



GRACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

2023 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Sunday 6:00 p.m.

[The sanctuary is dimly lit as the congregation gathers.]

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

Please stand and face the entrance to the sanctuary.

OPENING ADDRESS

- P The original title of the Christmas carol “*In dulci jubilo*” (LSB 386, “Now Sing We, Now Rejoice”) was interpreted by the famous French organist and composer Marcel Dupre as “In Quiet Joy.” Another familiar hymn tells of the birth of the Savior in the words “How silently the wondrous gift is given!” (LSB 361:3). Though there were moments of rage and loud opposition through His earthly ministry, many of our Lord’s activities happened in the quiet and stillness of His presence. Indeed, even as He accomplished His goal, He entered Jerusalem in quiet humility, suffered obediently, closed His eyes and breathed His last in death, and finally was laid in the stone-cold silence of a tomb. There are times for loud praise and rejoicing, but this Holy Night let us gather in quiet joy contemplating the mystery that, in this little babe in the little town of Bethlehem of Judea, fulfilled God’s ancient promise of redemption and peace for all who would be drawn in the silence of the Spirit of God through His Word and blessed Sacraments.

OPENING SENTENCES

- P In dulci jubilo! In quiet joy! In quiet joy, we gather this evening, this very special, holy night.
- C **The Lord Almighty grant us a quiet night and peace at the last.**
- P We gather from our busy lives, our hurried routines, the loud noises of life,
- C **in quiet joy.**
- P We bring our wearied bodies, our troubled hearts, our restless souls in hope,
- C **in quiet joy.**
- P God is here, the LORD is in His holy temple;

C let all the earth keep silence before Him.

“God Himself Is Present”

LSB 907

God Himself is present: Let us now adore Him

And with awe appear before Him.

God is in His temple; All within keep silence;

Humbly kneel in deepest rev'rence.

He alone On His throne is our God and Savior;

Praise His name forever!

PROCESSIONAL VERSICLES

The Christ candle is carried forward followed by the acolyte quietly processing between each reading until reaching the front of the sanctuary.

P The Spirit and the Church cry out:

C Come, Lord Jesus.

Process in quiet joy.

P All those who await His appearance pray:

C Come, Lord Jesus.

Process in quiet joy.

P The whole creation pleads:

C Come, Lord Jesus.

[The Christ candle is placed on the altar; the altar candles and Advent wreath candles are lighted, and the altar lights are fully lit during the singing of a hymn. The house lights remain half-lit]

ADVENT CAROL

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

LSB 357 sts. 1 & 6

O come, O come, Emmanuel,

And ransom captive Israel,

That mourns in lonely exile here

Until the Son of God appear.

Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, Thou Dayspring come and cheer,
Our spirits by Thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight. **Refrain**

INVOCATION

P In the name of the Father and of the **T** Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

Please be seated.

ADVENT ADDRESS

P The days and weeks preceding Christmas are full of hustle and bustle for many. Between parties and shopping, cooking and baking, wrapping and card writing, along with many more things, we are occupied and busy as we anticipate this night and the assured joy to come celebrating the Savior born for us. More than two thousand years ago, though, that wasn't the case. Nobody was prepared for what was to take place. Yet everything soon changed in that little town of Bethlehem. Quietly, unexpectedly, in the city of David, the long-awaited child was born who is Christ, our Lord.

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

LSB 361 sts. 1 – 3

- 1 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.
- 2 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!

- 3 How silently, how silently
The wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His heav'n.
No ear may hear His coming;
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him, still
The dear Christ enters in.

CHRISTMAS EVE ADDRESS

- P As we gather for this special, most holy night, we find joy in repeating the words of God's heavenly messengers who proclaimed a message of peace and good will, a word from God that was appearing in the Word made flesh—the baby Jesus born to bring the light of redemption to a people on earth lost in darkness.

Most of us have heard the beautiful carol “O Holy Night,” but sometimes we forget that none of us makes this night holy. The Lord makes this night holy, and He needs no help from us. What He does ask of us is that we listen to the familiar story, that we believe its truth and promise, and live in reflection of what God has done to save us. We cannot make this night holy, but we can keep it holy with faith that kneels at the manger, heads bowed in prayer and adoration, and voices raised in a joyful song of thanksgiving and praise.

READERS PRESENTATION

Grace Confirmands

O Holy Night

O holy night! the stars are brightly shining;
It is the night of the dear Savior's birth;
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,

Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn;

Chorus 1

Fall on your knees,
O, hear the angel voices!
O night divine,
O night when Christ was born!
O night, O holy night,
O night divine!

Verse 2

Truly He taught us to love one another;
His law is love and His gospel is peace;
Chains shall He break, for the slave is our brother,
And in His name all oppression shall cease.
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we,
Let all within us praise His holy name;

Chorus 2

Christ is the Lord,
O, praise His name forever!
His power and glory
Evermore proclaim!
His power and glory,
Evermore proclaim.

Final Chorus

Fall on your knees,
O, hear the angel voices!
O night divine,
O night when Christ was born!
O night, O holy night,
O night divine!

