

Christmas Eve | December 24th, 2020 | Character: Jesus Christ

Assistant: Allie Schley | Advent Wreath: Krohn Family

Readers: Ben Simon | Christmas Story: Les Hartwig

Prelude | *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring*

Call to Worship | *Of the Father's Love Begotten* sung by the Menk Family

Welcome + Opening Dialogue

Rejoice, for God is with us -- Emmanuel.

In the darkness of our world shines God's holy light.

Now there is reason to hope, to love, to laugh, to live.

God is truly with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God!

Lighting the Advent Wreath

Person 1: The Advent wreath is a circle with no beginning and no end. It is a symbol of God's unending love and faithfulness. Jesus Christ is the brightest revelation of God's love. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

Person 2: Throughout this season of Advent we have waited and prepared for this day, the arrival of Immanuel, God with us, the incarnation of God. And so, on this long-awaited day, we light this Christ candle and give thanks for God's presence among us.

Advent Wreath Response | *Joy to the World*

ELW 267

*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 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 sin and sorrow 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.*

Confession + Forgiveness

O God, you search us out and know us, and all that we are is open to you. We confess that we have sinned. **In your mercy, Lord, forgive us and heal us.**

When we make no room for Christ's birth, and fail to rejoice over his everyday presence, **in your mercy, Lord, forgive us and heal us.**

When we sing sweet sentiments over Christ's birth, and fail to rejoice over his everyday presence, **in your mercy, Lord, forgive us and heal us.**

We turn to you, O Christ, perfect union of Spirit and flesh; **We renounce evil; We claim your love; We choose to be made whole.**

Hear the good news: The God who promised never to leave us or forsake us has come to us in Jesus Christ who binds up the brokenhearted, heals all our infirmities, and relieves our burden of sin. So arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. **Amen. Thanks be to God!**

Prayer of the Day (Allie Schley)

O God of love, **you have brought us together today and blessed us with your very self. Open our eyes to the light of Christ which glows in the darkness of a world engulfed in apathy, pain and loss; a world separated from you. Speak to us now that we may hear the good news of your salvation. Bring us into the wonder of your presence. Fill us with that light and carry it out with us into our lives. Amen.**

Children's Message | Christmas Greetings

Opening Hymn | O Come, All Ye Faithful

ELW 283

*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!*

*The highest, most holy, light of light eternal, born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;
Son 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!*

*Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation, sing all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God... 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... 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!*

First Reading by *Ben Simon* | Isaiah 9:2, 6-7 (New International Reader's Version)

The people who are now living in darkness
will see a great light.
They are now living in a very dark land.
But a light will shine on them.
A child will be born to us.
A son will be given to us.
He will rule over us.
And he will be called
Wonderful Adviser and Mighty God.
He will also be called Father Who Lives Forever
and Prince Who Brings Peace.
There will be no limit to how great his authority is.
The peace he brings will never end.
He will rule on David's throne
and over his kingdom.
He will make the kingdom strong and secure.
His rule will be based on what is fair and right.
It will last forever.
The Lord's great love will make sure that happens.
He rules over all.

Gospel Reading | John 1:1-14 (Common English Bible)

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The Word was with God in the beginning. Everything came into being through the Word, and without the Word nothing came into being. What came into being through the Word was life, and the life was the light for all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness doesn't extinguish the light.

A man named John was sent from God. He came as a witness to testify concerning the light, so that through him everyone would believe in the light. He himself wasn't the light, but his mission was to testify concerning the light.

The true light that shines on all people was coming into the world. The light was in the world, and the world came into being through the light, but the world didn't recognize the light. The light came to his own people, and his own people didn't welcome him. But those who did welcome him, those who believed in his name, he authorized to become God's children, born not from blood nor from human desire or passion, but born from God.

The Word became flesh and made his home among us. We have seen his glory, glory like that of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

Sermon

Hymn of the Day | *Away in a Manger*

ELW 277

*Away in a manger, no crib for his 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 cradle till 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 and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

Christmas Affirmation of Faith (Allie Schley)

We believe in God, whose light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness can never smother it.

We believe that on a night like this night in Bethlehem
there was born a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

We believe in the Word who has become incarnate, our very flesh and blood,
yet full of grace and truth.

We believe in his name as Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.

This we surely believe!

Great Thanksgiving + Words of Institution

(Using pre-consecrated elements sent home in our *Christmas in a Bag*)

Lord's Prayer

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray: **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.**

Communion Blessing

Story Time with Les | *The Christmas Story*

Christmas Prayer (Allie Schley)

It may seem naive, in a world of grief, to choose to live in joy; It may seem foolish, in a world where solemnity is power, to sing and dance to a different tune; It may seem cruel, in a world of suffering and injustice, to speak of light and celebration; But you have come, Jesus, to bring joy into our grief, light into our darkness, singing into our mourning; and it is an act of healing and proclamation to believe and embrace the joy you offer. Joy to the world! The Lord is come! **Hallelujah! Amen**

Special Music + Closing Hymn | *Peace, Peace, & Silent Night*

ELW 281

*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; glorious 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 your holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace, Jesus, Lord at your birth, Jesus, Lord, at your birth.*

Blessing + Dismissal

We rejoice in God's steadfast presence in our lives, and in God's unique presence in the life of Jesus of Nazareth—born of Mary, growing through childhood into an adult ministry, in all his life manifesting the peace, love, and justice of God; his voice undimmed by the centuries his call and his promise as clear to us as it was to his disciples so long ago.

Come to us, Lord Jesus, be born in us this night, in our hearts, our minds, our lives. May the light of your life be kindled in us, and lead us to the shining truth, of God with us, God for us, God in us. **Amen.**

Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus. **Thanks be to God.**