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Christmas Eve: The Nativity of our Lord

December 24, 2020

In winter's deepest night, we welcome the light of the Christ child. Isaiah declares that the light of the long-promised king will illumine the world and bring endless peace and justice. Paul reminds us that the grace of God through Jesus Christ brings salvation to all people. The angels declare that Jesus' birth is good and joyful news for everyone, including lowly shepherds. Filled with the light that shines in our lives, we go forth to share the light of Christ with the whole world.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

PRELUDE

CHRISTMAS PROCLAMATION

Ellen van Rensburg and Alessia Gallipoli

Many ages from the time when God created the heavens and the earth and then formed human in God's image;
long after the great flood, when God made the rainbow shine forth as a sign of the covenant;
twenty-one centuries from the time the promise was given to Abraham and Sarah;
thirteen centuries after Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt and Miriam danced in freedom;
eleven hundred years from the time of Ruth and the judges;
one thousand years from the anointing of David as king,
in fulfillment of the times and years and months and days discerned by the prophets;
in the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad;
the seven hundred and fifty-second year from the foundation of the city of Rome;
the forty-second year of the reign of Octavian Augustus;
while the whole world enjoyed a span of peace,
Jesus Christ, eternal God and Son of the eternal Father,
desiring to sanctify the world by his most merciful coming,
being conceived by the Holy Spirit and nine months of growth in the womb of his mother—
now in our own times is the nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, God made flesh.

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CAROL: "O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL"

- 1 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:

Refrain

**O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!**

- 2 The highest, most holy, light of light eternal,
born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;
Son of the Father now in flesh appearing! *Refrain*
- 3 Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God in the highest: *Refrain*

Text: attr. John Francis Wade, 1711-1786; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802-1880, sts. 1, 3-4; tr. unknown, st. 2

CHRISTMAS DIALOGUE AND GREETING

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness, on them light has shined.

We have beheld Christ's glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.

For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given.

In him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

May the grace and truth of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray.

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 only son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

*God speaks to
us in
scripture
reading,
preaching,
and song*

*Light shines:
a child is born
for us*

WORD

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 9: 2 - 7

Shane Roche

This poem promises deliverance from Assyrian oppression, a hope based on the birth of a royal child with a name full of promise. While Judah's king will practice justice and righteousness, the real basis for faith lies in God's passion for the people: The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this!

²The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.

³You have multiplied the nation,
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.

⁴For the yoke of their burden,
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors
and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

⁶For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Word of God
Word of Life

CAROL: "IT CAME UPON A MIDNIGHT CLEAR"

ELW 282

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 all,
from heav'n's all-gracious king."
The world in solemn stillness lay
to hear the angels sing.

And you, beneath life's crushing load,
whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way
with painful steps and slow:
look now, for glad and golden hours
come swiftly on the wing;
oh, rest beside the weary road
and hear the angels sing!

For lo! The days are hast'ning on,
by prophets seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years
shall come the time foretold,
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendors fling,
and all the world give back the song
which now the angels sing.

Text: Edmund H. Sears, 1810-1876

SECOND READING: TITUS 2: 11 - 14

Melissa Noble

*The grace of
God has
appeared*

The appearance of God's grace in Jesus Christ brings salvation for all humanity. Consequently, in the present we live wisely and justly while also anticipating the hope of our Saviour's final appearance.

¹¹[For] the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, ¹²training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, ¹³while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. ¹⁴He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

Word of God
Word of Life

CAROL: "HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING"

ELW 270

- 1 Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn king;
peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled."
Joyful, all you nations, rise;
join the triumph of the skies;
with angelic hosts proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Refrain

Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn king!"

- 2 Christ, by highest heav'n adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!
Hail, incarnate deity!
Pleased as man with us to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel! *Refrain*

- 3 Hail the heav'n-born Prince of peace!
Hail the Sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
ris'n with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise each child of earth,
born to give us second birth. *Refrain*

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, alt.

THIRD READING: LUKE 2: 1 - 7

Stephanie Roche

God with us

God's greatest gift comes as a baby in a manger. Angels announce the "good news of great joy" and proclaim God's blessing of peace.

¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph 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. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And 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.

Word of God
Word of Life

CAROL: "AWAY IN A MANGER"

ELW 277

- 1 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.
- 2 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.
- 3 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.

Text: North American, 19th cent.

FOURTH READING: LUKE 2: 8 - 20

Hanna Holt

*Good news of
great joy*

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" ¹⁵When 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." ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Word of God
Word of Life

CHOIR ANTHEM: "EMMANUEL" (MEDLEY)

Arr. Don Wyrzten

SERMON

CAROL: "O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM"

ELW 279

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!

O holy child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin, and enter in,
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
the great glad tidings tell;
oh, come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Immanuel!

