

The Eve of the Nativity of Our Lord

December 24, 2025

Service of the Word and Candlelight Vigil



Preludes (instrumental)

Hymn: 379 O Come, All Ye Faithful



1 O come, all ye faith - ful, Joy - ful and tri - um - phant! O
2 High - est, most ho - ly, Light of Light e - ter - nal,
3 Sing, choirs of an - gels, Sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,
4 Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, Born this hap - py morn - ing;



come ye, O come — ye to Beth - le - hem;
Born of a vir - gin, a mor - tal He comes;
Sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heav - en a - bove!
Je - sus, to Thee — be — glo - ry giv'n!



Come and be - hold Him Born the king of an - gels:
Son of the Fa - ther Now in flesh ap - pear - ing!
Glo - ry to God — In — the — high - est:
Word of the Fa - ther Now in flesh ap - pear - ing!

Refrain



O come, let us a - dore Him, O come, let us a - dore Him,



O come, let us a - dore Him, Christ the Lord!

I When all was still, and it was midnight,
your almighty Word, O Lord, descended from the royal throne.

C **Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?**

I The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together,
against the LORD and against his anointed.

C **He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision.**

I Then he will speak to them in his wrath,
and terrify them in his fury, saying,

C **"As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill."**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the
beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

I When all was still, and it was midnight,
your almighty Word, O Lord, descended from the royal throne.

Readings from Holy Scripture on the Eve of the Nativity

Christmas Prophecy from Isaiah

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 shined.
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.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Gradual

Is. 9:6; Ps. 98:1a

C 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.
 Sing to the Lord a new song,
 for he has done marvelous things!

Hymn: 376 Once in Royal David's City



1 Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y Stood a
 2 He came down to earth from heav - en, Who is
 3 For He is our child - hood's pat - tern, Day by
 4 And our eyes at last shall see Him, Through His
 5 Not in that poor, low - ly sta - ble With the

low - ly cat - tle shed, Where a moth - er laid her
 God and Lord of all, And His shel - ter was a
 day like us He grew; He was lit - tle, weak, and
 own re - deem - ing love; For that child so dear and
 ox - en stand - ing by Shall we see Him, but in



ba - by In a man - ger for His bed: Mar - y
sta - ble, And His cra - dle was a stall; With the
help - less, Tears and smiles like us He knew; And He
gen - tle Is our Lord in heav'n a - bove; And He
heav - en, Set at God's right hand on high. Then like



was that moth - er mild, Je - sus Christ her lit - tle child.
poor and mean and low - ly Lived on earth our Sav - ior ho - ly.
feels for all our sad-ness, And He shares in all our glad-ness.
leads His chil-dren on To the place where He is gone.
stars His chil-dren, crowned, All in white, His praise will sound!

Text: Cecil F. Alexander, 1818–95, alt. Tune: Henry J. Gauntlett, 1805–76 Text and tune: Public domain

A Christmas Epistle from Saint Paul *Titus 3:4–7*

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

P This is the Word of the Lord. **G** Thanks be to God.

The Christmas Gospel of Jesus' Birth (KJV) *Luke 2:1–14*

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

P This is the Word of the Lord. **G** Thanks be to God.

Hymn: 361 O Little Town of Bethlehem



1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, How still we see thee lie!
 2 For Christ is born of Mar - y, And, gath - ered all a - bove
 3 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly The won - drous gift is giv'n!
 4 O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - hem, De - scend to us, we pray;



A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep The si - lent stars go by;
 While mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep Their watch of won - d'ring love.
 So God im - parts to hu - man hearts The bless - ings of His heav'n.
 Cast out our sin, and en - ter in, Be born in us to - day.



Yet in thy dark streets shin - eth The ev - er - last - ing light.
 O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er Pro - claim the ho - ly birth,
 No ear may hear His com - ing; But in this world of sin,
 We hear the Christ - mas an - gels The great glad tid - ings tell;



The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee to - night.
 And prais - es sing to God the king And peace to all the earth!
 Where meek souls will re - ceive Him, still The dear Christ en - ters in.
 O come to us, a - bide with us, Our Lord Im - man - u - el!

