

Worship on December 24, 2022 (CCLI: License Number #3156883)
(Welcoming Elder: Anne Neuman)

Christmas Eve worship

We Gather

- Call to worship (**The Glorious Christ – please see insert**)
- Praise song BOP 159 Oh come, all ye faithful (Vs. 1, 2, & 5)
- Prayer for Christmas
- Hymn BOP 164 O little town of Bethlehem
- Prayer of Confession
- The Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance & Sharing of Peace

We Listen

- The Time with Children (Anne Neuman)
- Hymn BOP 149 Away in a manger
- Prayer for illumination
- First lesson: Isaiah 9:2-7
- Hymn BOP 136 The first Nowell (vs. 1, 2, & 6)
- Second lesson: Psalm 96 (See the red Psalter) (refrain #1 at the beginning and at the end)
- Hymn BOP 122 Oh come, oh come, Emmanuel (vs. 1, 2, 7)
- Third lesson: Luke 2:1-20
- Hymn BOP 148 It came upon the midnight clear (vs. 1, 2, & 3)
- Sermon: A joyful race in the night

We Respond

- The Prayer for the people of God
- Hymn BOP 146 Angels from the realms of glory
- Offering, Doxology, & Dedication

We Serve

- Hymn BOP 154 Silent night
- The Blessing
- Hymn BOP 153 Joy to the world (1, 2, & 4)

Call to Worship : The Glorious Christ < As the candle are being lit >

We prepare for Christmas in a multitude of ways. Outwardly, we deck our halls with evergreens, bunches of bright red-berried holly, maybe even some fresh cedar sprigs. We may put up a Christmas tree, decorate it with tinsel and popcorn strings. We may even toss up some colourful sparkling lights. Inwardly, we may spend some time reflecting on Christmas past, or on Christmases to come. We may consider the “reason for the season.” And as we prepare in these myriad of ways, may it be said that in the end, there is really nothing we can do to completely prepare ourselves for the experience of the majesty and glory of God as revealed in the person of Jesus Christ, whose arrival we celebrate on Christmas day.

Moses desired to see God's glory in his day. God said, "I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the Lord before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion." And God said, "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!" Moses had to shield himself from God's glory as it passed by. Yet the shepherds who journeyed straight away to Bethlehem were blessed to behold with their very own eyes the Glorious King, in all fullness of Deity (Colossians 2:9). "The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them." (Luke 2:20)

As we light the final candle, the Christ candle, may our hearts be stirred to revival as we contemplate the Word become flesh, dwelt among us. May we see His glory, the glory as of "the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth," (John 11:14) and like the shepherds, may we go forth, glorifying and praising God.

Hymn – BOP 159 Oh come, all ye faithful (vs. 1, 2, & 5)

Prayer For Christmas

One: The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth

All: We have seen his glory. Full of grace and truth!

One: Let us rejoice that the Light of the World shines from the manger and the cross.

All: We will worship God this Christmas Day, with joyful hearts and songs of grateful praise.

One: Good and gracious God, on this holy night you have us your Son, the Lord of the universe, wrapped in swaddling clothes, the Saviour of all, lying in a manger.

On this holy night draw us into the mystery of your love. Join our voices with the heavenly host that we may sing your glory on high. Give us a place among the shepherds that we may find the one for whom we have waited, Jesus Christ, the Messiah and Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

All: Amen.

Hymn: 164 O little town of Bethlehem

Prayer of Confession (in unison)

All: God of grace and mercy, you have given us the greatest gift of all, your Son Jesus, but we confess that pressure to give the perfect gift distracts us. Jesus was born in human flesh, but we fail to see the dignity in the human lives around us. Forgive us, O God, and help us cherish the true meaning of all you offer us each and every day in the child in the manger. Grant us a spirit of wisdom to know how rich is the glory you have made our own, and how great the hope to which we are called in Jesus Christ, your Word made flesh. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer: (in unison)

All: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive

those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Words of Assurance

Sisters and brothers in Christ, The angel of the Lord assured Joseph he should take Mary as his wife, because her son, to be called Jesus, would save God's people from their sins. This night, receive the gift of God's forgiveness, offered in Christ Jesus. Know this gift is for you and share it with others in Jesus' name.

May the peace of the Lord be with you. Let us take few moments to greet each other and share our peace.

Time with children

Hymn BOP 149 Away in a manger

Prayer for Illumination:

God of light and life, open our hearts to hear your promise of new life in the familiar stories of Christmas. Surprise us with new insights and refresh us with deep wisdom. Enfold us in the light of your Holy Spirit as we attend to the baby in the manger. Amen.

First lesson: Isaiah 9:2-7

Hymn BOP 136 The first Nowell (vs. 1, 2, & 6)

Second lesson: Psalm 96 (refrain #1 at the beginning and at the end)

Hymn BOP 122 Oh come, oh come, Emmanuel (vs. 1, 2, & 7)

Third lesson: Luke 2:1-20

SERMON: A joyful race in the night

Today's sermon title is "A joyful race in the night."

