# **CHRISTMAS EVE**

Beautiful News to Hear Again

December 24, 2024





Can you imagine a person who has never heard of Christmas?

How would you explain what we are hearing on Christmas night to such a person? To fully understand what Christmas is about, that person needs to know, first, that God who created everything, including the person you are explaining this to. Then that person needs to know that, from the beginning, all people have sinned against God, with the result that "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). Christmas is the discovery that God's love is so deep that, even though we have sinned, from eternity He planned a way everyone could be forgiven, return to Him, and live forever in the way He originally intended for us. People in Old Testament times were saved by faith in the promised Christ. And people are saved by faith now in that same Christ who has come in the person of the Son of God, "conceived by the Holy Spirit" and "born of the virgin Mary." He was born in our flesh so that He could satisfy those "wages of sin" before God for us and for the whole world by His sacrificial death. The proof that His payment was sufficient is His resurrection from the dead and return to the Father to live and reign over all forever.

Paul said, "My heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved." Then he asked our question, "But how are they to call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? . . . So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ" (Romans 10:1, 14–17).

It is not that difficult to imagine someone who has never heard of Christmas for one more reason. For even we who have heard still too often live as if we have never heard! Because sin continues to be our struggle until we are finally delivered from its power, we need to hear this story over and over again. Tonight we recall how Christmas and the entire Gospel of our salvation is beautiful news to hear and to believe over and over again.

Organ Preludes – 1. "The Shepherds at the Manger"
Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

2. "Christmas Meditation on an Old French Melody" Richard Wegner (December 25, 1924 – December 27, 2020) His music and his memory live on

**№ PREPARATION** 

HYMN #379 - "O Come, All Ye Faithful"



Text: tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802–80, alt. Text and tune: John F. Wade, c. 1711–1786

Text and tune: Public domain

## **INVOCATION**

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ♥ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

#### **OPENING SENTENCES**

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

People: those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.

Pastor: You are my lamp, O LORD,

People: and my God lightens my darkness.

## **CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION**

Pastor:

The apostle Paul reminds us, "You know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light." In order to hear again the beautiful Good News of how the Savior of the world came to save us all, let us confess our need to hear, to repent of our sin and to believe.

People:

Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, I confess to You once again this night that I have walked in the darkness of sin, that I have sinned in the shadows of my conscience and in words and actions toward others; all of it in disobedience to Your commands. I pray You to send forth the light and truth of Your Son, my Savior. Have mercy on me, forgive me my sins, and bring me to everlasting life.

Pastor:

The Lord sends out His light and His truth to find you and to save you. Upon this, your confession, I, by virtue of my office as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God to all of you. In the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the  $\maltese$  Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

#### **₩ WORD ₩**



Text: tr. The Crown of Jesus, 1862, Part 2, London, alt. Text and tune: French
Text and tune: Public domain

#### **SALUTATION**

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

#### PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Let us pray.

O God of light, on the night of the birth of the Savior of the world, Your holy angels sang of Your glory. Grant that Your Word as a lamp unfailingly pierces the darkness of our earthbound way, showing us Your grace and enlightening our path with Your holiness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and

reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

#### **OLD TESTAMENT READING**

Isaiah 9:2–7 (From darkness to light)

<sup>2</sup> The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined. <sup>3</sup>You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest. as they are glad when they divide the spoil. <sup>4</sup>For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder. the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. <sup>5</sup>For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. <sup>6</sup>For to us a child is born. to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

**SOLO –** Denise Adah

"God's Gift of Love"

Music adapted from Frederic Chopin's Etude: Opus 10 No. 3 (1810-1849)

Lyrics and arrangement by Robert J. Hughes (1916-1999)

**EPISTLE** Titus 2:11–14

(Changed lives by the grace of God)

<sup>11</sup>For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, <sup>12</sup>training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, <sup>13</sup>waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, <sup>14</sup>who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

**VERSE** 

Pastor: Alleluia. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior,

People: who is Christ the Lord. Alleluia.

HOLY GOSPEL Luke 2:1–20

(The time came)

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the second chapter.

