

Christmas Day

December 25, 2017

BELLS

INVOCATION

P: In the name of the only true God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

C: Amen.

CALL TO WORSHIP Pastor/Congregation

When all was still and it was midnight; **Your almighty Word, O Lord, descended from the royal throne.** Sing to the LORD a new song; **Sing to the LORD, all the earth.** Sing to the LORD, praise his name; **Proclaim his salvation day after day.** Declare his glory among the nations, **His marvelous deeds among all peoples.** For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; **He is to be feared above all gods.** Ascribe to the LORD, O families of nations, **Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.** Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; **Bring an offering and come into his courts.** Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; **Let the sea resound, and all that is in it;** Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them. **Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy.**

HYMN 562

“I Love to Tell the Story”

I love to tell the story Of unseen things above,
Of Jesus and his glory, Of Jesus and his love.
I love to tell the story Because I know it's true;
It satisfies my longings As nothing else can do.
I love to tell the story; 'Twill be my theme in glory
To tell the old, old story Of Jesus and his love.

I love to tell the story, For those who know it best
Seem hungering and thirsting To hear it like the rest.
And when in scenes of glory I sing the new, new song,
'Twill be the old, old story That I have loved so long.
I love to tell the story; 'Twill be my theme in glory
To tell the old, old story Of Jesus and his love.

“Songs of the Season”

The First Song of Promise

Pastor: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. He called into being all living things—vegetation, beasts of the field, birds of the air, fish of the sea, and every other living creature. The crown of his creation was mankind, whom he made different from all of the animals. He made our first parents, Adam and Eve, rational beings. He gave them an immortal soul. He created them in his own image—that means that he created them to be holy, righteous and perfect in his sight, that they and their descendants might forever live in perfect harmony with the LORD. But before long this perfect harmony was shattered, as the LORD reveals to us in Genesis 3:

Men: Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”

Women: The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”

Men: “You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

Pastor: When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”

Men: He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”

Pastor: And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”

Men: The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

Pastor: Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?”

Women: The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

Pastor: So the LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life.” (And then the LORD, in the hearing of Adam and Eve, announced the first promise of a Savior from sin. No doubt these words were like a soothing song that comforted their sin-sick souls):

All: “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”

HYMN 34

“Now Sing We, Now Rejoice”

All Now sing we, now rejoice, Now raise to heav’n our voice;
He from whom joy streameth Poor in a manger lies;
Not so brightly beameth The sun in yonder skies.
Thou my Savior art! Thou my Savior art!

Men Come from on high to me; I cannot rise to thee.
Cheer my wearied spirit, O pure and holy Child;
Through thy grace and merit, Blest Jesus, Lord most mild,
Draw me unto thee! Draw me unto thee!

Women Now through his Son doth shine The Father’s grace divine.
Death o’er us had reigned Through sin and vanity;
He for us obtained Eternal joy on high.
May we praise him there! May we praise him there!

All Oh, where shall joy be found? Where but on heav’nly ground?
Where the angels singing With all his saints unite,
Sweetest praises bringing In heav’nly joy and light.
Oh, that we were there! Oh, that we were there!

The Song of Promise Echoed Until the Time of David

Pastor: Throughout the pages of the Old Testament, from the time of Adam and Eve to the time of Malachi, the last prophet of the Old Testament, the Promise of a Savior from sin, death and damnation echoed again and again. About 2000 years before Christ’s birth, the LORD told Abraham that the Savior would come from his family line, and that he would come to be the Savior of all nations. Genesis 12 records the LORD’s promise to Abraham:

All: “I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

Pastor: God repeated that promise directly to Abraham’s son Isaac, and to his son Jacob. On his death bed, as he was blessing his sons, Jacob foretold that the Savior would come from the line of his son Judah. Genesis 49 says:

All: “The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and the obedience of the nations is his.”

Pastor: After leading the children of Israel out of Egypt and leading them through the wilderness for forty years, it was time for Moses to be gathered to his people. But before he died, he repeated the promise of a Savior, saying:

All: “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him.”

Pastor: The LORD promised Israel’s second king, King David, that the Savior would come from his line. Psalm 89 declares:

All: “I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered. Once for all, I have sworn by my holiness—and I will not lie to David—that his line will continue forever and his throne endure before me like the sun; it will be established forever like the moon, the faithful witness in the sky.”