Imagine that you are one of the shepherds in the fields.

As usual, you were watching over your flocks by night.

All of the sudden, an angel of the Lord stood before you. There was shining glory of the Lord around the angel. You were terrified.

But, the angel of the Lord said to you, "Do not be afraid! 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 Saviour, 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." After finishing the saying, all of the sudden, there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God.

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours."

Then the angel left.

What did just happen?

What did you see? What did you hear?

The Messiah was born! The Saviour was born!

Where did it happen? The city of David, which is Bethlehem. And where are you right now? In the field. Somewhat distant from the city of David.

God's glory was present right in front of your eyes. And there was great news.

What would be your response now?

An angel visited and showed God's glory and the multitude of the heavenly host. It would be like a huge choir in heaven. You witnessed the heavenly choir praising God, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!"

Something very unexpected happened to you. God's messenger, an angel came to you with a message for you. Would you continue tending your sheep or would you go and find out what happened to the baby which the angel talked about?

The shepherds looked at each other yelled, "LET'S GO NOW TO BETHEHEM AND SEE THIS THING THAT HAS TAKEN PLACE."

They raced down to the city. Probably, they did not even stop to catch breath because they were too excited.

But, what did the angel say? V10. 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."

Angel brought good news to the shepherds. But, the angel did not say it's for you, but it is for all the people.

If you were the shepherds, would you care about spreading the news for all people?
I thought of it and most likely, I would not care about talking to the great news I just heard.

They raced down to Bethlehem to see what happened. They just wanted to see the baby wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger. He was said to be the Messiah, the Saviour.

Then, what would God think about these shepherds?

God sent his angel to give them the great news, so they can spread the news to the all people.

I think God just allowed them to have a curiosity. The shepherd did not have any commitment. They were not passionate about the good news. They just wanted to fulfill their question and wonder. I think God did not worry about anything about the good news to be spread out. God was confident about his present to all people.

God would say, "once you see what I am doing, then you cannot pay no attention to it."

"Once you know it, then you will be fall in love." God gave all people, including us, his one and only son. God first appeared to the outsiders. They did not have powerful influence like political leaders or teachers or kings.

God invites all the people including us whether we are small or great.

Like the shepherds in today's passage, it's okay to come to the Son out of curiosity, out of self-interest. Once you know it, you cannot help yourself falling in love with our Lord and Saviour Messiah Jesus Christ. Come to him and see what was given by our faith God the Father.
Have a blessed Christmas!

This is the message of the Lord for us today.

Prayer for the people of God

God of love, we are here to remember what you have given us. You gave your one and only Son Jesus Christ to be our Messiah and Lord and Saviour. Our of your selfless love, we are saved. Jesus, you came to us to die for us. We worship and adore you in our worship.

And we come to you wondering how you would work. We have questions about you. We sometimes cannot understand you. In spite of our wonders and questions, you are still confident because you know what we need and you know what we are like. Because of the vacuum in our hearts for you to fill, we cannot neglect you. We are drawn to you naturally.

Like the shepherds in today's story, we are coming to you without great passion for spreading the good news. But, still, you don't worry about your good news to be spread or you don't worry about us having faith or not. Because your gift for us, Jesus Christ, is just too precious. He is the best present we can have all through our lives. Lord, help us fathom the value of Jesus Christ.

As we worship God tonight, fill our hearts with hope, joy, peace and love. Shine your light in our lives, and be glorified through our lives.

Protect us safely. Icy road is always dangerous. Also, protect us from all kinds of virus.

Remember all the people who are alone and lonely tonight. Embrace their hearts and tell them your love. Fill their hearts with the joy of your coming.

Emmanuel, God with us. Be praised. In Jesus' beautiful name, we pray. Amen.

Hymn BOP 146 Angels from the realms of glory

Invitation to the offering: This is the time for offering. God's gift in the Christ Child arrived in a small town, a humble stable, to a couple no one invited in – and still that gift changes lives. Our gifts to God this Christmas share in that miracle.

The Doxology (tune of BOP 830)

Praise God with songs that never cease,
praise God who fills the earth with peace,
praise God for love and joy within;
the Holy Child is born again!

Offering prayer:

Generous and loving God, your gift to us in Christ Jesus still draws us to manger and opens our hearts with wonder. Bless our gifts in his name, so that they may draw others to your love and the blessing we have found in the Holy One, born for us this night. Amen.

Hymn BOP 154 Silent night

The Blessing

One: To you is born this night a Saviour who is Christ the Lord.
May the love of the Christ Child embrace you;

All: and the joy of the Christ Child fill your heart.

One: May the peace of the Christ Child give you rest,

All: and the hope of the Christ Child guide you into the year ahead.

Amen.

Hymn BOP 153 Joy to the world (1, 2, & 4)