People: Glory to You, O Lord.

<sup>1</sup>In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>And all went to be registered, each to his own town. <sup>4</sup>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, <sup>5</sup>to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. <sup>6</sup>And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. <sup>7</sup>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.

<sup>8</sup>And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. <sup>10</sup>And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. <sup>11</sup>For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup>And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup>"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

<sup>15</sup>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." <sup>16</sup>And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. <sup>17</sup>And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. <sup>18</sup>And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. <sup>20</sup>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 the Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

#### CREED

People: I believe in one God,

the Father Almighty,

maker of heaven and earth

and ascended into heaven

and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures

and sits at the right hand of the Father.

And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the Lord and giver of life,

who proceeds from the Father and the Son,

who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life 

of the world to come. Amen.



Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748

Tune: George Frideric Handel, 1685-1759, adapt.

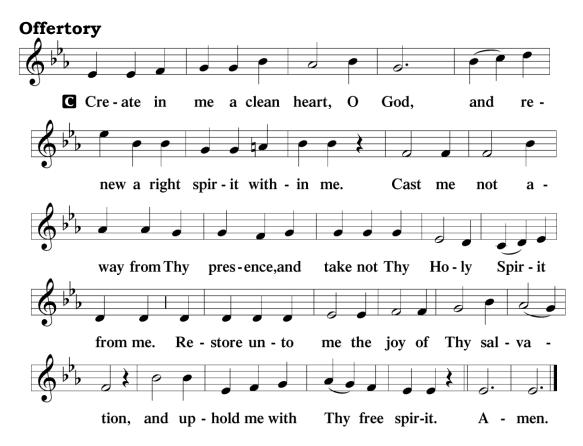
Text and tune: Public domain

**SERMON** Silent night, Holy night, but is all calm?

# **VOLUNTARY – "O Hail this Brightest Day of Days"** BWV 605 **Johann Sebastian Bach** (1685-1750)

#### **OFFERING**

(We join with Christians all over the world in worshipping God through the giving of our financial resources. If you are a first-time visitor, you are our guest and we do not expect you to give an offering. For members and friends, the ministry of this congregation is completely dependent upon your generous giving. Our offering is a significant act of worship.)



## PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Pastor: Let us pray.

Creator of the stars of night, Thy people's everlasting Light:

People: O Christ, Redeemer, save us all and hear Thy servants when they call.

Pastor: O God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, the wonder and beauty

of Your creation is surpassed only by the awe and miracle that You became one

with us in the incarnation of the Son of God, the Son of Mary.

Thou, grieving that the ancient curse should doom to death a universe,

People: hast found the healing, full of grace, to cure and save our ruined race.

Pastor: O Jesus Christ, true Son of God, You came into the world to save sinners.

Come now to us in Word and Sacrament to give us life by living in us. O Thou, whose coming is with dread to judge the living and the dead,

People: preserve us from the ancient foe while still we dwell on earth below.

Pastor: O Holy Spirit, Lord and giver of life, move us to truly repent of our sins and more

truly to be filled with faith in Christ, our life.

As the angels revealed to Mary and Joseph the miracle of Your visitation and to the shepherds the majesty of the incarnation of Your Son and to the Wise Men the holiness of the gift of Your salvation, so continue to send forth preachers of Your Word and witnesses of Your truth, that many may come to believe in Your

love and receive eternal life. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: Inspire those whom you send to preach and proclaim Your salvation, that they

may remain steadfast in the clarity and purpose of Your Word. Fill the entire earth with the beautiful news of Your grace and mercy. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: For all who are in any need—all who suffer illness, injury, or any adversity—send

Your healing and help, forgiveness and strength. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: Give to all who have died in Christ Your safekeeping and peace. Bring us all at

last to the great joy of our resurrection and the life of the world to come. Lord, in

Your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: To God the Father and the Son and Holy Spirit, Three in One.

People: praise, honor, might, and glory be from age to age eternally. Amen.

