



## CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

*How are Your Lives Changed by Jesus' Birth?*

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## THE COMMUNITY GATHERS

### APPROACHED TO GOD

Before the service, meditate and speak to God. During the service let God speak to you. After the service talk to each other and the wider community about God.

### KEYS

- Words printed in **ALL CAPS & bold** are spoken or sung by everyone.
- At places marked with the “✝,” you are invited to stand, as you are able.

### Functionaries

#### On Piano

- Lindsay Lundquist

#### Singers

- Kirsten Earl

#### Scripture Reading

- Louise Burton

#### Candle Lighting

- Carole Hawes

#### Videographer & Editor

- Franklyn James

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# Order of Worship

### PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

Friends, Welcome!

We come into this space with our hopes and expectations.

Expectations for how Christ breaks through and turns the world upside down in the extraordinarily ordinary of a manger.

Expectations for celebrating Christmas the way we did 1-2-5-20 years ago. Hopes that our food will be just right and gifts will be accepted.

As we come into this space, let us be reminded that our hope comes from Christ and the worries of the world can wait for another day. Let us center ourselves in this moment.

### **HYMN: In the quiet curve of evening VU #278**

In the quiet curve of evening,  
in the sinking of the days,  
In the silky void of darkness, you are there.  
In the lapses of my breathing,  
in the space between my ways,  
In the crater carved by sadness,  
you are there. You are there.

In the rests between the phrases,  
in the cracks between the stars,  
In the gaps between the meaning, you are there.  
In the melting down of endings,  
in the cooling of the sun,  
In the solstice of the winter,  
you are there. You are there.

In the mystery of my hungers,  
In the silence of my room,  
In the cloud of my unknowing, you are there.  
In the empty cave of grieving,  
In the desert of my dreams,  
In the tunnel of my sorrow, you are there.  
you are there. You are there.

**One: This is the day God has made!**

**People: Let us rejoice and be glad in it!**

### **INVITATION TO WORSHIP**

One: We come tonight to hear the story of God's love cradled in a manger. We come out of the deep night to see the light of Christ transform the world.

**Light the first Advent candle.**

**People: We set aside our worries and cast our eyes on the promise of hope that redeems us, renews us, renames us, and grafts us into the story of love that came down for you, me, and all the world. Come, let us worship.**

### **OPENING PRAYER**

#### **Hymn: Silent Night VU #67**

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 Hal-le-lu-jah,  
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.

### **PRAYER OF CONFESSION [Adapted from Titus 2:11-14]**

One: Holy One, we don't feel ready.

**People: We don't feel ready**

One: To forgive others who trespass as we have trespassed before others.

**People: We don't feel ready**

One: To share the good news of Christ's birth and salvation for the world.

**People: We don't feel ready**

One: To live into a new life that lets go of our broken pieces. Forgive us, O God!

**ALL: Forgive us, O God!**

## [Mindful Silence]

At the end of the silence, the officiant or worship leader moves to the baptismal font or baptistry, pours water into it, then moves to what is contextually appropriate.

### **ASSURANCE**

One: We celebrate the forgiveness God has freely given before we even ask. Jesus' birth affirms the good news of the gospel that this salvation is available for everyone!

**Light the second Advent candle.**

One: In the waters of baptism, we are redeemed and reminded that God is ready to take our broken pieces and rename them as Christ's own. Hear the good news: You are forgiven! You are known! You are renamed! In Jesus' name, we pray and say,

**ALL: Amen!**

### **ISAIAH 9:2-7 [Read Responsively]**

One: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. For those who lived in a land of deep shadows.

**People: Light! Sunbursts of light!**

**Light the third Advent Candle.**

One: You repopulated the nation, you expanded its joy. Oh, they're so glad in your presence! Festival joy! The joy of a great celebration, sharing rich gifts and warm greetings.

**People: Light! Sunbursts of light!**

One: The abuse of oppressors and cruelty of tyrants - all their whips and cudgels and curses - is gone, done away with, a deliverance as surprising and sudden as Gideon's old victory over Midian.

The boots of all those invading troops, along with their shirts soaked with innocent blood, will be piled in a heap and burned, a fire that will burn for days! For a child has been born - for us! The gift of a son - for us!

