



City Church

PHILADELPHIA

Sunday December 24, 2017

Christmas Eve

PRELUDE

PREPARATION

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

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 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.

from Isaiah 9

OPENING SONG

O Little Town of Bethlehem - Phillips Brooks,

Ralph Vaughan Williams

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 wond'ring 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 giv'n;
so God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still,
the dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!

THE OPENING OF WORSHIP

The glory of the Lord has been revealed
All **and all flesh shall see it together.**
Jesus Christ is the light of the world:
a light no darkness can quench.
The shepherds kept watch by night,
and your glory shone round about them.
The darkness is not dark to you,
the night is as bright as the day.
Let your light scatter the darkness
and fill your Church with your glory.

Grace, mercy, and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

All **And also with you.**

OPENING PRAYER

SONG

Angels We Have Heard on High

Traditional French carol, arr. Edward Barnes

1. An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing
2. Shep - herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous
3. Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the

o'er the plains, and the moun - tains in re - ply
strains pro - long? Say what may the ti - dings be
an - gels sing; come, a - dore on ben - ded knee

e cho back their joyous strains. Glo
which inspire your heav'nly song?
Christ the Lord, the newborn king.

ri - a, in excelsis De - o, glo

ri - a, in excelsis De - o.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Christ the light of the world has come to dispel the darkness of our hearts. In his light let us examine ourselves and confess our sins.

Lord of grace and truth,
we confess our unworthiness
to stand in your presence as your children.
We have sinned:

All forgive and heal us.

The Virgin Mary accepted your call
to be the mother of Jesus.
Forgive our disobedience to your will.
We have sinned:

All forgive and heal us.

Your Son our Savior
was born in poverty in a manger.
Forgive our greed and rejection of your ways.
We have sinned:

All forgive and heal us.

The shepherds left their flocks
to go to Bethlehem.
Forgive our selfishness and failure to believe.
We have sinned:

All **forgive and heal us.**

The wise men followed the star
to find Jesus the King.
Forgive our reluctance to seek you.
We have sinned:

All **forgive and heal us.**

WORDS OF COMFORT AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON

May God who loved the world so much
that he sent his Son to be our Savior
forgive us our sins
and make us holy to serve him in the world,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

SONGS OF PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

O Holy Night - Adolphe Adam, John Dwight, Placide Cappeau

O holy night, the stars are brightly shining;
it is the night of the dear savior's birth!
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
till he appeared and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices,
for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.
Fall on your knees, O hear the angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born!
O night divine, O night, O night divine!

Led by the light of faith serenely beaming,
with glowing hearts by his cradle we stand.
so led by light of a star sweetly gleaming,
here came the wise men from Orient land.
The King of kings lay thus in lowly manger,
in all our trials born to be our friend!
He knows our need, to our weakness is no stranger.
Behold your King; be before him lowly bend!
Behold your King; before him lowly bend!

Truly he taught us to love one another;
his law is love and his gospel is peace.
Chains shall he break for the slave is our brother,
and in his name all oppression shall cease.
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we,
let all within us praise his holy name!
Christ is the Lord! O praise his name forever!
His pow'r and glory evermore proclaim!
His pow'r and glory evermore proclaim!

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly – Polish carol, Edith Reed

Infant holy, infant lowly,
for his bed a cattle stall;
oxen lowing, little knowing
Christ, the babe, is Lord of all.
Swift are winging angels singing,
noels ringing, tidings bringing:
Christ the babe is Lord of all.
Christ the babe is Lord of all.

Flocks were sleeping: shepherds keeping
vigil till the morning new
saw the glory, heard the story,
tidings of a gospel true.
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow,
praises voicing, greet the morrow:
Christ the babe was born for you.
Christ the babe was born for you.

THE WORD OF GOD

Old Testament reading: Isaiah 52:7-10

⁷How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.”

⁸Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices, together they sing for joy; for in plain sight they see the return of the Lord to Zion. ⁹Break forth together into singing, you ruins of Jerusalem; for the Lord has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem. ¹⁰The Lord has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

This is the Word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

Gospel reading: Luke 2:1-20

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Luke.

All Glory to you, O Lord.

¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph 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. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And 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.

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in

bands of cloth and lying in a manger.”¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”¹⁵ 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.”¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child;¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them.¹⁹ But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.

REFLECTION

The Rev. Chris Currie

RESPONSE

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,
All he has come to his people and set them free.
Light has sprung up for the righteous
and joyful gladness for those who are true-hearted.
Glory to God in the highest
and peace to his people on earth.

SONG

Gentle Mary Laid Her Child - Joseph Simpson Cook,
Piae Cantiones

Gentle Mary laid her child lowly in a manger;
there he lay, the Undefined, to the world a stranger.
Such a babe in such a place, can he be the savior?
Ask the saved of all the race who have found his favor.

Angels sang about his birth,
wise men sought and found him;
heaven's star shone brightly forth, glory all around him.
Shepherds saw the wondrous sight, heard the angels singing;
all the plains were lit that night, all the hills were ringing.

Gentle Mary laid her child lowly in a manger;
he is still the Undefined, but no more a stranger.
Son of God of humble birth, beautiful the story;
praise his name in all the earth, hail the king of glory!

INTERCESSIONS

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Members of the congregation lead us in prayer.

Father, in this holy night your Son our Savior
was born in human flesh.
Renew your Church as the Body of Christ.
Holy God

All hear our prayer.

In this holy night there was no room for your Son
in the inn.

Protect with your love those who have no home
and all who live in poverty.

Holy God

All hear our prayer.

In this holy night Mary, in the pain of labor,
brought your Son to birth.

Hold in your hand all who are in pain or distress.

Holy God

All hear our prayer.

In this holy night your Christ came
as a light shining in the darkness.

Bring comfort to all who suffer
in the sadness of our world.

Holy God

All hear our prayer.

In this holy night the angels sang,
“Peace to God’s people on earth.”

Strengthen those who work for peace and justice
here in Philadelphia, our nation, and in all the world.

Holy God

All hear our prayer.

In this holy night shepherds in the field heard good
tidings of joy.

Give us grace to preach the gospel of Christ’s redemption.

Holy God

All hear our prayer.

In this holy night strangers found the Holy Family
and saw the baby lying in the manger.

Bless our homes and all whom we love.

Holy God

All hear our prayer.

In this holy night heaven is come down to earth,
and earth is raised to heaven.

Hold in your hand

all those who lost loved ones to death
and comfort them

in the hope of your coming kingdom.

Holy God

All hear our prayer.

In this holy night Christians the world over celebrate
Christ’s birth.

Open our hearts that he may be born in us today.

Holy God

All hear our prayer.

The leader concludes:

Father, in this holy night angels and shepherds worshipped
the newborn king enthroned within a manger.

Receive the worship we have offered this night
through him who is your Word made flesh,
our Savior Jesus Christ.

All Amen.

CLOSING CAROL AND CANDLELIGHTING

*While singing the carol, candles are lit, beginning from the
Christ candle.*

Silent Night - Joseph Mohr, Franz Gruber

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,
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.

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!

BLESSING AND SENDING

BENEDICTION

Christ the Son of God, born of Mary,
fill you with his grace
to trust his promises and obey his will;
and the blessing of God almighty,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be among you, and remain with you always.

All Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Proclaim the Word made flesh.

All Glory, thanks, and praise to God.

Tuck Bartholomew: liturgist
Bethany Brooks: piano, voice
Natalie Rudoi: violin
Azer Damirov: violin
Jambol Leuenberger: viola
Nellie Smith: cello

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