Realms of Glory*

1 Angels, from the realms of glory,
 wing your flight o'er all the earth;
 once you sang creation's story,
 now proclaim Messiah's birth:

Refrain:

*Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the new-born king.*

2 Shepherds, in the fields abiding,
 watching o'er your flocks by night,
 God with us is now residing,
 yonder shines the infant light. [*Refrain*]

3 Sages, leave your contemplations,
 brighter visions beam afar;
 seek the great Desire of nations,
 you have seen his natal star. [*Refrain*]

4 All creation, join in praising
 God, the Father, Spirit, Son,
 evermore your voices raising
 to the eternal Three in One. [*Refrain*]

GATHERING DIALOGUE:

P: Who are these angels who come to earth,

C: bearing the news of the Christ Child's birth?

P: Who are these shepherds who run to see,

C: and worship the babe on bended knee?

P: Who is this child, so small, so slight,

C: of whom the angels sang that night?

P: Who is this king, a manger his throne,

C: who humbles himself to make us his own?

P: Who is this God who sends a son,

C: into our midst, the promised one?

GREETING AND PRAYER

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God sent from heaven above, be with you all.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us pray: Incarnate God, on this Christmas Day we give you thanks for sending your Son to bring light to our darkness. Grant that we, like the angels over Bethlehem, may sing your praises in our hearts and our lives.

C: Amen

WHO ARE THESE ANGELS WHO COME TO EARTH?

LESSON: Luke 2:8-14

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth 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 heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!’

P: Glory to God in the highest heaven

C: Who unto us the Son has given.

Carol: ELW #268 *From Heaven Above* v1-3, 14

1 "From heav'n above to earth I come
to bear good news to ev'ry home!
Glad tidings of great joy I bring
to all the world, and gladly sing:"

2 "To you this night is born a child
of Mary, chosen virgin mild;

this newborn child of lowly birth
shall be the joy of all the earth."

3 "This is the Christ, God's Son most high,
who hears your sad and bitter cry,
who will himself your Savior be
and from all sin will set you free."

14 "Glory to God in highest heav'n,
who unto us the Son has giv'n."
With angels sing in pious mirth
a glad new year to all the earth!

WHO ARE THESE SHEPHERDS WHO RUN TO SEE?

LESSON: Luke 2:15-20

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

P: Glory to God in the highest heaven

C: **Who unto us the Son has given.**

Carol: *While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks*

1 While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down,
And glory shone around.

2 "Fear not," said he, for mighty dread
Had seized their troubled mind:
"Glad tidings of great joy I bring
To you and all mankind.

- 3 "To you, in David's town, this day
Is born of David's line,
The Saviour, Who is Christ the Lord;
And this will be the sign:
- 4 "The heavenly Babe you there shall find
To human view displayed,
All meanly wrapped in swathing bands,
And in a manger laid."
- 5 Thus spake the seraph; and forthwith
Appeared a shining throng
Of angels praising God, who thus
Addressed their joyful song:
- 6 "All glory be to God on high,
And to the earth be peace;
Good-will henceforth from heaven to men
Begin and never cease.

WHO IS THIS CHILD, SO SMALL, SO SLIGHT?

LESSON: Hebrews 1:1-4

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

P: Glory to God in the highest heaven

C: **Who unto us the Son has given.**

Carol: ELW #296 *What Child is This?*

- 1 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!

2 Why lies he in such mean estate
where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here
the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce him through,
the cross be borne for me, for you;
hail, hail the Word made flesh,
the babe, the son of Mary!

3 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!

WHO IS THIS KING, A MANGER HIS THRONE?

LESSON: Isaiah 9:2-7

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness - on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onwards and for evermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

P: Glory to God in the highest heaven

C: **Who unto us the Son has given.**

Carol: ELW #272

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

- 1 Lo, how a rose e'er blooming
from tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming
as seers of old have sung,
it came, a flow'r so bright,
amid the cold of winter,
when half-spent was the night.

- 2 Isaiah had foretold it,
the rose I have in mind;
with Mary we behold it,
the virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright,
she bore to us a Saviour,
when half-spent was the night.

- 3 This flow'r, whose fragrance tender
with sweetness fills the air,
dispels with glorious splendor
the darkness ev'rywhere.
True man, yet very God,
from sin and death he saves us
and lightens ev'ry load.

