

The Light of Grace: Glory: Shepherds

A Service for Christmas Eve

Order of Service

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased! Luke 2:14

Opening Hymn Joy to the World (Antioch CM and refrain)

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.

Invocation and Lighting of the Advent Wreath

P In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

(The center white candle and all four candles around the Advent wreath are lit.)

P Tonight we light the center candle of the Advent wreath as we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the Light of the world. He came to bring us hope, peace, joy and love. He came to bring us salvation through faith in his name.

C **Glory to God in the highest!**

P On the first Christmas night, shepherds in the fields near Bethlehem saw the light of God's glory and heard the glad news: "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."

C **Glory to God in the highest!**

P The shepherds hurried to Bethlehem to see the Holy Child. Tonight we share the joy of those shepherds as, by faith, we too gather to worship our Savior.

C **Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!**

Confession and Absolution

P On this holy night, let us confess our sins to God and ask his forgiveness.

C **Almighty God, although we gather to glorify your holy name, we too often seek glory for ourselves. We follow our own selfish desires instead of loving and serving others as we should. We try to exalt ourselves instead of giving glory to our Lord and Savior. Have mercy on us and forgive us for Jesus' sake. Lead us by your Spirit to glorify your name in our thoughts, words and actions.**

P In mercy and love, God sent his Son to be our Savior. The Holy Child of Bethlehem was born to die as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. By grace through faith in Jesus, we rejoice in God's favor and in his peace. I announce to you that your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

C **Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!**

Hymn of Response Amazing Grace (New Britain CM)

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found; Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear The hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils, and snares I have already come:
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far, And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me, His Word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be As long as life endures.

Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail, And mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess, within the veil, A life of joy and peace.

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow, The sun forbear to shine;
But God, who called me here below, Will be forever mine.

When we've been there ten thousand years, Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise Than when we'd first begun.

Prayer of the Day

Hymn Infant Holy, Infant Lowly (W ZLobie Lezy 447 447 4444 77)

Infant holy, infant lowly, For his bed a cattle stall;
Oxen lowing, little knowing Christ the child is Lord of all.
Swiftly winging, angels singing, Bells are ringing, tidings bringing:
Christ the child is Lord of all! Christ the child is Lord of all!

Children's Message

Hymn Infant Holy, Infant Lowly (W ZLobie Lezy 447 447 4444 77)

Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping Vigil till the morning new
Saw the glory, heard the story, Tidings of a Gospel true.
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow, Praises voicing, greet the morrow:
Christ the child was born for you! Christ the child was born for you!

Old Testament Reading Isaiah 7:10-14

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz: "Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test." And he said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

Congregation: 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.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God!

Gospel Reading, Part 1 Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. 6 And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of our Lord.

Congregation: Praise to You, O Christ!

Hymn O Little Town of Bethlehem (St. Louis 86 86 76 86)

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 to God the king And peace to all the earth!

Gospel Reading, Part 2 Luke 2:8-14

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and 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 among those with whom he is pleased!"

Pastor: This is the Gospel of our Lord.

Congregation: Praise to You, O Christ!

Hymn Angels We Have Heard on High (Gloria 77 77 and refrain)

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.

Gospel Reading, Part 3 Luke 2:15-20

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of our Lord.

Congregation: Praise to You, O Christ!

Sermon Hymn Away in a Manger (Away in a Manger 11 11 11 11)
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.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes, But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky, And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

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.

Sermon

Hymn of Response Silent Night, Holy Night (Stille Nacht 66 88 66)
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.

Apostles' Creed

C I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.
And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Offering Prayers

Each petition concludes with the following response:

P Savior of the world, with the angels we praise your holy name:

C Let your glory fill all the earth!

Lord's Prayer Benediction

(Luke 2:10-14; 2 Corinthians 13:14)

P And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

C And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."

P And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

C "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

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

C Amen.

Closing Hymn From Heaven Above to Earth I Come (Vom Himmel Hoch LM)

“From heav’n above to earth I come To bear good news to ev’ry home;
Glad tidings of great joy I bring, Whereof I now will say and sing:

“To you this night is born a child Of Mary chosen virgin mild;
This little child of lowly birth Shall be the joy of all the earth.

Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child, Make thee e a bed, soft, undefiled,
Within my heart, that it may be A quiet chamber kept for thee.

Glory to God in highest heav’n, Who unto us his Son has giv’n!
While angels sing with pious mirth A glad new year to all the earth.

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