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835–93 Tune: Lewis H. Redner, 1831–1908 Text and tune: Public domain

Hymn: 365 Away in a Manger

*Choir 1 Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
 The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
 The stars in the bright sky looked down where He lay,
 The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.*

*Choir 2 The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
 But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.
 I love Thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,
 And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.*

continued on next page →

Philadelphia, Tune: William J. Kirkpatrick 1838–1921; setting: James E. Engel 1925–1989, alt. Text and tune: Public domain

Organ interlude into...

Hymn: 364 Away in a Manger (congregation sings)



Text: Little Children's Book, 1885, Tune: James R. Murray, 1841–1905 Text and tune: Public domain



The Christmas Gospel of Jesus' Birth continued..

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, 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, good will toward men."

- P** This is the Word of the Lord.
- G** Thanks be to God.

Hymn: 368 Angels We Have Heard on High with Choir



1 An - gels we have heard on high, Sweet-ly sing-ing o'er the plains,
2 Shep-herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy-ous strains pro-long?
3 Come to Beth-le - hem and see Him whose birth the an - gels sing;



And the moun-tains in re-ply, Ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.
What the glad-some tid - ings be Which in-spire your heav'n - ly song?
Come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born King.

Refrain



Glo - - - - - ri - a



in ex - cel - sis De - o. Glo - - - - -



- - - - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

Text and tune: Public domain

The Christmas Gospel continued...

Luke 2:15–20

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing, which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us."

And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

P The Christmas Gospel. **G** Thanks be to God.

Hymn: 370 What Child Is This



1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, On Mar - y's lap is
 2 Why lies He in such mean es - tate Where ox and ass are
 3 So bring Him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; Come, peas - ant, king, to



sleep - ing? Whom an - gels greet with an - thems sweet While
 feed - ing? Good Chris - tian, fear; for sin - ners here The
 own Him. The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; Let



shep - herds watch are keep - ing? This, this is
 si - lent Word is plead - ing. Nails, spear shall
 lov - ing hearts en - throne Him. Raise, raise the



Christ the king, Whom shep - herds guard and an - gels sing;
 pierce Him through, The cross be borne for me, for you;
 song on high, The vir - gin sings her lul - la - by;



Haste, haste to bring Him laud, The babe, the son of Mar - y!
 Hail, hail the Word made flesh, The babe, the son of Mar - y!
 Joy, joy, for Christ is born, The babe, the son of Mar - y!

Text: William C. Dix, 1837–98 Tune: English, 16th cent. Text and tune: Public domain

+ Sermon +

A Savior is Born

Prayer

L Let us pray:

For the gift of Christmas peace and pardon, with all our heart and with all our mind, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

L For the holy Christian Church, here and scattered throughout the world, and for the proclamation of the Gospel and the calling of all to faith, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

L For our nation, for our cities and communities, and for the common welfare of us all, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

L For those who labor at this hour, for those whose work is difficult or dangerous, and for all who travel, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

L For all those in need this night and through this Christmas season and coming new year, for the hungry and homeless, for the widowed and orphaned, and for all those in prison, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

L For the sick and dying and for all those who care for them, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

L For the blessed memory of our loved ones, let us give thanks to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

L For . . . *[additional bids for prayer may be inserted here]* . . . let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

L Finally, for these and for all our needs of body and soul, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Lord's Prayer

C Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Candle-Lighting Ceremony (please tip only the unlit candles)

Collect for the Eve of the Nativity

O God, You make us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Grant that as we joyfully receive Him as our Redeemer, we may with sure confidence behold Him when He comes to be our Judge; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **C Amen.**



Hymn: 363 Silent Night, Holy Night (Include soloist stanza in German below)



1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm, all is bright Round yon
 3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God, love's pure light Ra - diant

vir - gin moth-er and child. Ho - ly In-fant, so ten-der and mild,
 beams from Thy ho-ly face With the dawn of re-deem - ing grace,

Sleep in heav - en - ly peace, Sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
 Je - sus, Lord, at Thy birth, Je - sus, Lord, at Thy birth.