**ALL: Light! Sunbursts of light!**

**Light the fourth Advent candle.**

One: He'll take over the running of the world. His names will be: Amazing Counselor, Strong God, Eternal Father, Prince of Wholeness.

His ruling authority will grow, and there'll be no limits to the wholeness he brings. He'll rule from the historic David throne over that promised kingdom.

He'll put that kingdom on a firm footing and keep it going With fair dealing and right living, beginning now and lasting always. The zeal of God will do all this. Thanks be to God!

**ALL: Amen!**

## HYMN: Away in a manger VU #69

Away in a manger, no crib for his 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.

The cattle are lowing; the poor baby wakes,  
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.  
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,  
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.

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

### ARTISTIC RENDERING OF LUKE 2:1-20 [Need a Creative Reader]

1. Bring the large empty manger brought to the front area of your worshipping space at the beginning of the reading.
2. Have some hay added after verse 5.
3. Add a swaddled baby (could be a baby doll or a family with a young child) after verse 7.
- 4. Light the Christ candle in the Advent Wreath after verse 7.**
5. Bring a blanket or soft material to cover the manger after verse 12.

## HYMN: Joy to the World VU #59

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 Saviour 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.

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.

## **CLOSING REMARKS**

### **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

At each long pause our ....., you are invited to offer a prayer of joys, concerns or requested prayers.

Holy One,

We are reminded, this night of all nights, to come and see what you have done for us. You have called those travelling far distances to trust in your great mercy to find food, shelter, and protection. We especially pray for those who are seeking refuge and strength that they may find sustenance and welcome.

You invite those who feel un-loveable to be wrapped in your love, swaddled in your mercy. We pray that despite circumstances of grief, mental health or addiction, they are reminded that they are named your beloved children. We silently lift the needs of the world in prayer to you, O God.

**Pause for a moment of silence.**

You break through with the songs of unexpected messengers and light our paths towards your glory. We may find ourselves rushing towards the manger without fully understanding what it means.

Thank you, God, for helping us respond to the world's needs out of hope. We pray all things in Jesus' holy name, using the prayer that Jesus taught saying... Amen.

### **THANK YOU, COMMISSION & BLESSING**

We are reminded of the Holy Spirit's presence lighting our lives, illuminating our community, empowering the world to refocus on the one who changed everything.

### **CLOSING HYMN: O, Holy Night**

Go now in the light of Christ, the sure and certain hope of our Creator, sustained by the Holy Spirit in mercy and love. Amen!



## **THANK YOU & CREDITS**

Thank you for participating in today's worship, I pray you have been greatly blessed.

Remember, for those we are unable to connect with any reason; call to buoy up their spirits, and/or pray for them and entrust them to the care of the divine.

Due to physical distancing caused by the Corona Virus, COVID 19, all church activities that require physical contact are suspended until further notice.

Those of you who are on PAR and those who mailed in the gifts and offerings thank you. You can also e-transfer your gift and offerings to [zionunitedarmstrongbc@gmail.com](mailto:zionunitedarmstrongbc@gmail.com)

We are always happy to hear your comments and queries. If you have a prayer request you may use the messenger tab here or email them to [standrewsenderby@hotmail.com](mailto:standrewsenderby@hotmail.com)

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## **MUSIC CREDITS**

### **In the Quiet Curve of Evening – Voices United #278**

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North, St. Cloud, MN 56303.  
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### **Silent Night, Holy Night Voices United #67**

Words: Joseph Mohr 1818.  
English translation: John Freeman  
Young 1863, et al.  
Music: Franz Xavier Grüber 1818.  
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### **Away in a Manager – Voices United #69**

Words: Author unknown.  
Music: William James Kirkpatrick 1895.  
Arrangement: © 1992 Desmond Hassell,  
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429 Parkdale Ave., Ottawa, ON K1Y 1H3.  
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### **Joy to the World Voices United #59**

Words: Isaac Watts 1719,  
alt. Music: attributed to George Frideric  
Handel 1742, arranged by Lowell Mason 1836.  
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### **O Holy Night**

Words: Cantique de Noël or Minuit, Chrétiens  
("Midnight, Christians")  
Placide Cappeau (1808-1877), 1847;  
Translated from French to English  
by John Sullivan Dwight (1813-1893).



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