- 4 O Savior, child of Mary,
who felt our human woe;
O Savior, king of glory,
who dost our weakness know:
bring us at length, we pray,
to the bright courts of heaven
and into endless day.

WHO IS THIS GOD WHO SENDS A SON?

LESSON: John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

He was in the beginning with God.

All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

P: Glory to God in the highest heaven

C: **Who unto us the Son has given.**

Carol: ELW #292 *Love Has Come*

- 1 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.
- 2 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.
- 3 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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MEDITATION

HYMN OF THE DAY: **ELW#284** *T'was in the Moon of Wintertime*

1. T'was in the moon of Wintertime
 when all the birds had fled,
 that mighty Gitchi Manitou
 sent angel choirs instead;
 before their light the stars grew dim,
 and wand'ring hunters heard the hymn:
 Jesus your king is born!
 Jesus is born, in excelsis gloria!

2. Within a lodge of broken bark
 the tender babe was found;
 a ragged robe of rabbit skin
 enwrapped his beauty round;
 but as the hunter braves drew nigh,
 the angel song rang loud and high:
 Jesus your king is born!
 Jesus is born, in excelsis gloria!

3. The earliest moon of wintertime
 is not so round and fair
 as was the ring of glory
 on the helpless infant there.
 The chiefs from far before him knelt
 with gifts of fox and beaver pelt.
 Jesus your king is born!
 Jesus is born, in excelsis gloria!

4. O children of the forest free,
 the angel song is true:
 the holy child of earth and heav'n
 is born today for you.
 Come kneel before the radiant boy,
 who brings you beauty, peace, and joy.
 Jesus your king is born!

Jesus is born, in excelsis gloria!

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PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

P: Gracious God, you come from heaven above into the midst of our world.

C: **Fill our hearts with the joy of the angels at your birth.**

P: You come from heaven above to the lowliest of human conditions.

C: **Watch over those in need, the sick, the hungry, the grieving.**

P: You come from heaven above to walk the way of the cross.

C: **Guide us to follow your path of forgiveness, mercy, and peace.**

P: You come from heaven above to become flesh and live among us.

C: **May we see your glory, full of grace and truth. Amen**

PEACE

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: **And also with you.**

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Great Thanksgiving is begun by the presiding minister.

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: **We lift them to the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

P: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
offer thanks and praise to you Almighty and merciful God.
In the wonder and the mystery of the word made flesh
you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory,
that, beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God
whom we cannot see. And so with all the choirs of angels,
with all the faithful of every time and every place,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, holy, Lord most holy,
God of pow'r and God of might:
heav'n and earth reveal your glory.
Hail, hosanna, Lord of Light!
Blessed be the coming Saviour.
Hail, hosanna, Lord of Light!**

(Sung to EvLW #490 PICARDY - Let all Mortal Flesh Keep Silent)

The minister continues with the eucharistic prayer

P Holy God,
Creator of all and Source of life,
at the birth of time
your word brought light into the world.

In the fullness of time,
you sent your Word, born of Mary,
to shine in our darkness
and to make us your daughters and sons.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore,

his birth and life among us,
his death and resurrection,
we await his coming again
when all things will be restored in him.

By your Spirit bless us and this bread and cup,
that, held and nourished by you,
we may live as your children,
shining with the light of your Son.

Through him all glory and honour is yours,
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,
in your holy Church,
both now and forever.

C Amen

LORD'S PRAYER

P: And now as our Saviour Christ has taught us we are bold to say:

**C 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**

P: In this holy sacrament God makes a home with us. Let us approach in wonder all that God has done. These are the gifts of God for the children of God.

C: Thanks be to God.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P: O Lord, our God, we give you thanks for the gifts of bread and wine, the body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ. Send us out into the world to proclaim with joy:

**ALL: Glory to God in the highest heaven,
who unto us the Son has given**

BLESSING

P: And now may the blessing of the Christ Child go with you this holy Christmas Day. Go and celebrate the Saviour's birth. Go and sing, *Glory to God in the highest and peace to his people on earth*. Go in the name of the Father, the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit. Go adoring Christ the Lord.

C: **Amen.**

SENDING SONG ELW #288 *Good Christian Friends, Rejoice*

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

2 Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
now ye hear of endless bliss:
Jesus Christ was born for this!
He has opened heaven's door,
and we are blest forevermore.
Christ was born for this!
Christ was born for this!

3 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!

P: Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus.

C: **Thanks be to God.**