

Christmas Eve Worship

December 24, 2020

Worship video - <https://youtu.be/ww1IGkJbIVs>

Prelude

"The First Noel"

arr. Lorie Line

Welcome

"A Christmas Gift"

Adapted from "The Night Before"

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Call to Worship

Leader: Come, peek into the birthing room of the Savior.

People: A hospital it is not: no beepers, no buzzers, no doctors or nurses.

Leader: Listen. You can hear the sounds of Bethlehem, a tired country community.

People: The contractions are becoming more frequent. It's time.

Leader: Joseph, without the benefit of Lamaze, beholds a miracle.

People: Tired and relieved, Mary tenderly nurses Immanuel.

Leader: The Savior is born! Let us worship.

People: We worship Christ, the newborn King.

Christmas Carol – *O Come, All Ye Faithful*

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;
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

True God of true God, Light from Light Eternal,
lo, he shuns not the Virgin's womb;
Son of the Father, begotten, not created;
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation;
O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest;
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,
Jesus, to thee be all glory given.
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:

O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

The First Present

Scripture Reading – Luke 1:26-38

²⁶In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, ²⁷to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. ²⁸Gabriel appeared to her and said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!"²⁹ Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. ³⁰"Don't be afraid, Mary," the angel told her, "for you have found favor with God! ³¹You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!"³⁴ Mary asked the angel, "But how can this happen? I am a virgin."³⁵ The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God. ³⁶What's more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People used to say she was barren, but she has conceived a son and is now in her sixth month. ³⁷For the word of God will never fail."³⁸ Mary responded, "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true." And then the angel left her.

Meditation – "The First Christmas After"

Lighting of the Advent Candle – Candle of Faith

Christmas Prayer

In the midst of the pain, Lord, it is difficult to hear the angels sing. Yet, the words of the Christmas carol remind us of God and sinners being reconciled. Give us the faith to embrace your offer of peace. Help us to be sensitive to those who struggle with this first Christmas after. May you come as the Prince of Peace we so desperately need. Amen.

Christmas Carol - *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King:
peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
join the triumph of the skies;
with th'angelic hosts proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King"

Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,

offspring of the Virgin's womb:
veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
hail th'incarnate Deity,
pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel.
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King"

3 Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King"

The Second Present

Scripture Reading – Luke 1:39-45

³⁹A few days later Mary hurried to the hill country of Judea, to the town ⁴⁰where Zechariah lived. She entered the house and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹At the sound of Mary's greeting, Elizabeth's child leaped within her, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴²Elizabeth gave a glad cry and exclaimed to Mary, "God has blessed you above all women, and your child is blessed. ⁴³Why am I so honored, that the mother of my Lord should visit me? ⁴⁴When I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy. ⁴⁵You are blessed because you believed that the Lord would do what he said."

Meditation – "A Christmas Question"

Lighting of the Advent Candle – Candle of Hope

Christmas Prayer

Precious Lord, forgive us where our actions and words deny the hope that people desire. For we, too, long for a reason to hope. And then, in all our hopelessness, you come to us through the Holy Child of Bethlehem. Give us the grace not only to receive this gift of hope but to share it with others as well, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Christmas Carol - *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

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.

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—let "Glory!" ring
with peace to all on earth!

How silently, how silently,
the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of the heav'ns.
No ear may hear his coming,
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still
the dear Christ enters in.

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.
O come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Emmanuel.

The Third Present

Scripture Reading – Luke 2:1-7

At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. ² (This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³ All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census. ⁴ And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. ⁵ He took with him Mary, to whom he was engaged, who was now expecting a child. ⁶ And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. ⁷ She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.

Meditation – "A Christmas Bag"

Lighting of the Advent Candle – Candle of Love

Christmas Prayer

Love came down at Christmas, O God, so we may come home. Help us let go of the things that we bag up and that prevent us from coming home: the anger, the bitterness, the grudges, or the desire for revenge. Enable us to have a bag filled with forgiving love as we carry the Christmas story with us and share it with others, in the name of Christ we pray. Amen.

Special Music

Go Tell it on the Mountain

Lisa Fouts

The Fourth Present

Scripture Reading – Luke 2:8-12

⁸That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. ⁹Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord’s glory surrounded them. They were terrified, ¹⁰but the angel reassured them. “Don’t be afraid!” he said. “I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. ¹¹The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! ¹²And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger.”

Meditation – “A Christmas Quest”

Lighting of the Advent Candle – Candle of Joy

Christmas Prayer

Almighty God, how often we are disappointed when Christmas fails to live up to expectations. Forgive us, for we are quick to see what it isn’t instead of seeing the miracle that is: the coming of the Christ! Help us to be captivated by the joy of Immanuel, of having God with us! For it is in his name that we pray. Amen.

Christmas Carol - *Joy to the World*

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive its 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.

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.

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.

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.

The Fifth Present

Scripture Reading – Luke 2:13-20

¹³ Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, ¹⁴ “Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.”¹⁵ When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, “Let’s go to Bethlehem! Let’s see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”¹⁶ They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. ¹⁷ After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. ¹⁸ All who heard the shepherds’ story were astonished, ¹⁹ but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often. ²⁰ The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them.

Meditation – “A Christmas Fiction”

Lighting of the Advent Candle – The Christ Candle

Christmas Prayer

What child is this who can make God real to our hearts? Who can take us beyond the fictions of Christmas and usher us into the very presence of God? Lord, we long for the reality of Christmas. It’s so easy to get caught up in the busyness of it all that we miss you! Forgive us, we ask, and renew the true meaning of Christmas in our hearts. Amen.

Christmas Carol - *What Child is This*

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!

Why lies He in such mean estate,
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear: for sinners here
The silent Word is pleading.
This, this is Christ, the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:

Haste, haste to bring Him laud,
The Babe, the Son of Mary!

So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh,
Come, peasant, king to own Him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.
This, this is Christ, the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,
The Babe, the Son of Mary!

Presenting Our Present

Invitation and Prayer

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son. We invite you to continue that mission of sharing Jesus with our world by mailing in your Christmas offering to the church office.

Let us pray: From deep within the recesses of your heart, O Lord, your love came to us that first Christmas. The joy of Immanuel, of God with us, is for all the world. So, move in our hearts that through our gifts and offerings many may hear the good news of Jesus, our Savior. Amen.

Special Music

Welcome to our World

Lisa Fouts

Lighting of the Christmas Candles

Jesus, born in Bethlehem, is the light of the world. So it is that our light comes from the light of Christ. As we share the good news of Jesus then light spreads. We invite you to light your candles in your homes as we sing together, Silent Night.

Christmas Carol - *Silent Night*

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,
heav'nly hosts sing, "Alleluia!
Christ the Savior is born,
Christ the Savior is born!"

Silent night, holy night!
Son of God, love's 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!
Wondrous star, lend thy light.
With the angels let us sing
"Alleluia" to our King,
"Christ the Savior is born,
Christ the Savior is born."

Benediction

Postlude

"Joy to the World/Hark the Herald Angels"

arr. Jason Tonioli