

**A Candlelight Service of  
Lessons and Carols  
Christmas Eve 2020**

Prelude  
Welcome

**CHRISTMAS EVE CALL TO WORSHIP**

P: The Prophet Isaiah said:  
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.

**C: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel**

P: The Priest Zechariah said before John's birth:  
By the tender mercy of our God,  
The dawn from on high will break upon us,  
To give light to those who sit in darkness,  
To guide our feet into the way of peace.

**C: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel**

P: The Evangelist John said:  
What has come into being in him was life  
And the life is the light of all people.  
The light shines in the darkness,  
And the darkness did not overcome it.

**C: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel**

P: God is with us  
God is coming into our lives in a new way  
The birth of the Christ-child is the renewal of hope  
A reminder that Christ will come again  
Keep watch for the light; it is drawing near.

**C: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel**

- 1 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:

*Refrain*

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

- 2 The highest, most holy,  
light of light eternal,  
born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;  
Son of the Father  
now in flesh appearing! *Refrain*
- 3 Sing, choirs of angels,  
sing in exultation,  
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God  
in the highest: *Refrain*
- 4 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*

Text: attr. John Francis Wade, 1711-1786; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802-1880, sts. 1, 3-4; tr. unknown, st. 2

**FIRST LESSON**

Luke 1:26-38

The message of the angel

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High,

and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.” Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

Luke 1:26-38

### LIGHTING OF THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE

CAROL                      ELW #289                      *Angels We Have Heard on High*

1     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.*

2     Shepherds, why this jubilee?  
      Why your joyous strains prolong?  
      What the gladsome tidings be  
      which inspire your heav'nly song? *Refrain*

3     Come to Bethlehem and see  
      him whose birth the angels sing;  
      come, adore on bended knee  
      Christ the Lord, the newborn king. *Refrain*

Text: French carol; tr. H. F. Hemy, *The Crown of Jesus Music*, 1864

SECOND LESSON                      Luke 1:39-45                      Good news for two women

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of

your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.”

#### **LIGHTING OF THE SECOND ADVENT CANDLE**

**CAROL**

**ELW #267**

*Joy to the World! The Lord Is Come*

- 1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her king;  
let ev'ry heart prepare him room  
and heav'n and nature sing,  
and heav'n and nature sing,  
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.
  
- 2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!  
Let all their songs employ,  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
  
- 3 No more let sin and sorrow grow  
nor thorns infest the ground;  
he comes to make his blessings flow  
far as the curse is found,  
far as the curse is found,  
far as, far as the curse is found.
  
- 4 He rules the world with truth and grace  
and makes the nations prove  
the glories of his righteousness  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders, wonders of his love.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

And Mary said,

“My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,  
for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.  
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.  
His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.  
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;  
he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.  
He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

#### LIGHTING OF THE THIRD ADVENT CANDLE

CAROL

ELW #265

*The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came*

- 1 The angel Gabriel from heaven came,  
with wings as drifted snow, with eyes as flame:  
"All hail to thee, O lowly maiden Mary,  
most highly favored lady." Gloria!
- 2 "For know a blessed mother thou shalt be,  
all generations laud and honor thee;  
thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,  
most highly favored lady." Gloria!
- 3 Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head;  
"To me be as it pleaseth God," she said.  
"My soul shall laud and magnify God's holy name."  
Most highly favored lady, Gloria!

- 4 Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born  
in Bethlehem all on a Christmas morn,  
and Christian folk throughout the world will ever say:  
"Most highly favored lady." Gloria!

Text: Basque carol; para. Sabine Baring-Gould, 1834-1924

#### **FOURTH LESSON**

Matthew 1:18-25

Joseph's Dream

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel." which means "God is with us." When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife.

#### **LIGHTING OF THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE**

**CAROL**

**ELW #282**

*It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*

- 1 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.
- 2 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.

- 3 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!
- 4 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.

Text: Edmund H. Sears, 1810-1876

**FIFTH LESSON**

Luke 2:1-7

The birth of Jesus

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

**LIGHTING OF THE FIFTH ADVENT CANDLE (CHRIST CANDLE)**

**CAROL**

**ELW #279**

***O Little Town of Bethlehem***

- 1 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.

- 2 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!
- 3 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.
- 4 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;  
oh, come to us, abide with us,  
our Lord Immanuel!

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835-1893

## SIXTH LESSON

Luke 2:8-20

## The Shepherds and the Angels

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!”

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.

**CAROL**                      **ELW #300**                      *The First Noel v 1-4*

1     The first Noel the angel did say  
      was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;  
      in fields where they lay, keeping their sheep,  
      on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

*Refrain*

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

2     They looked up and saw a star  
      shining in the east beyond them far;  
      and to the earth it gave great light,  
      and so it continued both day and night. *Refrain*

3     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. *Refrain*

4     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*

Text: English traditional

## CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

CAROL

ELW #270

*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

- 1 Hark! The herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn king;  
peace on earth, and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled."  
Joyful, all you nations, rise;  
join the triumph of the skies;  
with angelic hosts proclaim,  
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

*Refrain*

Hark! The herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn king!"

- 2 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, incarnate deity!  
Pleased as man with us to dwell,  
Jesus, our Emmanuel! *Refrain*
- 3 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 we no more may die,  
born to raise each child of earth,  
born to give us second birth. *Refrain*

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, alt.

(during this time, we would start lighting the candles and prepare to turn the lights out in the sanctuary)

## CHRISTMAS PRAYER

P: It is you, loving God, who lights our path with truth,

**C: Your Word, Jesus, is truth.**

P: In his light, draw all to the manger

**C: to gather in wonder with the shepherds.**

P: In his light, draw all to the manger

**C: to kneel in reverence with the wise ones.**

P: In his light, draw all to the manger

**C: to sing for joy with the angels.**

P: In the brightness of his life

**C: cast away the darkness of injustice, poverty, and hunger in the world**

P: It is you, loving God, who meets us on our way.

**C: In the light of Jesus, show the world the way of life.**

P: As our Saviour taught us,

let us joyously gather our prayers together as we pray:

**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.**

CAROL

ELW #281

*Silent Night! Holy Night!*

*English*

1 Silent night, holy night!  
All is calm, all is bright  
round yon virgin mother and child.

*(German)*

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht!  
Alles schläft, einsam wacht  
nur das traute, hochheilige Paar.

Holy Infant, so tender and mild,  
sleep in heavenly peace,  
sleep in heavenly peace.

Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar  
schlaf in himmlischer Ruh,  
schlaf in himmlischer Ruh,

2 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!

3 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.

Text: Joseph Mohr, 1792-1849; tr. John F. Young, 1820-1885

#### **BENEDICTION**

P: Praise God, from whom all blessings flow!

**C: Praise God, all creatures here below!**

P: You are the shepherds telling the story.

**C: We tell it in the streets and across the land.**

P: You are the wise ones worshipping with thanksgiving.

**C: We worship with gifts of song and service, talents and treasures.**

P: You are the angels announcing peace.

**C: We live in joy and go now in peace.**

P: Almighty God, Father, ✙ Son, and Holy Spirit,  
bless you, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

Postlude