Adolphe Charles Adam, John Sullivan Dwight, Placide Cappeau. Words & Music: Public Domain

THE PROCLAMATION

P Tonight we gather amid the busyness to reflect, rejoice, and ponder anew the joy of our Savior, come to dwell with us, and to prepare our hearts to receive the greatest gifts ever given and received by and through Him—hope, forgiveness, newness, and an assured promise of eternal life through faith in Him. Let us go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, and with the shepherds adore the child lying in his mother's arms. O Come, Let Us Adore Him.

Please stand.

PROCLAMATION CAROL

"O Come, All Ye Faithful"

LSB 379

- 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 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,
O Sing, all ye bright hosts of heaven above!
Glory to God all glory in the highest: ***Refrain***

SALUTATION and PRAYER OF THE DAY

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Let us pray . . . O God, You make us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Grant that as we joyfully

receive Him as our Redeemer, we may with sure confidence behold Him when He comes to be our Judge; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Please be seated.

PROPHECY CONCERNING THE MESSIAH

P Our gracious God did not become one of us unexpectantly; rather, through the ages, He promised to enter human history to save us. Listen now to the words of the prophet Isaiah:

*For unto to us a child is born,
unto 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.*

Isaiah 9:6

After the reading:

P This is God's Word for us tonight.

C Glory to God in the highest.

What Child Is This

LSB 370

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, haste to bring Him laud,
The babe, the son of Mary!

Why lies 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!

L Isaiah wrote about a descendant of Jesse, David's father:

*"There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from
his roots shall bear fruit. With righteousness He shall judge the poor and
decide with equity for the meek of the earth."* *Isaiah 11:1*

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

LSB 357 sts. 4 & 5

4 O come, Thou Branch of Jesse's tree,
Free them from Satan's tyranny
That trust Thy mighty pow'r to save,
And give them vict'ry o'er the grave. **Refrain**
Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

5 O come, Thou Key of David, come,
And open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery. **Refrain**

L In the Book of Numbers we read that the Savior would be royal.

*“The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor,
the oracle of the man whose eye is opened,
the oracle of him who hears the words of God,
and knows the knowledge of the Most High,
who sees the vision of the Almighty,
falling down with his eyes uncovered:
I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near:
a star shall come out of Jacob,
and a scepter shall rise out of Israel.”*

Numbers 24:15-17b

The Night Will Soon Be Ending

LSB 337 sts. 1 & 4

The night will soon be ending;
The dawn cannot be far.
Let songs of praise ascending
Now greet the Morning Star!
All you whom darkness frightens
With guilt or grief or pain,
God’s radiant Star now brightens
And bids you sing again.

Yet nights will bring their sadness
And rob our hearts of peace,
And sin in all its madness
Around us may increase.
But now one Star is beaming
Whose rays have pierced the night:
God comes for our redeeming
From sin’s oppressive might.

L Isaiah envisions God’s people in the midst of calamities and affliction; the way of repentance is prepared, and they await the advent of God’s salvation. The “voice” announces the good tidings that God is present to save his people.

*Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,*

*and cry to her
that her warfare is ended,
that her iniquity is pardoned,
that she has received from the LORD's hand
double for all her sins.*

A voice cries:

*"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD;
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.
And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."*

*Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;
behold, his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.
He will tend his flock like a shepherd;
he will gather the lambs in his arms;
he will carry them in his bosom,
and gently lead those that are with young.*

Isaiah

40:1-5

Handel's Messiah: Comfort Ye My People

Bob Cochran

CHRISTMAS EVE MESSAGE

"Jesus: The Advent King"

Pastor Marty Tyler

Please stand.

CHRISTMAS EVE PRAYERS

P God's own Son is born a child. God the Father is reconciled. So with all boldness and confidence, let us bring our needs before His throne of grace.

Brief silence for reflection.

P Behold the Child our Lord Jesus Christ is born in Bethlehem. O come, let us adore Him,

C **Christ the Lord!**

P His light shines in the darkness of this world. O come, let us adore Him,

C **Christ the Lord!**

P He brings peace, unity, and salvation to all the earth. O come, let us adore Him,

C **Christ the Lord!**

P He brings good news to those who are far off. O come, let us adore Him,

C **Christ the Lord!**

P He comes to sacrifice His life for His people. O come, let us adore Him,

C **Christ the Lord!**

P He comes to restore all creation. O come, let us adore Him,

C **Christ the Lord!**

P He comes to comfort the oppressed, persecuted, and grieving. O come, let us adore Him,

C **Christ the Lord!**

P He comes to heal those who are sick, injured, and recovering. O come, let us adore Him,

C Christ the Lord!

P O God, You have not forgotten Your people, but sent them Your only Son in the humble form of an infant. Keep our eyes fixed on Him throughout the year, that we may be filled with Christmas wonder, joy and peace; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

**C 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.**

Please be seated.

