

Midnight Candlelight Christmas Eve Service
December 24, 2020

PRELUDE *Do You Hear What I Hear* Carole Caswell, Soprano Solo
 The Holly and the Ivy Rachael Wertz, Soprano Solo
 I Wonder as I Wonder Gary Knisely, Tenor Solo
 The Star of Bethlehem Shine Upon Us Tonight Dr. Troy Winemiller, Organ

WESTMINSTER CHIMES

GREETING and LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES (Based on Isaiah 9)

Pastor: After counting the weeks of Advent, we find ourselves standing before the stable;
 waiting to witness the emerging Light. (*Light candle*)

Congregation: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great Light! (*Light candle*)

Pastor: Those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them the Light shines! (*Light candle*)

Congregation: The true Light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. (*Light candle*)

Pastor: And the Word became flesh and lived among us. (*Light candle*)

All: *Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth, peace and good will.*

HYMN

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

*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 men, from Heaven’s all gracious King.”
The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.*

*Still through the cloven skies they come, with peaceful wings unfurled;
And still their heavenly music floats, o’er all the weary world:
Above its sad and lowly plains they bend on hovering wing,
And ever o’er its Babel sound the blessed angels sing.*

*O ye, 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 their wings;
Oh rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing.*

*For lo! the days are hastening on, by prophet bards foretold;
When with the ever-circling years, shall come the time foretold,
When peace shall over all the earth, its ancient splendors fling,
And the whole world send back the song, which now the angels sing.*

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 2:1-20

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ² (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³ And everyone went to their own town to register.

⁴ So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

A CHRISTMAS STORY

HYMN

Adeste Fidelis (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.
O come, let us adore Him. O come, let us adore Him.
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

CANDLELIGHTING

Pastor: We have now come to that special moment in our Christmas Eve worship, when we will light our candles, remembering that as Christ comes bringing the light of God's love, so too, will we let that Love be born in us, letting Christ's Light shine forth from us, as we live as Christ's faithful disciples in the world.

As the lights are dimmed let us hold up our candles and sing...

HYMN

Silent Night, Holy Night

*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.*

*Silent Night, Holy Night! Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar; heavenly hosts sing, "Alleluia!"
Christ the Savior is born; Christ the Savior is born.*

*Silent Night, Holy Night! Wondrous star, lend thy light!
With the angels let us sing, "Alleluia to our King!"
Christ the Savior is born; Christ the Savior, is born!*

*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.*

TOLLING OF TWELVE BELLS

BENEDICTION

Pastor: Merry Christmas! Today the Christ is born. Today a Savior appeared. The Word of God dwells among us. The Light of God shines in the world. Sing praises! Shout for joy! Celebrate the hope and promise given to us this day. Go – filled with the hope, love, peace, and joy of the Christ Child.

All: *Joy to the world! Let the earth receive her King! Amen!*

POSTLUDE

Joy to the World