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**Christmas Eve**

 **Pre-service Anthem “Joy” by the FLC Choir**

“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!’ Hark! The herald angels sin, ‘Glory to the newborn King!’” *LSB* 380:1

**AS WE GATHER**

“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.

**INVOCATION and OPENING SENTENCES** *Luke 2:10–12, 14*

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

**People: Amen.**

Pastor: To shepherds filled with fear, the angel said,

**People: “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people.”**

Pastor: To those shepherds and to us this holy night, the angel declares,

**People: “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”**

Pastor: To all who seek signs of God’s peace in this broken world, the angel proclaims,

**People: “And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.”**

Pastor: To our world, so filled with uncertainty, confusion, and fear, the multitude of angels sings,

**People: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!?**

**CAROLS** *“O Come, All Ye Faithful” and “Joy to the World”*

O come, all ye faithful joyful and triumphant
O come ye, oh come ye, to Bethlehem;
Come and behold Him born the King of angels:
Oh come let us adore Him, Oh come let us adore Him
Oh come let us adore Him Christ the Lord

Highest, most holy, Light of Light eternal,

Born of a virgin, a mortal He comes;

Son of the Father now in flesh appearing!

Oh come let us adore Him, Oh come let us adore Him
Oh come let us adore Him Christ the Lord

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
Sing all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God in the highest
Oh come let us adore Him, Oh come let us adore Him
Oh come let us adore Him Christ the Lord

Yea, Lord we greet Thee, born this happy morning
Jesus to Thee be glory giv’n
Word of the Father now in flesh appearing
Oh come let us adore Him, Oh come let us adore Him
Oh come let us adore Him Christ the Lord.

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, hill, and plains repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sin and sorrow 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.

**PRAYER**

Pastor: Let us pray. Mighty God, You sent a multitude of angels to announce the birth of our Savior, Jesus. Fill our voices with this Good News of great joy, that we may join the angels in speaking peace and hope in Jesus; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**OLD TESTAMENT** Isaiah 9:2-7

The people who walked in darkness
    have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
    on them has light shone.
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.
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.
For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult
    and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire.
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.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**EPISTLE** Titus 2:11-14

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 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.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**CHRISTMAS GOSPEL** Luke 2:1-20

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. 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.

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 great fear. And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of 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!”

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. 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.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

 **People: Praise to You, O Christ.**

**CAROL** *“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”*

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 hosts proclaim: "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

Christ, by highest heaven 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 Emmanuel!
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

Hail the heav’n-born Prince of Peace! Hail the sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings, ris’n with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by, born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

**SERMON *“Announcing Peace”***

**CAROL** *“Go Tell It on the Mountain”*

*Chorus:*

Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and ev’rywhere;

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. *(Chorus)*

The shepherds feared and trembled when lo, above the earth

rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior’s birth. *(Chorus)*

Down in a lonely manger the humble Christ was born;

And God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn. *(Chorus)*

# PRAYER OF THE CHURCH and LORD’S PRAYER

*(after each petition):* Pastor: God of glory,

 **People: let Your peace and hope reign.**

**CAROL** *“Angels We Have Heard on High”*

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing over the plains,
And the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains.
Glo-ria in excelsis Deo; Glo-ria in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heav’nly song?
Glo-ria in excelsis Deo; Glo-ria in excelsis Deo.

Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn King.
Glo-ria in excelsis Deo; Glo-ria in excelsis Deo.

**THE LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES**

(*The pastor takes the light from the Christ candle and gives to those assisting. They pass the light on to the congregation. Tip only the unlighted candle. Holding the lit candles straight up prevents the wax from dripping.*)

**BENEDICTION**

**CAROL** *“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, heav’nly hosts sing, Alleluia!
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!

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 Thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

**FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH,**

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 **All are welcome …**

 **… Christ is honored.**