

Family Christmas Eve Service

December 24, 2022; 6:00 pm



Welcome

**Lighting of the Advent Candle**

Reader 1: We are Christmas people.

Reader 2: We have heard the good news that a child has been born for us, a Son has been given to us, and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Almighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

**People: We have seen God kindle hope, peace, joy and love in our lives and in our world.**

Reader 1: The centre candle in our Advent wreath is the Christ candle. From this light, all good gifts come.

Reader 2: We light this candle remembering the One who is the Light of the world.

*(Light the Christ candle)*

Reader 1: Let us pray:

**People: Holy One, you sent your son as a baby born in Bethlehem. Give us a strong sense of his birth among us, so that our lives reflect the warmth and wonder of this Christmas flame. Make your church a place that shines with the wonder of your love. Amen.**

Reading: Luke 2:1-14

About that time Caesar Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Empire. This was the first census when Quirinius was governor of Syria. Everyone had to travel to his own ancestral hometown to be accounted for. So Joseph went from the Galilean town of Nazareth up to Bethlehem in Judah, David's town, for the census. As a descendant of David, he had to go there. He went with Mary, his fiancée, who was pregnant.

While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. She gave birth to a son, her firstborn. She wrapped him in a blanket and laid him in a manger, because there was no room in the hostel.

There were shepherds camping in the neighborhood. They had set night watches over their sheep. Suddenly, God's angel stood among them and God's glory blazed around them. They

were terrified. The angel said, "Don't be afraid. I'm here to announce a great and joyful event that is meant for everybody, worldwide: A Savior has just been born in David's town, a Savior who is Messiah and Master. This is what you're to look for: a baby wrapped in a blanket and lying in a manger."

At once the angel was joined by a huge angelic choir singing God's praises: Glory to the heavenly heights, Peace to all men and women on earth who please him.

Carol: #165 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 wondering love.

O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth, and praises sing to God the King, and peace to all on earth.

3. How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!

So God imparts to human hearts the blessings born of heaven.

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, Emmanuel.

Family Time: Who will show us the way?

*Everyone is encouraged to move closer to the front to be able to hear and see this story better.*

Luke 2:15-20

As the angel choir withdrew into heaven, the shepherds talked it over. "Let's get over to Bethlehem as fast as we can and see for ourselves what God has revealed to us." They left, running, and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. Seeing was believing. They told everyone they met what the angels had said about this child. All who heard the shepherds were impressed.

Mary kept all these things to herself, holding them dear, deep within herself. The shepherds returned and let loose, glorifying and praising God for everything they had heard and seen. It turned out exactly the way they'd been told!

Carol #136 The first nowell

1. The first nowell 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 winters night that was so deep  
Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell!  
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.  
Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell!  
Born is the King of Israel.

Special presentation: Twas the Night Before Christmas

Carol #153: Joy to the World

1. Joy to the world! The Lord is come:  
let earth receive its King;  
let every heart prepare him room  
and heaven and nature sing.  
And heaven and nature sing.  
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

2. Joy to the earth! The Saviour reigns:  
let us our songs employ,  
while fields and floods,  
rocks, hills and plains  
repeat the sounding joy.  
Repeat the sounding joy.  
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

Leader: Joni Smith; Rev. Scott McAndless

Musician: Zoe McAndless; Tech Team: Dylan Smith



3. No more let sins and sorrows 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, and wonders of his love.

Christmas Prayer (said in unison)

**I wonder Lord what the world would feel like  
Before you came to earth.**

**Before the dawn of love reborn,  
Before the promise of the baby of light!**

**I wonder did the shepherds feel  
The absence of your grace?**

**Before forgiveness came in a manger,  
Before your mercy was laid in the hay  
I wonder how desperate were the hearts  
Of those Kings who searched for truth?  
Before all wisdom was born that night,  
Before the dawning of a Saviour bright.**

**I wonder just how Joseph felt,  
What a heavy burden he bore.  
Before the promises of a beautiful boy,  
Before he held the miracle child.**

**I wonder whether Mary was  
The first to feel new things,  
Before the birth of Jesus,  
Before she carried the Kingdom within.**

**I wonder this on Christmas eve  
Before the dawn of day.  
Before the celebrations  
Before our Lord's birthday.**

We wish you a Merry Christmas: Zoe McAndless