

Christmas Eve

December 24, 2020

TO OUR GUESTS

Welcome! May your worship with us add inspiration and light to your celebration of Christmas. Please fill out the Welcome Card found on the back of each pew, and have a very Merry Christmas!

ORDER OF SERVICE

PRELUDE

A Christmas Fantasy

Matthew Pascazio

RINGING OF THE BELLS

OPENING HYMN

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;

Refrain O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.

Highest, most holy, Light of Light Eternal,
Born of a virgin, a mortal He comes
Son of the Father, now in flesh appearing! *Refrain*

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation;
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, in the highest; *Refrain*

Text and music: Public Domain

INVOCATION

The sign of the cross (†) may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

P: In the name of the Father and of the (†) Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: Let us pray.

O God, You make us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. You make this most holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that as we have known the mysteries of that Light on earth we may also come to the fullness of His joys in heaven; through the same Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

P: The virgin will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus.

C. For He will save His people from their sins.

P: For unto us a child is born

C: unto us a Son is given.

P: and His name shall be Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,

C: Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

P: Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth;

C: Break forth in song, rejoice, and sing praises.

(Please be seated)

HYMN

Hymnal p. 380

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 host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"**

**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 man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"**

Text and music: Public Domain

FIRST READING

Micah 5:2-5

L: The first reading for Christmas Eve is from chapter five of Micah.

The promised Savior is to be born in Bethlehem.

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for Me
one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.

Therefore he shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labor has brought forth;
then the rest of his kindred shall return
to the people of Israel.

And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord,
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.

And they shall live secure, for now He shall be great
to the ends of the earth;
and He shall be the one of peace.

Following the reading...

L: This is the Word of our Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

HYMN

Hymnal p. 361

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.**

**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 Immanuel!**

Text and music: Public Domain

SECOND READING

1 John 4:7-16

L: The second reading is from chapter four of 1 John.

God Is Love.

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and His love is perfected in us.

By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent His Son to be the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

Following the reading...

L: This is the Word of our Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

HYMN

Hymnal p. 384 sts. 1,3,5

Of the Father's Love Begotten

**Of the Father's love begotten Ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega, He the source, the ending He,
Of the things that are, that have been, And that future years shall see
Evermore and evermore.**

**This is He who seers in old time Chanted of with one accord,
Whom the voices of the prophets Promised in their faithful word.
Now He shines, the long expected; Let creation praise its Lord
Evermore and evermore.**

Text and music: Public Domain

HOLY GOSPEL

Luke 2:1-20

P: The Holy Gospel is according to St. Luke, chapter two.

C: Glory to You, O Lord.

The Christmas story

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 Saviour, 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.

Following the reading...

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ.

HYMN

Hymnal p. 364

Away in a Manger

**Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**

**Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
And take us to heaven to live with Thee there.**

Text and music: Public Domain

SERMON*

VERSE

**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!**

Text and music: Public Domain

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

P: Let us pray for ourselves, the church and the world.

For a blessed celebration of Christmas, that the music, lights, food, gatherings and gifts of this season would lead us to receive and worship our Savior that we would know the joys that only He can bring, we pray,

C: hear us, heavenly Father.

P: For those who are sick, injured, or hospitalized, that the abiding love of Jesus may be their comfort and strength, we pray,

C: hear us, heavenly Father.

P: For those who suffer depression, sadness, and grief, especially at this time of year, that in the midst of their deep darkness, the ever-shining light of Christ may renew their joy and gladness, we pray,

C: hear us, heavenly Father.

P: For all who travel, that they may arrive safely at their destinations and enjoy the company of family and friends, we pray,

C: hear us, heavenly Father.

P: For the rulers of nations and for all of our elected leaders, that their governing may reflect the peace, justice, and righteousness of the Child born Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace, we pray,

C: hear us, heavenly Father.

P: For all who serve in our armed forces and are away from home during this festive season, for our enemies, and for all victims of violence and war, that their lives may be touched by the Prince of Peace, we pray,

C: hear us, heavenly Father.

P: Exulting in the birth of our Savior, abiding in His love, and looking forward to His coming again, we entrust all for whom we pray to You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit now and forever.

C: Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

CHRISTMAS COLLECT

P: God our Father, in this night You have made known to us again the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Confirm our faith and fix our eyes on Him until the day dawns and Christ the Morning Star rises in our hearts, through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

BENEDICTION

P: Let us bless the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

P: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with His favor and (†) give you His peace.

C: Amen.

SHARING OF THE CHRISTMAS LIGHT

A candle is lit from the Christ candle, which symbolizes Christ, the Light of the world of whom John's gospel speaks. Ushers light their candles from this candle and then light the candle of each worshiper nearest the center aisle. The candlelight is then passed down one person to another. The lighted candle is never tilted, but is always held upright when giving light to another to prevent the dripping of wax.

A Reading from John 1

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were

made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through Him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

PRAYER FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

P: Heavenly Father, because You once caused this holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light, grant that we who have known the mystery of that light here on earth may come to the full measure of its joys in heaven; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

HYMN

Hymnal p. 363

Silent Night, Holy 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, 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 Your holy face With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Your birth, Jesus, Lord, at Your birth.**

Text and music: Public Domain

(Extinguish candles by placing one hand behind candle and softly blowing out the flame.)

POSTLUDE

Gigue on "Good Christian Friends, Rejoice"

Jeff Perks

*Martin Luther teaches us about hearing the Word: "Know, therefore, that you must be concerned not only about hearing, but also about learning and retaining it in memory, and do not think that it is optional with you or of no great importance, but that it is God's commandment, who will require of you how you have heard, learned, and honored His Word." (Large Catechism) *Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!* Luke 11:28

Christ Lutheran Church is a member of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod.

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

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The Reverend Ronald Bright	Pastor
The Reverend Reholma McCants	Pastor Emeritus
Douglas Skalka	Organist
4pm Al Dick	Worship Assistant
Barb Mitchell	Lector
7pm Eric Hoblak	Worship Assistant
Vince Mroz	Lector

Missionaries: The Rev. Dr. Jonathan and Deaconess Cheryl Naumann

Sunday bulletins, news, puzzles, and sermons are available on our website listed above. Video recordings of our weekly services can be viewed on our You Tube channel, *Christ Lutheran Forest Hills Pa*. Services are live-streamed on our Facebook page.

