

Lessons and Carols Service

The First Sunday after Christmas Day

December 27, 2020

THE WORD OF GOD

Opening Hymn No. 100 *“O Come, All Ye Faithful*

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.*

God from God,
Light from Light eternal,
lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
only-begotten Son of the Father;

Refrain

Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation;
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
glory to God, glory in the highest;

Refrain

Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be glory given;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing;

Refrain

In praise and thanksgiving, let us rejoice together as we welcome our Savior, Christ the Lord, God With Us, Prince of Peace. The prophets foretold his coming, Mary heard an angel's call and responded with strength and love beyond all telling. John the Baptist prepared the way with raw honesty and courage, and proclaimed his redeeming presence. Through all the ages, Loving and Mighty God, you have called your people from darkness into light, making our gladness greater and our joy increase. As we celebrate a child born for us, a son given to us, we ask that you make the light of Christ shine ever brighter in our own hearts that we may be called once again to bring peace and reconciliation to our families, our communities, and to our world.

Let us pray in the words our Savior taught us:

**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, for ever and ever. Amen.**

First Lesson Isaiah 7:10-15

The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test. Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good."

Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.
All **Thanks be to God.**

Hymn No. 87..... "*God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen*"

God rest you 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;

Refrain:
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy.

From God our heav'nly 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,

Refrain

"Fear not, then," said the angel,
"let nothing you affright;
this day is born a Savior
of a pure virgin bright,
to free all those who trust in him
from Satan's pow'r and might."

Refrain

Now to the Lord sing praises,
all you within this place.
And with true love and charity
each other now embrace.
This holy tide of Christmas doth bring redeeming grace.

Refrain

Second Lesson Luke 1:26-58

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.

Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.
All **Thanks be to God.**

Hymn No. 79..... "*O little town of Bethlehem*"

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 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 this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still
the dear Christ enters in.

Where children pure and happy
pray to the blessed Child,
where misery cries out to thee,
Son of the mother mild;
where charity stand watching
and faith holds wide the door,
the dark night wakes, the glory breaks,
and Christmas comes once more.

Third Lesson **Luke 1:57-80**

The time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. But his mother said, "No; he is to be called John." They said to her, "None of your relatives has this name." Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him. He asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And all of them were amazed. Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. Fear came over all their neighbors, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea. All who heard them pondered them and said, "What then will this child become?" For, indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him. Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them. He has raised up a mighty savior for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us. Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and has remembered his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham, to grant us that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins. By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel.

Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

All **Thanks be to God.**

Hymn No. 81 "*Lo, how a Rose e're blooming*"

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming
from tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming
as seers of old have sung.
It came, a blossom bright,
amid the cold of winter,
when half spent was the night.

Isaiah 'twas foretold it,
the Rose I have in mind,
with Mary we behold it,
the Virgin Mother kind.
To show God's love aright,
she bore to us a Savior,
when half spent was the night.

O Flower, whose fragrance tender
with sweetness fills the air.
Dispel in glorious splendor
the darkness everywhere;
true man, yet very God,
from sin and death now save us
and share our every load.

Fourth Lesson Luke 2:1-20

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!" 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.

Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.
All **Thanks be to God.**

Solo by Matthew Johnson "*Mary, Did You Know?*" Greene and Lowry

Fifth Lesson Hebrews 1:1-12

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you"? Or again, "I will be his Father, and he will be my Son"? And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him." Of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, and his servants flames of fire." But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the righteous scepter is the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions." And, "In the beginning, Lord, you founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands; they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like clothing; like a cloak you will roll them up, and like clothing they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will never end."

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All **Thanks be to God.**

Hymn No. 83 "*In the Bleak Midwinter*"

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
in the bleak midwinter, long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;
heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign:
in the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed
the Lord God incarnate, Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels may have gathered there,
cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;
but his mother only, in her maiden bliss,
worshiped the beloved with a kiss.

What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
if I were a wise man, I would do my part;
yet what I can I give him--give my heart.

The Prayers of the People

Let us pray for the Church around the world as it celebrates the birth of Christ. Bless all those who are entrusted with Christian ministry that your Word might be proclaimed with truth across our world.

Bless all those who are working on the frontlines. Give them courage and strength to endure. Protect them as they work, surround them with your compassion as they leave work, and give rest to their weary souls.

Bestow your wisdom on all who govern, that in honoring the earth and its diverse races, cultures, and religions, we may celebrate the light of Christ.

Grant reconciliation to those surrounded with conflict, racism, and violence, that they may live in the peace of Christ.

Let us pray for all who are cold and hungry this night. Embrace with your tender care all who have no place to lay their head that they may experience the hope of Christ.

Let us pray for all who are anxious, depressed, lonely, or ill. Draw near to those who find this season a source of pain or grief. Be present all those who are isolated this Christmas. Give peace to all those who are overwhelmed by quarantine, and heal this world of COVID. We especially pray for those who are facing illness who we remember in our own hearts ... *silence*... that all may feel the comfort of Christ.

Open our hearts to your presence, deepen and strengthen our faith, help us to seek your light and hope.

Let us give thanks for all the faithful departed who have been bearers of the Word made flesh. Give us grace to follow your holy ones in lives of faith and commitment, that we may join with the hosts of heaven in singing the praises to God.

All these things and whatever else you see that we need, grant us, O God, for the sake of him who died and rose again, and now lives and reigns within the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever

The Peace

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

All **And also with you.**

Blessing

Celebrant May God bless you and keep you. May God make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you now and always.

Closing Hymn No. 99..... “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!*

While shepherds kept their watching
o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens
there shone a holy light.

Refrain

The shepherds feared and trembled
when lo! above the earth
rang out the angel chorus
that hailed our Savior's birth.

Refrain

Down in a lowly manger
the humble Christ was born,
and God sent us salvation
that blessed Christmas morn.

Refrain

Dismissal

Celebrant Let us bless the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God. Alleluia.**