

Prepare a Place

A Service for Christmas Eve

Order of Service

Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. Luke 2:12

Pre-Service Music

Invocation and Call to Worship

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C Amen.

P Prepare the way of the Lord! Make straight in the desert a highway for our God!

C To us a child is born.

P To us a Son is given.

C And the government will be on his shoulders.

P And he will be called—

C Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

P For unto you is born today in the city of David—

C A Savior, who is Christ the Lord!

Hymn Angels from the Realms of Glory

Angels from the realms of glory, wing your flight o'er all the earth;^[SEP]Ye who sang creation's story, now proclaim Messiah's birth.^[SEP]Come and worship; come and worship; worship Christ, the newborn King.

Shepherds in the field abiding, watching o'er your flocks by night,^[SEP]God with us is now residing, yonder shines the Infant Light.^[SEP]Come and worship; come and worship; worship Christ, the newborn King.

Sages, leave your contemplations; brighter visions beam afar;^[SEP]Seek the great Desire of nations,

ye have seen his natal star:^{[[SEP]]}Come and worship, come and worship; worship Christ, the newborn King.

Saints, before the altar bending, watching long in hope and fear,^{[[SEP]]}Suddenly the Lord, descending, in his temple shall appear:^{[[SEP]]}Come and worship, come and worship; worship Christ, the newborn King.

Confession and Absolution

P On this holy night, merciful Father, hear our confession, for frequently we hesitate to take your Son.

C Instead we take the forbidden fruit, like Adam and Eve, and hide behind the bushes.

P We take advantage of others, while mouthing pious words.

C We take your blessings for granted, living with thankless hearts.

P We take vengeance upon those who hurt us, promising retaliation.

C We take life into our own hands, ignoring your holy will.

P We take refuge and satisfaction in sin, spurning your commandments.

C We take hold of our possessions, refusing to let them go.

P We take part in sinful conversations, oblivious as to how they break your heart.

C Lord, have mercy! Christ, have mercy! Lord, have mercy!

P Luke writes in tonight's gospel lesson, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11). Jesus your Savior took your place in the manger and upon the cross. As the Christ and Lord, Jesus took all of your sin, shame and brokenness. I announce to you the complete and full pardon of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. For unto you is born today in the city of David—

C A Savior, who is Christ the Lord!

Prayer of the Day

Musical Reflection: "What Child Is This" by Jonathan Neumueller

Old Testament Reading ... Isaiah 9:2-7

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. For

the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God!

Epistle Reading ... 2 Corinthians 4:5-6

For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God!

Gospel Reading ... Luke 2:1-20

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, 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, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another,

Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God!

Hymn ... Angels We Have Heard on High

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,^{[[]]}And the mountains in reply,^{[[]]}
echoing their joyous strains.^{[[]]}Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?^{[[]]}What the gladsome tidings be?^{[[]]}
Which inspire your heav'nly songs?^{[[]]}Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing;^{[[]]}Come, adore on bended knee,^{[[]]}
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.^{[[]]}Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Sermon

Whoever Takes The Son Gets It All! Luke 2:1-20

Musical Reflection “Angels We Have Heard On High” by Jonathan Neumueller

Prayers

P Dear Lord Jesus, you came from eternity into time and space—not as a metaphor or myth, fable or tale—but to bear our sin and be our Savior. We sing to you with all the humility and joy we can muster, “Born that man no more may die, born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth.” We praise, bless and adore you as we embrace the hymn of the angels. For unto you is born today in the city of David—

C A Savior, who is Christ the Lord!

P Dear Lord Jesus, we thank you that Luke took such great care to detail the history of your birth—one of the greatest details is the lowliness of your birth. Any other king—like Caesar Augustus—would’ve come with great fanfare and a royal entourage. But you came into our

world in profound weakness. “No room in the inn” wasn’t an insult to you; it was your choice, your plan, the way of the gospel. We rejoice with the angels who announced: For unto you is born today in the city of David—

C A Savior, who is Christ the Lord!

P Dear Lord Jesus, you didn’t consider equality with God something to be protected or hoarded. Rather, you made yourself nothing, becoming one of us. And with measureless love and indescribable compassion, you died in our place upon the cross. Thank you for these angelic lyrics. For unto you is born today in the city of David—

C A Savior, who is Christ the Lord!

P Dear Lord Jesus, we long for the Day when every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that you are Lord, to the glory of God the Father. But on this Christmas Eve, we humble ourselves, in quietness and stillness, gratefulness and peace. We pray in your merciful and mighty name, Jesus.

C Amen.

Lord’s Prayer

The Lighting of the Candles

Hymn ... Silent Night

Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright^[1]Round yon virgin mother and child. Holy Infant, so tender and mild,^[SEP]Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight;^[1]Glories stream from heaven afar, heav’nly hosts sing, Alleluia!^[SEP]Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!

Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love’s pure light^[1]Radiant beams from thy holy face with the dawn of redeeming grace,^[SEP]Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

Benediction

P Prepare the way of the Lord! Make straight in the desert a highway for our God!

C For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness”—

P Has shone in our hearts.

C To give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God—

P In the face of Jesus Christ.

C For unto us is born today in the city of David—a Savior, who is Christ the Lord!

Hymn ... Joy to the World

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.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let men 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.