

LIGHT FOR OUR DARKNESS



Advent 4 / Christmas Eve Morning – December 24th, 2023

+ In Nomine Jesu +

Opening Hymn

CW21 Blue #362 (1,5-6) *Come, Your Hearts and Voices Raising*

*Come, your hearts and voices raising,
Christ the Lord with gladness praising;
Loudly sing his love amazing,
Worthy folk of Christendom.*

*Oh, the joy beyond expressing
When by faith we grasp this blessing,
When, O Christ, we come addressing
Thanks to you and highest praise!*

*Gracious Child, in mercy hear us;
From your lowly manger cheer us.
Gently lead us and be near us
Till we join th' angelic choir.*

Invocation

Pastor: In the name of the Father

Cong: Who is eternal... neither made nor created nor begotten of anyone.

Pastor: And of the Son

Cong: Who is eternal... neither made nor created, but is begotten of the Father when for our salvation he took on human flesh.

Pastor: And of the Holy Spirit.

Cong: Who is eternal... neither made nor created nor begotten, but proceeds from the Father and the Son.

Pastor: And within this Trinity none comes before or after, none is greater or inferior, but all three persons are coequal and coeternal and all three persons are to be worshiped as one God and one God worshiped as three persons.

Cong: This is most certainly true.

Pastor: Brothers and sisters in Christ: there was a time when the world sat in darkness, separated from God because of sin. Since we human beings were unable to find God in that darkness, He came near to us as a baby, born of a virgin, bringing with Him the great light of our salvation. Now, come near to God and confess to Him your sins.

Cong: We confess that we have sinned against You in our thoughts, words, and deeds. The world has tempted us in this Christmas season to put our delight and joy in material things, to be envious of others, and to center our celebrations around ourselves rather than on You. Thus we have sinned against You and against one another. Forgive our sins, O Lord, for the sake of the Babe of Bethlehem, Jesus Christ, who died for us. Decorate our hearts with repentance and joy that our Christmas celebration may be pleasing to You.

Pastor: This Child whose birth we celebrate came among us to live perfectly in our stead, to give His life in payment for our sins, to rise from the grave for our justification, and to give us new life. In His name and at His command, I as a called and ordained servant of the Word, forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Choir

Light an Advent Candle

*1. Advent is a time of hope
Of waiting for the light
To lead us to the promised One
To break the dark of night.
Light a candle, our Messiah will come.
Light a candle for the promised One.*

*2. Advent is a time of peace
The ancient prophets tell
A King will be born in Bethlehem
Our Lord, Emmanuel.
Light a candle, our Messiah will come.
Light a candle for the promised One.*

*3. Advent is a time of joy
Of looking for the star
Just as the wisemen long ago
Followed from afar.*

*4. Advent is a time of love
As we await Christ's birth
The Prince of Peace, Emmanuel
Will bring God's love to earth.*

*5. Light a candle of hope
Light a candle of peace
Light a candle of joy
Light a candle of love.
Light a candle, our Messiah will come.*

THE ADVENT CANDLES:

Pastor: We light four Advent candles now.

Cong: The Advent kindles bright.

Pastor: Dispelling darkness, Jesus comes

Cong: and warms us with his holy light.

Pastor: The manger marks the earthly start

Cong: of heaven's plan to save the lost,

Pastor: for Bethl'em leads to Calvary,

Cong: and manger soon becomes a cross.

Pastor: And so we make a cradle new

Cong: inside our hearts to hold God's Son.

Pastor: We pray, "Lord Jesus, be our guest.

Cong: Fill us with light! Come, Jesus, come!"



Hymn

CW21 Blue #325 (1-4) My Soul in Stillness Waits

Refrain:

***For you, O Lord, my soul in stillness waits,
truly my hope is in you.***

*O Lord of Light, our only hope of glory,
your radiance shines in all who look to you,
come, light the hearts of all in dark and shadow.*

Refrain

*O Spring of Joy, rain down upon our spirits,
our thirsty hearts are yearning for your Word,
come, make us whole, be comfort to our hearts.*

Refrain

*O Root of Life, implant your seed within us,
And in your advent draw us all to you,
Our hope reborn in dying and in rising.*

Refrain

*O Key of Knowledge, guide us in our pilgrimage;
We ever seek, yet unfulfilled remain;
Open to us the pathway of your peace.*

Refrain

1. WE WERE LOST IN DARKNESS ... THE PROPHECIES GIVE US HOPE

Pastor:

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:14)

Congregation:

We look for light, but all is darkness; for brightness, but we walk in deep shadows. Like the blind we grope along the wall, feeling our way like people without eyes. (Isaiah 59:9,10).



Recitation:

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel. (Genesis 3:15)

Pastor: *Devotion on Prophecy / Hope Candle*

Hymn by Congregation:

CW21 #304: *What Hope! An Eden Prophesied*

Sung to tune of CW Blue #313 "Hark the Glad Sound! The Savior Comes!"

