

PEACE CAME TO EARTH

Children and Youth Christmas Program

Sunday, December 17, 2023

11:00 a.m.

Please note: This worship service is live streamed and recorded.

AS WE GATHER

As each year comes to a close, we wonder if the next year will bring peace that endures. We seek peace in many ways, but we don't often find it. As we journey, God meets us and gives us a new understanding of His gift of peace. That peace comes through the birth of Jesus, the Word become flesh who entered our world so He could save us. God's peace is the Son of God who was born in a stable, put to death for our sins, and resurrected on the third day to give us new life. Jesus is the Prince of Peace who gives us peace with God that endures forever.

PRELUDE

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"

arr. for handbells by Lloyd Larson

WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND EXCHANGE OF PEACE

It is important to recognize that some people are especially susceptible to viruses that can be spread by contact and that some immune systems are very sensitive. Please understand that some may choose not to shake hands during the Exchange of Peace, but might simply greet you with a verbal greeting, a wave, or a smile.

+ PREPARATION +

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

379 O Come, All Ye Faithful

1 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)

ref O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord!

2 Highest, most holy,
Light of Light eternal,
Born of a virgin, a mortal He comes;
Son of the Father
Now in flesh appearing! (Refrain)

3 Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God
In the highest: (Refrain)

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INVOCATION

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

People: Amen.

RESPONSIVE READING

Isaiah 9:6

Pastor: For to us a child is born,

People: to us a son is given;

Pastor: and the government shall be upon His shoulder,

People: and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor,

Pastor: Mighty God, Everlasting Father,

People: Prince of Peace.

+ THE PROMISE OF PEACE +

NARRATION & SCRIPTURE READINGS

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel (Genesis 3:15).

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 (Isaiah 9:6).

ACTION RHYME

To us a Child is born

To us a Son is given.

This Christmas we receive

The blessed gift of heaven.

CHILDREN'S SONG

"God Loves Me Dearly"

*God loves me dearly,
Grants me salvation,
God loves me dearly,
Loves even me. Refrain*

Refrain:

*Therefore I'll say again:
God loves me dearly,
God loves me dearly,
Loves even me.*

*He sent forth Jesus,
My dear Redeemer,
He sent forth Jesus
And set me free. Refrain*

Text: August Rische, 1819–1906; tr. composite. Public domain.

HYMN

338 Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1 Come, Thou long-expected Jesus, Born to set Thy people free; From our fears and sins release us; Let us find our rest in Thee. Israel's strength and consolation, Hope of all the earth Thou art, Dear desire of ev'ry nation, Joy of ev'ry longing heart.</p> | <p>2 Born Thy people to deliver; Born a child and yet a king! Born to reign in us forever, Now Thy gracious kingdom bring. By Thine own eternal Spirit Rule in all our hearts alone; By Thine all-sufficient merit Raise us to Thy glorious throne.</p> |
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+ PEACE IS PROCLAIMED +

NARRATION & SCRIPTURE READINGS

And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation to His people in the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace (Luke 1:76–79).

Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end (Luke 1:30–33).

An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel” (which means, God with us) (Matthew 1:20–23).

RECITATION

*The prophets spoke about
The Savior God would send,
The glorious Prince of Peace
Whose kingdom shall not end.*

HYMN

384 Of the Father's Love Begotten

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| <p>1 Of the Father's love begotten Ere the worlds began to be, He is Alpha and Omega, He the source, the ending He, Of the things that are, that have been, And that future years shall see Evermore and evermore.</p> | <p>3 This is He whom seers in old time Chanted of with one accord, Whom the voices of the prophets Promised in their faithful word. Now He shines, the long-expected; Let creation praise its Lord Evermore and evermore.</p> |
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Text: Public domain

+ THE PRINCE OF PEACE +

NARRATION & SCRIPTURE READINGS

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 (Luke 2:1–7).

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 fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a 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!" (Luke 2:8–14).

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 (Luke 2:15–20).

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1).

RECITATION

*The angels sang God's praise
Amid the heavens bright.
We also join in song
And fill the church with light.*

RECITATION

*The shepherds left the sheep
They watched in nearby fields
To see the Lamb of God
In human flesh revealed.*

CHILDREN'S SONG

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

(continued on next page)

*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 take us to heaven to live with Thee there.*

Text: Little Children's Book, Philadelphia, 1885, sts. 1–2; Vineyard Songs, Louisville, 1892, st. 3, alt. Public domain.

+ PEACE FOR ALL PEOPLE +

NARRATION & SCRIPTURE READINGS

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is He who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw His star when it rose and have come to worship Him” (Matthew 2:1–2).

When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: ‘And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd My people Israel’” (Matthew 2:3–6).

Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found Him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship Him.” After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was (Matthew 2:7–9).

When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house they saw the child with Mary His mother, and they fell down and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way (Matthew 2:10–12).

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns” (Isaiah 52:7).

RECITATION

*We also kneel before
The Babe in humble stall,
The Lord our Righteousness
Who came to save us all.*

CHILDREN’S SONG

“To Us a Child Is Born”

Refrain:

*To us a Child is born,
To us a Son is given.
This Christmas we receive
The blessed gift of heaven.*

*The shepherds left the sheep
They watched in nearby fields
To see the Lamb of God
In human flesh revealed. Refrain*

*The prophets spoke about
The Savior God would send,
The glorious Prince of Peace
Whose kingdom shall not end. Refrain*

*We also kneel before
The Babe in humble stall,
The Lord our Righteousness
Who came to save us all. Refrain*

*The angels sang God’s praise
Amid the heavens bright.
We also join in song
And fill the church with light. Refrain*

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OFFERING

“Concerto No. 4 in E flat”

W. A. Mozart

Please stand

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.

RESPONSIVE READING

Pastor: Lord, let Your servants go in peace;

People: Your word has been fulfilled.

Pastor: Our eyes have seen the salvation which You have prepared in the sight of every people;

People: A light to reveal You to the nations and the glory of Your people Israel.

**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.**

PRAYERS

Pastor: Let us pray.

People: Heavenly Father, we thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus Christ, to take away our sins and bring peace to our fallen world. Help us to share Your message of love and forgiveness with others so that they may also find peace in You. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

BENEDICTION

Pastor: Joy to the world, the Son of God, our Savior, has come! The peace of the Father, the T Son, and the Holy Spirit be with you today and every day.

People: Amen.

HYMN

387 Joy to the World

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| 1 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. | 3 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. |
| 2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let men their songs employ, While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat, repeat the sounding joy. | 4 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. |

Text: Public domain

POSTLUDE

“Joy to the World”

setting by D. P. Smith

Serving at Chapel

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|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Pastor: | Theodore Laesch |
| Choirs: | Sunday School Choir & Children's Bells |
| Children's Bell Choir Director: | Jen Schmidt |
| Program Director: | Mary Laesch |
| Accompanist: | Ryan Meyer |
| Instrumentalists: | Jacob Laesch, Euphonium Zeke Laesch, French Horn |

Worship Schedule

Christmas Eve Worship – Sunday, December 24th, 5:00 p.m. & 10:30 p.m.

Christmas Day Worship – Monday, December 25th, 10:00 a.m.

Epiphany Service – Saturday, January 6th, 6:30 p.m.

Regular Weekend Worship Services:

Saturday, 5:00 p.m. – Sunday, 8:30 & 11:00 a.m.

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