#### **♥ SACRAMENT ▼**

#### **PREFACE**

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

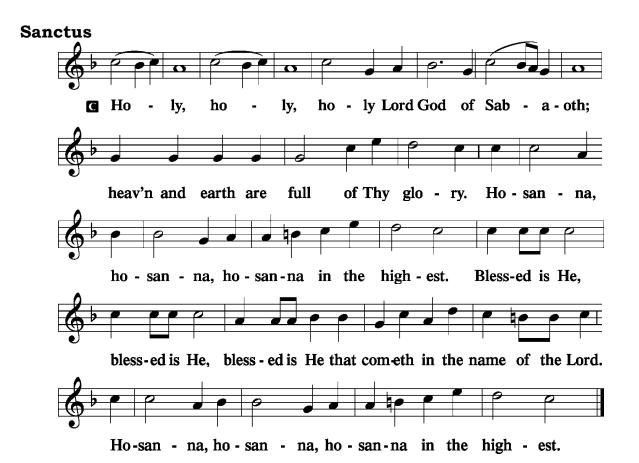
Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

## PROPER PREFACE

Pastor:

It is truly meet, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Beginning from His home on high in human flesh, He came to die, and from the cross, He became Your bright redeeming light. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:



## LORD'S PRAYER

People: 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.

## THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

Pastor:

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My ♣ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My ♣ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

## **PAX DOMINI**

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: Amen.



## **DISTRIBUTION HYMNS**

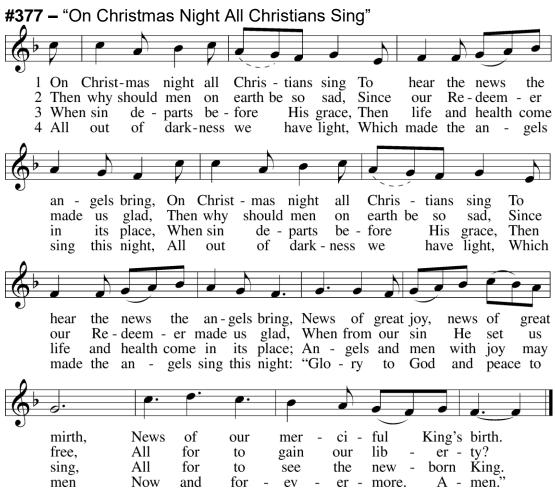




- 5 "These are the signs that you shall mark: The swaddling clothes and manger dark. There you will find the infant laid By whom the heav'ns and earth were made."
- 8 Welcome to earth, O noble Guest, Through whom the sinful world is blest! You came to share my misery That You might share Your joy with me.

Text: Martin Luther, 1483–1546; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–78, alt. Tune: Geistliche lieder, Leipzig, 1539, ed. Valten Schumann Text and tune: Public domain

6 How glad we'll be to find it so! Then with the shepherds let us go To see what God for us has done In sending us His own dear Son.



Text and tune: English
Text and tune: Public domain

## POST-COMMUNION COLLECT

Pastor: Let us pray.

Christ, to Thee, with God the Father,

And, O Holy Ghost, to Thee

Hymn and chant and high thanksgiving

And unending praises be, Honor, glory, and dominion,

Honor, glory, and dominio

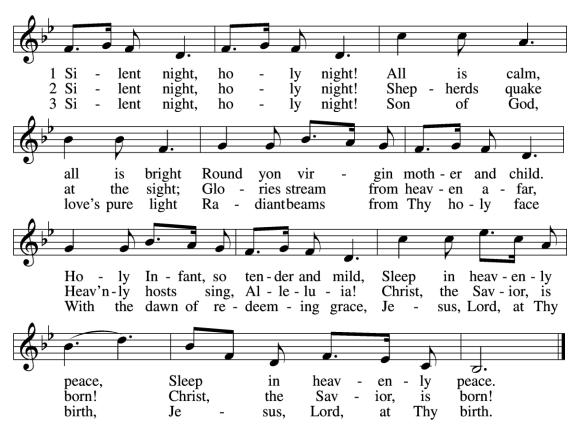
And eternal victory

Evermore and evermore.

People: Amen.

