

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

DECEMBER 24, 2023

6:30 p.m.

CALVARY LUTHERAN CHURCH, RAPIDAN, MN

WORDS OF WELCOME *(from the back of the Sanctuary)*

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

C: And also with you.

CALL TO WORSHIP

P: Welcome to worship on this Christmas Eve to a celebration like no other!

C: This is the night of Jesus' holy Birth!

P: Let the love of the Christ child be born in your hearts and spirits!

C: Open our hearts to receive this precious gift, Loving God.

P: Rejoice, good friends, the Good News is here!

C: Christ our Lord and Savior is Born! Hallelujah! Amen

PROCESSIONAL HYMN: ELW #283 "O Come All Ye Faithful" v.1,3, & 4

*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.*

*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 given;
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.*

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CANDLE LIGHTING

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: We gather to celebrate the birth of the one who is the light of the world.

C: We are here to worship God and his Son Jesus Christ, born this night in Bethlehem.

P: We light the candle of hope to remind us of the promises made by all the prophets that God would raise up a savior for his people Israel and through Him bless all the nations.

C: Let the heavens and the earth rejoice. Our Lord has come.

- light the first candle -

P: We light the candle of peace to remind us that the Prince of Peace comes to enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.

C: Let the heavens and the earth rejoice. Our Lord has come.

- light the second candle -

P: We light the candle of joy to remind us that the Lord has made known his salvation and that grace is poured out upon us.

C: Let the heavens and the earth rejoice. Our Lord has come.

- light the third candle -

P: We light the candle of love to remind us that God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

C: Let the heavens and the earth rejoice. Our Lord has come.

- light the fourth candle -

P: We light the Christ candle to celebrate and rejoice that the light of the world is born this night....

- light the Christ candle -

P: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. For those who lived in a land of deep shadows—light! sunbursts of light! You repopulated the nation. For a child has been born—for us! The gift of a son—for us! He'll take over the running of the world. His names will be: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

C: Glory be to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to all people of good will. Alleluia!

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

SPECIAL MUSIC ~ "Before the Marvel of this Night"

HEARING THE GOOD NEWS OF CHRISTMAS

SCRIPTURE: Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.

The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God."

Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

HYMN: ELW #279 "O Little Town of Bethlehem" Vs 1-3

***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 street 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 wondering love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth.***

***How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming; but in the world of sin,
Where meet souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.***

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SCRIPTURE: Luke 2:1-14

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.

While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see--I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth 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 heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

HYMN: ELW #296 "What Child is This"

***What child is this, who laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the king, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, hast to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!***

***While likes he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;
Hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary!***

***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!***

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SCRIPTURE: Luke 2:15-20

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us."

So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.

The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

HYMN: ELW #278 "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 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 side until 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.***

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OFFERING PRAYER

God of abundance, receive and bless these gifts we have offered. Join our hearts with the song of the angels, and gather us at your table of celebration. Strengthen us to share with all the world the abundance of your grace upon grace, poured out in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. **Amen.**

OFFERING

OFFERING HYMN: ELW #686 "We Give Them But Thine Own" (V 1)

***"We give thee but thine own, what e'er the gift may be
All that we have is thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from me."***

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CHRISTMAS PRAYER

HYMN: ELW #282 "It Came Upon A Midnight Clear" (vs 1,2 & 4)

***It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold:
'Peace on the earth, good will to men, from heaven's all gracious king!'
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.***

***Still through the cloven skies they come with peaceful wings unfurled;
and still their heavenly music floats o'er all the weary world;
above it's sad and lowly plains they bend on hovering wing,
and ever o'er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.***

***For, lo! the days are hastening on, by prophet bards foretold,
when with the ever-circling years comes round the age of gold,
when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendours fling,
and the whole world give back the song which now the angels sing.***

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CHRISTMAS COMMUNION

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

C: It is right to give thanks and praise.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Glory to God in the highest!

Come to the table of peace.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN: ELW #290 "Go Tell It on the Mountain"

Refrain: Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere; go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!

- 1. While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night, behold, through-out the heavens there shone a holy light. Refrain:*
- 2. The shepherds feared and trembled when, lo, above the earth rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth. Refrain:*
- 3. Down in a lonely manger the humble Christ was born; and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn. Refrain:*

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POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ, strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God our redeemer, you have fed us at this table with gifts of grace, truth, and life. As you have gathered us in joy, send us forth as messengers of your peace. Make us shine with the good news of your glory, born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

CHRISTMAS BLESSING

God bless you and keep you, ✝ Jesus grant you grace and truth, and the Spirit send peace upon your hearts, now and forever. **Amen.**

Lighting of the candles

SENDING HYMN: ELW #281 "Silent Night, Holy Night!"

(please remain seated)

***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!***

***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.***

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DISMISSAL

Go in peace. And may the Lord God Almighty – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be with you and keep you safe in his love both now and forevermore.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

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