*What hope! An Eden prophesied
Where tame live with the wild;
The lamb and lion side by side,
Led by a little child!*

*A shoot will sprout from Jesse's stem,
A branch from David's line,
A Prince of Peace in Bethlehem:
The fruit of God's design.*

*As banner of God's love unfurled,
Christ came to suffer loss,
That by His death a dying world
Would rally to the cross.*

*Come, Jesus, come, Messiah Lord,
Lost Paradise restore;
Lead past the angel's flaming sword —
Come, open heaven's door.*

2. THE LIGHT COMES INTO THE DARKNESS... BRINGING PEACE

Pastor:

²“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times. Therefore Israel will be abandoned until the time when she who is in labor bears a son... He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD.



Congregation:

And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth. ⁵ And he will be our peace.” (Micah 5:2-5)

Recitation:

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ² (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³ And everyone went to their own town to register. ⁴ 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. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. (Luke 2:1-7)

Children's Song

Away in a Manger

Pastor: *Devotion on Bethlehem / Peace Candle*

Choir:

A Light Will Shine by Lloyd Larson

1. The people who walk in the darkness
They will see a great light
The people who walk in the darkness
On them a light will shine.

2. Those who live in the shadow of death
Will be filled with joy
And unto them will a child be born
Heaven's gift, a baby boy.

3. Come, thou long-expected Jesus
Born to set our people free
From our fears and sins release us
Let us find our rest in thee.

4. Israel's strength and consolation
Hope of all the earth thou art.
Dear desire of ev'ry nation
Joy of ev'ry longing heart.

5. The people who walk in the darkness
They will see a great light
The people who walk in the darkness
On them a light will shine,
On them a light will shine.

3. THE LIGHT FILLS US WITH JOY!

Pastor:

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. (Philippians 4:4-5)

Congregation:

Arise, shine, for your light has come and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. (Isaiah 60:1)

Recitation:

⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." (Luke 2:8-12)

Children's / Choir Song

*While by the Sheep / Joy, Joy, Joy
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Pastor: *Devotion on Shepherd's / Joy Candle*

Hymn by Congregation:

CW21 Blue #345 "Where Shepherds Lately Knelt"

***Where shepherds lately knelt and kept the angel's word,
I come in half-belief, a pilgrim strangely stirred;
But there is room and welcome there for me,
But there is room and welcome there for me.***

***In that unlikely place I find him as they said:
Sweet newborn babe, how frail! and in a manger bed,
A still, small voice to cry one day for me,
A still, small voice to cry one day for me.***



4. THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD SHINES WITH LOVE

Recitation:

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

Congregation:

In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)



Recitation

¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” (Luke 2:13-14)

Hymn by Congregation & Children: CW21 Blue #346 “Angels We Have Heard on High”
Children will sing verse and the congregation will join the 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.

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.

Recitation

¹⁵ 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.”¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told. (Luke 2:15-20)

Pastor: *Devotion on Angel’s / Love Candle*

Children’s Song

CW Red #57 *Go Tell It On the Mountain*

Congregation will join on each chorus except the one that starts the song. Children will do the first chorus and the verses. Congregation can join on all the rest of the choruses. The lyrics will be displayed on the screen.

5. THE LIGHT IS CHRIST THE LORD!

Pastor:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1)

Congregation:

² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. (John 1:2-4)



Recitation:

⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (John 1:5)

Pastor: *Devotion on Christ Candle*

Hymn by Congregation: CW21 Blue #355 (1-2,4) *Let All Together Praise Our God*

**Let all together praise our God
Before his highest throne;
Today he opens heav'n again
And gives us his own Son,
And gives us his own Son.**

*He leaves his heav'nly Father's throne,
Is born an infant small,
And in a manger, poor and lone,
Lies in a humble stall,
Lies in a humble stall.*

*He undertakes a great exchange,
Puts on our human frame.
And in return gives us his realm,
His glory, and His name!
His glory, and His name!*

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The Prayer of the Church

The Lord's Prayer

Tune: Away in A Manger – Cradle Song

*Our Father in heaven, all praise to your name!
Your kingdom among us, your will done the same
By mortals and angels. Come, Lord, reign alone;
Oh, hear us and bless us from heaven's high throne.*

*The bread that we yearn for provide us each day;
As we forgive others, our sins take away;
In times of temptation, to lead us be near;
From evil deliver your children most dear.*

*For yours is the kingdom; o'er all things you reign.
And yours is the power; all things you maintain.
To you be the glory, resounding again
From all of creation, forever! Amen.*

The Blessing & Benediction

M: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;

C: those who lived in deepest night, have seen a brilliant sight.

M: Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.

C: The greatness of his influence and of his peace will never end.

M: Therefore, go out into the world with great joy,

C: glorifying and praising God for all the things you have heard and seen.

M: May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the determination of the magi, and the peace of the Christ child who God sent because he loved us dearly!

M: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious unto you.

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

Hymn by Congregation & Children:

CW21 Blue #353 “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.

