

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP
December 24, 2022 - 2:00 – 4:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Introduction to the Day

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.

PROCLAMATION

P: Unto us a child is born. Unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be on his shoulder; and his name shall be called wonderful, mighty counselor, the Prince of peace. O sing unto the Lord a new song; for he has done marvelous things. Glory be to the father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.

Amen.

P: In the beginning was the Word,

C: In the beginning when God began to create the heavens and the earth,

P: and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

C: the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep while a spirit from God swept over the face of the waters.

P: He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.

C: Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

P: What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

C: And God saw that the light was good.

P: The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

C: Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

**So God created humankind in their image,
In the image of God they were created;
Male and female God created them. And God blessed them.**

P: And 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.

C: God saw everything that God had made, and indeed, it was very good.

P: From the fullness of the Word made flesh we have all received grace upon grace.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN OF PRAISE "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

#283

INVITATION

Jesus Christ is the Light of the world!

He is the Light no darkness can overcome.

At darkest night we gather to celebrate the great light of our salvation.

With the heavenly host we sing, "Glory to God in the highest heaven."

In Christ, God's Word is made flesh and lives among us.

With the shepherds, we will tell of the wonders we have seen and heard.

The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAYER OF THE DAY

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

P: Let us pray.

C: 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. Amen.

READING **Isaiah 9:2-7**

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness —
on them light has shined.
You 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.
For 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.
For all the boots of the tramping warriors

and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.
For 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.
His 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.

L: The word of the Lord. **C: Thanks Be to God.**

SPECIAL MUSIC

“Silent Night”
“Still, Still, Still”

Children's Bells 2 & 4:30 p.m.
Heavenly Bells 9 p.m.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

GOSPEL Luke 2:1-20

Our Christmas Eve story comes from the Gospel of Luke.

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. To us is born a Savior.

Jesus Christ our Lord.

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. To us is born a Savior.

Jesus Christ our Lord.

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. To us is born a Savior.

Jesus Christ our Lord.

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. To us is born a Savior.

Jesus Christ our Lord.

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.” To us is born a Savior.

Jesus Christ our Lord.

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!” To us is born a Savior.

Jesus Christ our Lord.

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. To us is born a Savior.

Jesus Christ our Lord.

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. To us is born a Savior.

Jesus Christ our Lord.

The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. To us is born a Savior.

Jesus Christ our Lord.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON – “The Immeasurable Realized”

People of God, grace to you and peace from God, and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. AMEN

I bring you Good News of Great Joy for all people! These are the angels words that glorious night, and they are words that we are reminded of again here this day.

God takes on human form and lives among us. Jesus Christ is the embodiment of Good News and Great Joy for all people.

Throughout the season of Advent here at Good Shepherd we have been enjoying the theme of God’s Immeasurable Hope – Peace – Joy – Love and what that means for us as people of faith. Throughout the season we invited folks to write moments where they have experienced those things.

When have you experienced that immeasurable Joy of God’s love for God’s people? Surely, at some point in our lives, we have had that moment of unimaginable joy. Right? It is Christmas after all! You *should* be feeling that joy right now! At least that is what we are told.

What about hope? Certainly we’ve had those moments where we’ve experienced the immeasurable HOPE that comes with Christ.

Peace? We know peace. Of course!

And Love? Absolutely!

Immeasurable indeed, because God is good.

But what about when we don't. You see, we didn't just invite people to think of moments where they have experienced those things, we also encouraged folks to think of moments where they have longed for those things.

We know that as people of faith it isn't always perfect. The immeasurable HOPE – PEACE – JOY – LOVE of Christ isn't always obvious or experienced by everyone. Or perhaps it IS experienced, but where we least expect it.

That is how the story goes in Luke's Gospel. It is Luke's Gospel that gives us most of the birth narrative. Matthew and Mark touch on it, but it is Luke who details Mary and Joseph's journey. It is Luke who tells of the no vacancy inn. Luke introduces us to the manger. It is Luke's telling of this story that has our minds putting this event in a barn full of animals. Luke's gospel has shaped our understanding of the story around the birth of our savior. It's got cows, pigs, sheep, mules, allllll the livestock.

And it is Good.

And notice who it is that the angels appear to. While we think of the immeasurable HOPE – PEACE – JOY – LOVE of Christ, and that it comes to those who have their stuff together, the reality is that the angels appeared to shepherds in a field keeping watch over their flocks by night.

Rightfully, they are terrified. And that is before the whole multitude of heavenly hosts showed up!

After all, why would the angel bring them, the lowly shepherds, the societal outcasts, why would Good News of Great Joy come to them? That isn't how it is supposed to be. That isn't what we are told.

But it did. The Good News of Great Joy does come to them. It is for them. They are supposed to go and see this thing that has happened, for them this day.

The shepherd's had likely heard of the coming Messiah. They knew of the prophet Isaiah and the words he spoke. One has been born who breaks the rod of the oppressor. He shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. They've read these words. They know them. They're waiting for it, too. But, like anybody, that is an incredible word to comprehend, and who is to blame them for thinking it couldn't possibly be for them.