PROPHECY FULFILLED

P “All is calm, all is bright.” Is it really? We sing those words from the hymn “Silent Night, Holy Night” every Christmas Eve. Yet the world in which we live is in so many ways neither calm nor bright. War, violence, shootings, unending anxiety: these are anything but calm and bright. Yet we sing. Why? Because the calmness and brightness of which we sing on Christmas Eve comes not from politics or laws or humanity’s ability to overcome obstacles; it comes from God. “Glory to God in the highest,” sings the multitude of angels to the shepherds, “and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased” (Luke 2:14). In Christ, we are given peace beyond human understanding, peace flowing from God to us, peace that comes from God’s self-sacrificing love. So filled with hope, we join the angel chorus and sing of the peace found only in Jesus.

I Heard the Bells On Christmas Day

Grace Ensemble

- P We hear again the Good News from the Gospel according to St. Luke and we sing hymns echoing the sounds of the angels on that first Holy Night.

FIRST READING

Luke 2:1-5

- P *In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. 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, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.*

O Little Town of Bethlehem

LSB 361:4

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;
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Immanuel!

SECOND READING

Luke 2:6-7

- P *And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. 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.*

Away in a Manger

LSB 364

- 1 Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the 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 Thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

- 3 Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
And take us to heaven to live with Thee there.

THIRD READING

Luke 2:8-14

P *And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. 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. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths 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,
and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!"*

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

LSB 380

Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"

Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Refrain:

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

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 the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as Man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel! **Refrain**

FOURTH READING

Luke 2:15-16

- P Whether we are singing in Latin, "Gloria in excelsis Deo!" or English, "Glory to God in the highest!" or some other language, it is the message of the words that matters. Tonight, we hear from Holy Scripture the story of promises from of old, now fulfilled. Gladly, with our hymns and carols of praise, we worship our Lord and rejoice in the glory of Christmas!

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." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger.

Angels We Have Heard On High

LSB 368

- 1 Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply,
Echoing their joyous strains.

Refrain

Glo - - - - ri - a in excelsis Deo.
Glo - - - - ri - a in excelsis Deo.

- 2 Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heav'nly song? **Refrain**
- 3 Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn King. **Refrain**

P *And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.*

SPECIAL MUSIC

“God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen”

God rest ye merry gentlemen
Let nothing you dismay.
Remember Christ our Savior
Was born on Christmas Day.
To save us all from Satan's pow'r
When we were gone astray.

Chorus

O tidings of comfort and joy,
Comfort and joy.
O tidings of comfort and joy.

From God our heavenly Father
A blessed angel came.
And unto certain shepherds
Brought tidings of the same.
How that in Bethlehem was born
The Son of God by name. ***Chorus***

Bridge

Joy to the world, for Christ the Lord has finally come.
Let every heart receive the newborn King,
O come all of heaven and nature sing!

** The room begins to dim in preparation of the LIGHT SHINES IN THE DARKNESS candle lighting.*

Please stand.

THE LIGHT SHINES IN THE DARKNESS: John 1:1-14

P *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

C **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning is now, and will be forever and ever. Amen.**

I LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

The pastor lights a candle from the Christ candle and proceeds to light the candle of the ushers and they in turn light the candles of the first worshiper in each pew. The lights are then passed down each row until every candle is lit. Please remember to tip only the unlit candle.

Silent Night, Holy Night

LSB 363

- 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 Thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

CLOSING PRAYER

- P Let us pray. . . Heavenly Father, of whose love the angels sang when Jesus was born in Bethlehem, accept our worship and praise this holy night. Amid the clutter and clamor of our Christmas Day celebration, help us to focus on Your words:

*"Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior,
who is Christ the Lord."*

We pray that during the giving and receiving of gifts, You will keep us ever mindful of the greatest gift, Jesus, Your only begotten Son, who came to seek and to save the lost.

Move us to offer ourselves to You in obedience and praise as we proclaim the message of the manger to the world; through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

- C **Amen.**



Please extinguish your candle and kindly return them to an usher as you exit.

BENEDICTION

- P God Almighty—the Father, who gave His Son for the life of the world,
the **T** Son, who has revealed to us God's grace, mercy, and love, and the

Holy Spirit, by whose blessed work in us we are seen to be children of God—bless you now and forevermore.

C Amen.

REDEMPTION HYMN OF JOY

P “Joy to the World” is Isaac Watts’ interpretation of Psalm 98, which says: “Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!” Isaac pondered the real reason for shouting joyfully to the LORD—the Messiah has come to redeem us. Join me in singing joyfully to the LORD, for our Redeemer has come!

Joy to the World

LSB 387

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.

DISMISSAL

P God bless us, everyone!

C **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE



Glory to God in the Highest and Peace on Earth!

THOSE SERVING THIS EVENING

Officiant _____ Pastor Marty Tyler
Piano/Cello _____ Rhonda Walker
Technical Team _____ Jayson Shanle and Diana Stanley
Readers _____ Praise Team Members
Ushers _____ Juris Mergups, Layne Crist, Owen Creist, Bob West, Larry Runnels, David Wilson
Acolyte _____ Erik
Hauan _____