Soli only: 2nd stanza: Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht! Hirten erst kundgemacht,
 Durch der Engel Halleluja Tönt es laut von fern und nah:
 Christ, der Retter, ist da, Christ, der Retter, ist da! Public domain

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
 born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and
 was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead.
 He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
 From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the
 forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life ✝ everlasting.
 Amen.

Closing Sentences

I To us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his
 shoulder.

C And his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
 Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Please extinguish your candles.

Blessing

L Let us bless the Lord. **C** Thanks be to God.

P The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless and preserve you. **C** Amen.

Hymn: 387 Joy to the World



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re - ceive her
2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let men their songs em -
3 No more let sins and sor - rows grow Nor thorns in - fest the
4 He rules the world with truth and grace And makes the na - tions



King; Let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare Him
play, While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
ground; He comes to make His bless - ings
prove The glo - ries of His righ - teous -



room And heav'n and na - ture sing, And heav'n and na - ture
plains Re - peat the sound - ing joy, Re - peat the sound - ing
flow Far as the curse is found, Far as the curse is
ness And won - ders of His love, And won - ders of His



sing, And heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
joy, Re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
found, Far as, far as the curse is found.
love, And won - ders, won - ders of His love.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748 Tune: George Frideric Handel, 1685–1759, adapt. Text and tune: Public domain

*Join us in the morning for the Christmas Day (The Nativity of Our Lord) Divine Service with the Lord's Supper.
Special Service time: 10:00 a.m.*

Acknowledgments

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Poinsettias Dedicated in Memory and Honor of...

Al & Sally Collver	in memory of	our daughter, Gina, and parents, Albert & Evelyn Caspers and Albert & Jane Collver
Amy Mohr	in memory of	Dick Mohr
Amy Mohr	in honor of	Amy's mother, Dorothy Solomon
Ann Brown	in memory of	loved ones
David & Nancy Smith	in honor of	Tillie and Shirley
Fred Hansen	in memory of	son, Brian Andrew; and the Schweer Family
George and Linda Walker	in memory of	our parents George and Mary Walker, and Larry and Helen Kilfoil
Hebar Family	in memory of	our grandparents
Jim & Maureen Roberts	in memory of	our parents
Larry & Cathy Wacker	in memory of	Sam, Marjorie, and Stephanie Wacker
Larry & Janet Moore	in memory of	Howard & Alice Moore, Harry & Marylou Lillemoen, and Linda Julio
Larry & Phyllis Bembas	in memory of	David Bembas and our parents
Lou & Karen Trebus	in memory of	our parents
Mark Ratliff	in memory of	Barbara Ratliff, Megan Ratliff, and Jeff Ratliff
Mark Yoder	in memory of	Sharon Yoder
Ole & Mavis Johnson	in honor of	our Military and our Law Enforcement
Phil & Carol Barnett	in memory of	our parents, Milton & Beatrice Yerges, and Hans & Dorothy Vangen
Phil & Carol Barnett	in honor of	Brad Barnett
Rick & Lisa Gift	in memory of	Rick's father, Terry Gift
Smith & Sebright Family	in memory of	Taryn Sebright and Debra Hauschildt
Steve & Janice Kaiser	in memory of	Richard Haynes and Andrew Kaiser
Thomas Lane	in memory of	Kathleen Lane
Tom & Nadine Wittkopp	in memory of	our son, Ed Wittkopp
Upward Family	in memory of	Tim's father, Richard Upward and our Grandparents, Leo Upward, John & Helen Mackowiak, Arlon & Darleen Balz, Bill & Pat Hartwig
Vesper Family	in memory of	John & Joanne Boling and Jim & Nancy Vesper