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835-1893

MEAL

*God feeds us
with the
presence of
Jesus Christ*

PEACE

OFFERING

OFFERING PRAYER

GREAT THANKSGIVING

P: The Lord be with you.
C: *And also with you.*

P: Lift up your hearts.
C: *We lift them up to the Lord.*

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
C: *It is right to give our thanks and praise.*

P: We give you all thanks....forever and ever.
C: *Amen.*

LORD'S PRAYER

C: *Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.*



COMMUNION

CAROL: "TWAS IN THE MOON OF WINTERTIME"

ELW 284

1 'Twas in the moon of wintertime
when all the birds had fled,
that *God the Lord of all the earth
sent angel choirs instead;
before their light the stars grew dim,
and wond'ring hunters heard the hymn:

Refrain

Jesus your king is born! Jesus is born,
in excelsis gloria!

2 Within a lodge of broken bark
the tender babe was found;
a ragged robe of rabbit skin
enwrapped his beauty round;
but as the hunter braves drew nigh,
the angel song rang loud and high: *Refrain*

3 The earliest moon of wintertime
is not so round and fair

as was the ring of glory on
the helpless infant there.
The chiefs from far before him knelt
with gifts of fox and beaver pelt. *Refrain*

**original: "mighty Gitchi Manitou"*

Text: Jean de Brébeuf, 1593-1649; tr. Jesse E. Middleton, 1872-1960, alt.
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POST COMMUNION PRAYER

CAROL: "ONCE IN ROYAL DAVID'S CITY"

ELW 269

- 1 Once in royal David's city
stood a lowly cattle shed,
where a mother laid her baby
in a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ, her little child.
- 2 He came down to earth from heaven
who is God and Lord of all,
and his shelter was a stable,
and his cradle was a stall;
with the poor and meek and lowly,
lived on earth our Savior holy.
- 3 And our eyes at last shall see him,
through his own redeeming love;
for that child so dear and gentle
is our Lord in heav'n above;
and he leads his children on
to the place where he is gone.

Text: Cecil Frances Alexander, 1818-1895

CANDLE LIGHTING

*The minister lights a large candle from the altar candle, which symbolizes Christ, the Light of the world.
Light a candle at home to welcome the Light of the World into your heart.*

THE GOSPEL OF THE INCARNATION, JOHN 1:1-14

Debra Goshulak

*The light shines
in the darkness*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and
without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was
life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the

darkness did not overcome it. ⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God

CAROL: "SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT"

ELW 281

- 1 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.
- 2 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!
- 3 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.

Text: Joseph Mohr, 1792-1849; tr. John F. Young, 1820-1885

SENDING

*God blesses
us and sends
us in mission
to the world.*

BLESSING

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. Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

(The candles are extinguished)

CAROL: "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.

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.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

DISMISSAL

P: Christ is born! Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

C: *Thanks be to God!*

POSTLUDE

"He is Born" (French Carol) arranged by Patricia Sanders Cota

Handbells Quartet





ST. PHILIP'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

SERVING TODAY

Rev. Tuula Van Gaasbeek	Minister
Chris Ritcey-Conrad	Music Director
Dave Pascoe	Videographer
Marcia Powers-Dunlop	Lay Assistant
Lauren Voorpostel	Cantor

IN OUR PRAYERS

Michael Micelli, Lesley Powell, Gustav Berndt, Rodney Erlandson, Melody Hogeveen, Mary Hughes, Al Jacksteit, Mark Kieswetter, Fran Moore, Marion Morningstar, Pat Penney, Julie Potocny, Lesley Powell, Sydney Ross, Helen Scollnik, and Elga Smidt.

NEW PARAMENTS

The stunning paraments and matching stole used for this service are new and donated to the glory of God and in loving memory of Marion and Fred Roberts, charter members of St. Philip's, by Kathy and Rick Gorski. These were designed and created by Bramante Studio (<https://bramante.com>).

WAYS TO BE INVOLVED

While we can't be in the building, there are still ways to stay involved and in community with others. Here are a few:

- Tuesday Bible Study via Zoom @ 7:00 pm
- Participate in the Virtual Worship: play an instrument or sing, read the Gospel, provide a Children's Message, lead the prayers, or tell a Faith Story. Please contact the office.
- Join in the Virtual Coffee Hour @ 11:00 am on Sunday mornings.
- Call a member and check on how they are doing.

PASS THE OFFERING PLATE PLEASE

Thanks for giving your offering regularly. Even while our doors are closed, our hearts and hands are open and busy. Our ministries need your support. Details for how to give are on <http://www.stphilipstoronto.com/donate-now/>.

DECEMBER SERVICES

- **Christmas Day:** a special Christmas Day message will be made available online
- **December 26:** a virtual Ecumenical Service
- **December 27:** Sunday virtual worship