



ST. FRANCIS
EPISCOPAL
CHURCH

Christmas Eve

December 24, 2015 — 6:15 PM



The Word of God

Welcome (* indicates when to stand) Welcome to worship tonight. We're glad you've come to glorify God with us. We invite you to take part in everything. Follow the singing with the words in this bulletin and come to the Table for communion.

Prelude

Lighting of the candles: Almighty God, you have made this night holy by the gift of your son, born of the Holy Spirit and Mary. Upon him rested all your grace, through him has come all your mercy. Let his light shine within our hearts tonight even more brightly than it shines from the candles in this place. Help us to hear your word and to celebrate your everlasting love through him. **Amen.**

The candles are lit during the singing of the following carol:

* O Little Town of Bethlehem

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 wondering 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 given! So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven. No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin, where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.

Where children pure and happy pray to the blessed child, where misery cries out to thee, Son of the mother mild; where charity stands watching and faith holds wide the door, the dark night wakes, the glory breaks and Christmas comes once more.

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!

Priest: Blessed be God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

All: And blessed be His kingdom now and forever. Amen.

Priest: Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid. Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

***Angels We Have Heard On High**

Angels we have heard on high singing sweetly through the night, and the mountains in reply echoing their brave delight.

(Refrain:) Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why these songs of happy cheer? What great brightness did you see? Which glad tidings did you hear? *(Refrain)*

Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing; Come, adore on bended knee, Christ the Lord, the newborn King. *(Refrain)*

See Him in a manger laid, Whom the angels praise above; Mary, Joseph, lend your aid, while we raise our hearts in love. *(Refrain)*

***All:** O God, you have caused this holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light: Grant that we, who have known the mystery of that Light on earth, may also enjoy him perfectly in heaven; where with you and the Holy Spirit he lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.

A Reading from Isaiah

(9:2-7)

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.

You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder.

For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

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.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

* 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.

(Refrain:) O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord.

God from God, Light from Light eternal, Lo! He abhors not the Virgin's womb: only begotten Son of the Father. *(Refrain)*

Yea, Lord we greet thee, born this happy morning; Jesus, to thee be glory given; Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing. *(Refrain)*

* **The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ According to Luke**

(2:1-20)

All: Glory to you, Lord Christ

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

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see -- I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth 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 heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

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." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Priest: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Christ.

Sermon (please be seated)

***Leader:** Let us stand and profess our faith using the words of the Nicene Creed.

All: We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

*** Prayers for Ourselves and Others**

Leader: Let us pray for ourselves and others. We pray for all who work through the power of Christ, serving the needs of the poor and healing the wounds of injustice, division and materialism in our society. Lord, in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for the elderly, the sick and the lonely among us: that they may receive comfort, companionship and care from those around them. Lord, in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray that those who have been persecuted or seriously wronged by others may experience warmth and love with Christ, and be able to forgive those who have hurt them. Lord, in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray that when we are discouraged, we may find strength in the signs of a loving and faithful God in those around us, and the joy of the Holy Spirit within us. Lord, in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for those whom we love but no longer see; those who have gone beyond the veil of this mortal life, that their souls and the souls of all the departed may rest in peace. Lord, in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord of eternity, bind us together by your Holy Spirit in communion with your saints, that we may entrust ourselves, and one another, and our whole lives to you. **Amen.**

* Exchange of Peace

Priest: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: And also with you.

The Holy Communion

Offertory: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Hark! the herald angels sing "Glory to the new born 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!"

(Refrain:) Hark! The herald angels sing, Glory to the new born King!

Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord; late in time behold Him come, offspring of the Virgin's womb. Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail the incarnate Deity. Pleased as man with men to dwell; Jesus, our Emmanuel! *(Refrain)*

Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die, born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth. Risen with healing in his wings, light and life to all he brings, Hail, the sun of Righteousness! Hail, the heaven born Prince of Peace! *(Refrain)*

* Doxology

All: Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below; praise him above, ye heavenly host: praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

* Eucharistic Prayer A

Priest: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

Priest: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them to the Lord.

Priest: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Priest: It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. For you are the source of light and life, you made us in your image, and called us to new life in Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who forever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

All (Sung): Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power, God of might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.

Priest: Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself; and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all. He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself, in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world. On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me." Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

All: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Priest: We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts. Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom. All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ. By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Priest: And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray,

All: 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, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The priest breaks the consecrated bread and says:

Priest: Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

People: Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

Priest: The gifts of God for the people of God.

[NOTE: All are welcome to receive Communion, whatever your faith tradition. Please receive the bread in the open palm of your hand. Then, either consume the bread and move to a chalice and receive from the chalice by guiding the base of the chalice to your mouth or take the chalice from the chalice minister. Or, you may intinct or dip the bread into the chalice and consume it. The glass chalice contains non-alcoholic wine for those who do not wish to consume alcohol for any reason. If you do not wish to receive communion but would like a blessing, please come forward with your arms crossed over your chest.]

Communion Song 1: Away In A Manger

Away in a manger no crib for a bed; The little Lord Jesus lay down His sweet head. The stars in the sky looked down where He lay; The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

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.

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay, close by me forever and love me I pray. Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care, and fit us for heaven to live with Thee there.

Communion Song 2: Silent 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, 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.

* **Post-Communion Prayer:**

Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

* **Blessing**

* **Joy to the World**

Joy to the world the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King; let every heart prepare Him room, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the world the Savior reigns! Let us our songs employ, while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains, repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows 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.

Priest: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord and each other.

People: Thanks be to God.

