

Worship for December 4, 2023  
Christmas Eve

Prelude

Lighting the Advent Wreath, the Candle of Love and the Christ Candle

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Reader 1: To a people longing for hope and yearning for deliverance, the prophet Isaiah declared,

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...for a child has been born to us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:2,6)

Reader 2: This morning, we come seeking hope, peace, joy, and love. And we find these things in a child. God made flesh as a baby in a manger. A baby who is both the beginning and the end of our salvation, who dwells with us even now, our Emmanuel, God with us.

**Congregation: We live as people in the in-between, who celebrate the arrival of the Light that shines in lost and broken places, as we wait for the day when we will live in the fullness of God's kin-dom.**

Reader 1: We light these candles as signs of our shocking hope, our just peace, our fierce joy, the love that transforms us, and Jesus Christ, our wondrous Light. May the Light burning in our hearts guide us, comfort us, protect us, and tend us in all seasons and circumstances, reminding us that day and night, in the light and in the darkness, God is with us. Our salvation has come! Amen.

\*Hymn 133 O Come, All Ye Faithful

Prayer

**God of grace,**

**You chose the Virgin Mary, full of grace, to be the mother of our Lord and Savior.**

**Though we have sinned and failed both you and our neighbors, we place ourselves before you in penitence, that you may fill us with your grace.**

**Like Mary, may we rejoice in your salvation, and in all things, embrace your will, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Hymn 698 Take, O Take Me As I Am

Assurance of Forgiveness

God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. This is our Good News. This is our peace. Alleluia! Amen.

First Reading Psalm 98

Time With Our Young Disciples

Gospel Reading Luke 2:1-20

Morning Message

\*Hymn 145 What Child Is This?

\*Affirmation of Faith *From A Brief Statement of Faith*

**We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God.**

**Jesus proclaimed the reign of God,**

**preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives,**

**teaching by word and deed**

**and blessing the children, healing the sick, and building up the brokenhearted,**

**eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners, and calling all to repent and believe the gospel.**

**Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition, Jesus was crucified, suffering the depths of human pain and giving his life for the sins of the world.**

**God raised this Jesus from the dead, vindicating his sinless life, breaking the power of sin and evil, delivering us from death to life eternal.**

\*Hymn 581 Gloria Patri

Sharing Our Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Presenting Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory

\*Hymn Christmas Doxology (insert)

\*Prayer of Dedication

**In gratitude for grace given, we offer our thanks and praise:**

**For this season and all its blessings.**

**For life and health and family and friends.**

**For the witness of this congregation thru the generations.**

**For the love and support of one another.**

**For the privilege of reaching out to others in Jesus' name:**

**For the work of our denomination in preparing leaders, educating young people, establishing and staffing hospitals, and relieving suffering near and far. In all these things, we lift our voices, prepare our homes, welcome loved ones, and show kindness to those in need. In the name of Jesus, coming to us as a helpless babe, who died that we might live. Amen.**

Lighting Our Candles from the Christ Candle

Let us light our candles so that we may joyfully bear the light of Christ into the world.

\*Hymn 122 Silent Night (insert)

\*Blessing

Go now, and celebrate God's love all your days.

Give to Christ Jesus the obedience of faith,

offering yourself as the servant of the Lord

and allowing God's Word to be fulfilled in you.

And may the only wise God establish you forever.

May the mysteries of Christ be conceived within you.

And may the Holy Spirit strengthen and encircle you. Amen.

\*Postlude