

CHRISTMAS EVE 2023 CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

THE OPENING HYMN MEDLEY

“HYMN: 368 ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH

HYMN: 361 O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

THE INVOCATION

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

C: Amen.

P: Unto us a Child is born,

C: Unto us the Son is given.

ALL: Oh, come let us worship Him!

THE LITANY

P: We GATHER on this silent, holy night to worship our Christ,

C: the promised Immanuel, to be born to a virgin named Mary.

P: We gather on this silent, holy night to worship our Savior,

C: who is Christ, our Lord!

P: We gather on this silent, holy night to worship Jesus,

C: promised through Isaiah and the prophets, announced to the shepherds, and worshipped this night around the world!

THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

P: Let us light four candles and the Christ Candle this night. The first candle is the candle of repentance. The second, the candle of remembrance. The third, the candle of rejoicing. The fourth candle, the candle of reconciliation.

C: The Christ Candle represents the true light that came into the world.

P: On this silent night, we light the Christ Candle

C: that penetrates the darkness of our world and powerfully symbolizes for us Immanuel, God with us!

HYMN: 366 IT CAME UPON THE MIDNIGHT CLEAR

THE CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

P: On this silent night when we gather in this place to celebrate the birth of our Immanuel, we acknowledge that we have too often made much noise that drowns out the wonderful melody of His redeeming love. On this silent night, we confess our sins:

C: Almighty God, I confess to you all my sins by which I have offended you. I deserve to suffer for my sins both now and eternally. I am sorry for all my sins, and I pray that you will look on me in mercy and forgive me for the sake of Jesus, who suffered the punishment for my sins when He died on the cross.

P: In the stead and by the command of my Lord, Jesus Christ, I forgive you all of your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

THE CHRISTMAS COLLECT

P: O God, because You once caused this most 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 with You. We pray this through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord and Savior. Amen

HYMN: 374 GENTLE MARY LAID HER CHILD

THE MAGNIFICAT

P: My soul magnifies the Lord,

C: And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.

P: For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant;

C: For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.

P: He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name.

C: And His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation.

P: He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

C: He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted the lowly.

P: He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent empty away.

C: He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy,

P: As He spoke to our fathers,

C: To Abraham and to his seed forever.

HYMN: 387 JOY TO THE WORLD

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON *Isaiah 7:10–14*
The Sign of Immanuel

¹⁰Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, ¹¹“Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” ¹²But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” ¹³And he said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? ¹⁴Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”

HYMN: 364 AWAY IN A MANGER

THE EPISTLE: *1 John 4:7–16*
God Is Love

⁷Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹In 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. ¹⁰In 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.

¹¹Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹²No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

¹³By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. ¹⁶So 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.

HYMN: 380 HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING

THE CHRISTMAS GOSPEL: *Matthew 1:18–25*
The Birth of Jesus Christ

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” ²²All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: ²³“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us). ²⁴When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ²⁵but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

**HYMN: 367 ANGELS FROM THE REALMS OF
GLORY**

SERMON: The Nativity

**HYMN: 379 O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL
THE OFFERING OF OUR GIFTS TO GOD**

**HYMN: 384 OF THE FATHER'S LOVE BEGOTTEN
PRAYERS**

THE LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

(The pastor will light his candle from the Christ candle. The ushers will light theirs from the pastor's; then the candle of the worshipper in each pew nearest the center aisle. It is requested that **NO LIT CANDLE BE DIPPED** to avoid dripping wax on the floor. When all candles are lit the congregation will rise and the service continues.)

THE BENEDICTION

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be and abide with you all.

C: Amen.

HYMN: 363 SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT

sts. 1-3