# The Lighting of the Christmas Candles

# HYMN #363 - "Silent Night, Holy Night"



Text: Franz Joseph Mohr, 1792-1848; tr. John F. Young, 1820-85

Tune: Franz Xaver Gruber, 1787-1863

Text and tune: Public domain

# Christmas Prayer

## **BENEDICTION**

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

People: Amen.



Text: Charles Wesley, 1707–88, alt. Tune: Felix Mendelssohn, 1809–47 Text and tune: Public domain

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## Organ Postlude –

# "Good Christian Men, Rejoice"

Charles Sergisson (1905-1988)

4th Century Latin Carol

**Those Serving Today:** 

Pastor Rev. Charles Minetree

Officiant
Lay Reader Sandy Collins

Director of Music Muriel Hopkins

Altar Guild Carolyn Henn/Joan Goeller

Tuesday	December 24	9 pm	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
Thursday	December 26	7 pm	Choir practice CANCELLED
Sunday	December 29	9:00 am 10:00 am Post worship	Sunday school, ages 3-12 Worship Adult Bible Class

# **Ministry Notes**

## **Sunday Adult Bible Class**

We meet immediately after 10 AM Divine Service in the conference room. Our topic will be examining insights given in the book: **Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes**, Cultural Studies in the Gospels by Kenneth E, Bailey. We will gain insights into some of the Bible passages that are covered in the gospels.

## **Wednesday Lunch Bible Class**

Our Wednesday Lunch Bible Class has decided not to meet in December due to the busy schedules. We will resume in January.

## **Adult Confirmation Class**

Pastor Minetree is teaching an Adult Confirmation Class every Monday at 7:00 pm. In this class we cover the basic teaching of the Christian Faith. Feel free to drop by to join us for one or more classes.

#### PRAYER REQUESTS

- -Elaine Mueller, who had hip surgery and is recovering well
- -Sharon Minetree, who had good test results
- -Pastor Elliott Robertson, who is having bypass surgery
- -For complete recovery of Barbara Griffa, June Dennis' sister who is in rehab
- -Sylvia Holland, a family relative of June Dennis, for her complete recovery from a stroke
- -For peace in Ukraine, Israel, Gaza, and Russia
- -Bonnie and Joe Castrilli as she cares for her husband who has dementia
- -Ginger Glindemann for family members who are being treated for cancer
- -Winnie Kruelle who has been diagnosed with cancer
- -Naomi Kruelle for health reasons
- -Rosemarie Wilson, the daughter of Filleseta James, for return of strength in her left leg
- -Joseph Woah-tee missing, and whereabouts unknown



# POINTSETTIAS WERE GIVEN TO THE WORSHIP OF OUR LORD

In Glory to God – Guenter & Elaine Schwab

For Peace in the World – Gabriel & Moni Tenabe

To the Glory of God and in Memory of Loved Ones – Lillian Noel

# In memory of

Parents and grandparents, Floyd and Peggy Bland and Kennth Belz – the Bland Family
Ervin Dietrich and Ruth Dietrich – Stacey Dietrich
Husband, Ted – Carolyn Henn

Our parents, Efiok and Affiog Adah, and George and Annie Flood – Denise Adah
Our sisters, Brenda Eaton Edwards Smith and Vanessa Eaton Lemma – Denise Adah
Beloved husband and father, Richard Goeller – The Goeller Family
Those members of our congregation who have gone before us to their eternal home this year – The Goeller
Family

Mother, father, brother, and husband - Cathy Belz

## In honor of

My children and grandchildren, Carolyn Henn

John Rebstock – Phyllis Rebstock

Our granddaughters, Madilyn and Claire Ruble – Jerry and Mary Ruble

Our beloved Pumpkin, Jazzie, Tillie, Shelby, Lulu, Twinkletoes, Tinkerbell, Maya, Tulip, Vous Kitty, and Spike – Laura Pickering

# In loving memory of

John Pickering, Paul and Alice Stoltman, Herbert and Mary Pickering, Raymond and Bessie Pickering, Harold and Edith Hurley – Laura L. Pickering