It would do us a lot of good to remember what else Luke brings to the birth narrative. Before the baby is even born, Luke tells of Mary's experience upon learning that she is to be a mother, to the Messiah, the Savior of the Nations. It is in Mary's song that we realize who else this good news is for, not just the ones who have it all together.

Paraphrased in Holden Even Prayer, Mary sings,

“My soul proclaims your greatness, O God, and my spirit rejoices in you, You have looked with love on your servant here, and blessed me all my life through.

Great and mighty are you, O Holy One, strong is your kindness evermore. How you favor the weak and lowly one, humbling the proud of heart.

You have cast the mighty down from their thrones, and uplifted the humble of heart, You have filled the hungry with wondrous things, and left the wealthy no part.

Great and mighty are you, O faithful one, strong is your justice strong your love, As you promised to Sarah and Abraham, kindness forevermore.

“My soul proclaims your greatness, O God, and my spirit rejoices in you, You have looked with love on your servant here, and blessed me all my life through.

The Angels came to the Shepherd’s not because that is all that this message is for, but because they needed the reminder that the Good News of God’s Love, Good News of Great Joy, is for them, too. It is for the lowly. It is for the humble. The lost. The lonely. And the least.

People of God, the wonder of the Christmas promise is that the immeasurable HOPE – PEACE – JOY – LOVE is realized this day. Not just for those who have experienced those things, or think they deserve it most, but perhaps even moreso for those who are longing for them. It isn’t an immediate, but it is a reminder. That in those moments of longing God comes down, is with us, and walks alongside us.

The immeasurable of this season is realized in the moments where it is needed most. It is realized in the difficulty of life. Yes, the joy and happiness that is thrust upon us, but also the difficulty we know too well.

Church, the Good News of Great Joy is for you this day. Go and do as the shepherd’s did. They returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. To us is born a Savior.

Let us go and do the same.

Thanks be to God. AMEN.

HYMN

“Joy to the World”

#267

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,

who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

LITANY AND PRAYERS FOR THE CHRIST MASS:

P: I will sing of your steadfast love, O Lord, forever.

C: With my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations.

P: To us you have brought abundant joy.

C: Before you we rejoice and sing.

P: O God, to whom glory is sung in the highest while on earth peace is proclaimed to all people of goodwill, grant that goodwill to us, your servants. Cleanse us from all our sins, and give perpetual peace to us and to all people; through your mercy, O God, who blesses and governs all things, now and forever.

C: Amen

P: Tomorrow the iniquity of the earth shall be blotted out.

C: And the Savior of the world shall reign over us.

P: The people who walk in darkness have seen a great light.

C: For those abiding in the land of death, a new splendor has appeared.

P: God of love, Father of all, the darkness that covered the earth has given way to the bright dawn of your Word made flesh. Make us a people of this light. Make us faithful to your Word, that we may bring your life to the waiting world.; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen

P: Today for our sake, the King of heaven is born of a virgin mother:

C: To reclaim the lost for the heavenly kingdom.

P: All the angels cry aloud with joy:

C: For God has come himself to save all humanity.

P: Almighty God, you wonderfully created and yet more wonderfully restored the dignity of human nature. In your mercy, let us share the divine life of Jesus Christ who came to share our humanity, and who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen

P: The peace of Christ Be with you always. **C: And also with you.**

OFFERING

“Child of Peace and Love”

Senior Choir

OFFERING PRAYER

P: Good and loving God,

C: we rejoice in the birth of Jesus, who came among the poor to bring the riches of your grace. As you have blessed us with these gifts, let them be a blessing for others. With the trees of the field, with all the earth and heaven, we shout for joy at the coming of your son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

COMMUNION

4:30 Special Music – Stephanie Wagner and Dad

CHOIR ANTHEM

“Night of Silence”

Senior Choir

DISTRIBUTION OF THE LIGHT: “Peace, Peace”

CLOSING PRAYER AND BENEDICTION

P: Light of the World, All good things shine brightly in your kingdom. Change us so that we shine with the brilliance of your grace and truth, for the sake of the Christ-child who brought light to the darkness and life where there was death, Jesus Christ our savior.

Amen.

P: The Almighty and Incarnate God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit bless you now and forever.

Amen

HYMN "Silent Night" (all sing) (*words will be in the bulletin*)

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.

P: Go in peace, God's Word has become flesh and lives among us.

C: Thanks be to God!

All extinguish candles.

POSTLUDE



Worship on Sunday, Jan. 1 will be at 10 a.m.

December Financial Snapshot

Through December 21

Total Revenue **\$22,973**

Total Expenses **\$19,696**

+3,277 Difference

Rest of December

Financial Forecast

\$35,000 Offering Goal

\$25,000 projected expenses

Year-end response:

\$3,000 towards the Boiler Loan Debt

*We've nearly paid off that debt with gifts that have come in since year-end giving letter went out!

Please note: Our preference is giving to the general fund and we will handle a surplus when we get there.