

# WORSHIP SERVICE

December 24, 2024

Christmas Eve

Prelude

Welcome

\* God's Greeting

\* We Greet One Another

\* Call to Worship: Promises

*Speaker 1: In days of old, God's promises began with almost a whisper to one old man and his wife. "I am God Almighty; walk before me faithfully and be blameless... I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you."*

**All: Many generations later, God's prophets became more specific about a Savior who would come:**

*Speaker 2: "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord—and he will delight in the fear of the Lord." (Isaiah 11:1-3)*

**All: And the promises took on even greater dimensions:**

*Speaker 3: "Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. (Isaiah 9:7)*

**All: God's plan is bigger than all of us, but it applies to each of us. It will save the world, and yet, it can encourage each of our hearts.**

\* Opening Song: "O Come All Ye Faithful"      Lift Up Your Hearts #76

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!

God of God, Light of Light eternal,

lo he abhors 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;

sing, all ye citizens of heav'n 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 giv'n!  
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!

**All: The promise is fulfilled through a humble young couple:**

*Speaker 1:* Luke 1:26-38, 46-49

### **The Birth of Jesus Foretold**

<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

<sup>29</sup> Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup> But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

<sup>34</sup> "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

<sup>35</sup> The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called<sup>[a]</sup> the Son of God. <sup>36</sup> Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. <sup>37</sup> For no word from God will ever fail."

<sup>38</sup> "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

### **Mary's Song**

<sup>46</sup> And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord <sup>47</sup> and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, <sup>48</sup> for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, <sup>49</sup> for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name.

*Speaker 2: Her husband, Joseph, was a carpenter. He was good man, wanting to do the right thing. Then an angel came to him and explained that Mary had not been unfaithful, but her son was from God himself, and destined to save their people. Though probably as overwhelmed as Mary, Joseph also followed God's leading, taking care of Mary and her child.*

Song: "What Child Is This"                      Lift Up Your Hearts #95

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.  
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, The cross be borne for me, for you  
Hail Hail for Word made flesh 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.  
Raise, Raise the song on high, The virgin sings her lullaby  
Joy, joy for Christ is born The babe, the son of Mary

**All: The Savior of the world arrives in a humble birth:**

*Speaker 3: This most important child would come to a poor young couple instead of  
an important ruler.                      Even his birth was in the humblest of conditions.*

*Speaker 1: Luke 2:1-7*

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be  
taken of the entire Roman world. <sup>2</sup>(This was the first census that took  
place while<sup>[a]</sup> Quirinius was governor of Syria.) <sup>3</sup> And everyone went to  
their own town to register.

<sup>4</sup> So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to  
Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line  
of David. <sup>5</sup> He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be  
married to him and was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time  
came for the baby to be born, <sup>7</sup> and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son.  
She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was  
no guest room available for them.

Song: "Away in a Manger"

Lift Up Your Hearts #86

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,  
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head:  
the stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay;  
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.  
The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,  
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.  
I love you, Lord Jesus: look down from the sky  
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.  
Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay  
close by me forever and love me, I pray.

Bless all the dear children in your tender care;  
prepare us for heaven to live with you there.

**All: The majestic birth announcement is made to humble shepherds:**

*Speaker 2: After Jesus' birth, angels came to spread the news. But they did not announce it to Caesar Augustus or King Herod; not to military leaders, religious leaders, or even local officials. Instead, they appeared to a group of blue-collar guys working the night shift outdoors, tending sheep.*

*Speaker 3: Luke 2:8-14*

<sup>8</sup> And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. <sup>9</sup> An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. <sup>11</sup> Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup> This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup> Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

Song: "Angels We Have Heard on High" Lift Up Your Hearts #82

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 song?  
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 new-born King.  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Good News in a Brown Paper Wrapping

Luke 2:15-20

<sup>15</sup> When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

<sup>16</sup> So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup> When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, <sup>18</sup> and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

## Meditation

Song of Response: "O Holy Night" (insert)

The stars are brightly shining,  
It is the night of the dear Savior's birth;  
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,  
Till he appear'd and the soul felt its worth.  
A thrill of hope the weary soul rejoices,  
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!  
Fall on your knees,  
O hear the angel voices!  
O night divine,  
O night when Christ was born!  
O night, O holy night,  
O night divine!  
Led by the light of Faith serenely beaming,  
With glowing hearts by His cradle we stand;  
So led by light of a star sweetly gleaming,  
Here come the wise men from Orient land.  
The King of Kings lay thus in lowly manger,  
In all our trials born to be our friend;  
He knows our need to our weakness is no stranger,  
Behold your King, before Him lowly bend!  
Behold your King, before Him lowly bend!  
Truly He taught us to love one another;  
His law is love and His gospel is peace;  
Chains shall He , for the slave is our brother,  
And in His name all oppression shall cease.  
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we,  
Let all within us praise His holy name;  
Christ is the Lord, O praise His name forever!  
His power and glory evermore proclaim!  
His power and glory evermore proclaim.

### *Lighting of the Advent candles*

*Advent Speaker 1: Sometimes, the most important events and the most important people are not the most obvious. Jesus' birth was almost hidden, but its impact changed the fabric of the universe as God became a human child.*

*Advent Speaker 2: The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. (John 1:9-10)*

*(Light all five candles)*

**All: We light the Christ Candle tonight. In a technological world, it is a simple light. But two millennia later, his light still shines brighter than ever as it ignites a flame in the hearts of us who follow him.**

*(The people closest to the white Christ candle light their candles from it and pass it on)*

\* Closing Song: "Silent Night" Lift Up Your Hearts #85

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 Oh sleep in heavenly peace  
Silent night holy night Shepherds quake, at the sight  
Glories stream from heaven afar Heavenly 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

\* Blessing  
Postlude

\*Please stand if you are able.

Message: Rev. Randy Raak

Musicians: Rex DeBruin, Char Verkade, Maggie VanDyk, Chloe Berns-Schweingruber