HYMN 42 **“Come, Your Hearts and Voices Raising”**

Choir

Come, your hearts and voices raising, Christ the Lord with gladness praising;
Loudly sing his love amazing, Worthy folk of Christendom.

Ambo Side

Christ, from heav’n to us descending And in love our race befriending,
In our need his help extending, Saved us from the wily foe.

Font Side

Jacob’s Star in all its splendor Beams with comfort sweet and tender,
Forcing Satan to surrender, Breaking all the pow’rs of hell.

All

Gracious Child, we pray you, hear us; From your lowly manger cheer us.
Gently lead us and be near us Till we join th’ angelic choir.

The Song of Promise Sung by the Prophets

Pastor: As the LORD’s Old Testament revelation increased, more and more information about the Savior was imparted to souls awaiting his coming. The prophet Isaiah foretold much about the Messiah—where he would live, what he would be called, and what he would do, as chapter 9 declares:

Men: There will be no more gloom for those who were in distress.

Women: In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan—

Men: The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.

Women: For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.

All: And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Pastor: Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.

All: The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

Pastor: Isaiah also foretold that Jesus would be born of a virgin, so that he could be our perfect Savior, fully God and fully human—“Immanuel”, which means, “God with us.”

All: “The Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.”

Pastor: The prophet Micah foretold the place of his birth:

All: But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.

Pastor: The song of salvation was composed on the staff of the pages of the Old Testament, a song that stretched through the centuries, bringing serenity to the guilt-burdened, and hushing disturbed souls that were shaken with the fear of death. Malachi, the last prophet of the Old Testament, announced that a prophet would come to prepare the way for the LORD. That prophet would turn out to be John the Baptist. Malachi wrote:

All: “See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the LORD Almighty.

HYMN 65

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

All 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.

Women How silently, how silently The wondrous gift is giv’n!
So God imparts To human hearts The blessings of his heav’n.
No ear may hear his coming, But in this world of sin
Where meek souls will Receive him still, The dear Christ enters in.

All 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;
Oh, come to us, Abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!

Mary’s Song: The Magnificat

Pastor: Finally the time had come for the song of the Old Testament prophets to be played through the birth of the Savior. The angel Gabriel appeared to an elderly priest named Zechariah as he was carrying out his duties at the Temple in Jerusalem. In spite of the fact that Zechariah was old and his wife Elizabeth was barren, Gabriel promised Zechariah that he would have a son, saying,

Men: “Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord...And he will go on before the Lord...to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

Pastor: In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, the angel Gabriel went to the virgin Mary to announce that she would conceive by the power of the Holy Spirit and bear a son named Jesus, which means “Savior.” We hear Luke’s account: In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. The angel went to her and said,

Men: “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”

Pastor: Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her,

Men: “Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.”

Women: “How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”

Men: The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God.”

Women: “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May it be to me as you have said.” Then the angel left her.

Pastor: Mary went to visit her relative Elizabeth in the hill country of Judah. After greeting Elizabeth, Mary spoke the words of Mary’s Song, which has become known as the Magnificat:

“Holy Is Your Name”

by David Hass

The choir will sing all the verses and the first refrain alone. The congregation is invited to sing the refrain (top of page 8) with the choir after verses two through five.

- 1) My soul is filled with joy as I sing to God my Savior: you have looked upon your servant, you have visited your people. *Refrain: Choir*
- 2) I am lowly as a child, but I know from this day forward that my name will be remembered, for all will call me blessed. *Refrain: Congregation*
- 3) I proclaim the pow’r of God, you do marvels for your servants; though you scatter the proud hearted, and destroy the might of princes. *Refrain: Congregation*
- 4) To the hungry you give food, send the rich away empty. In your mercy you are mindful of the people you have chosen. *Refrain: Congregation*
- 5) In your love you now fulfill what you promised to your people. I will praise you Lord, my Savior, everlasting is your mercy. *Refrain: Congregation*

HOLY IS YOUR NAME

Luke 1:46-55, adapt. D.H. **Refrain** Trad. Scottish
Arr. by David Haas

And ho - ly is your name, through
all gen - er - a - tions! Ev - er - last - ing is your
mer - cy to the peo - ple you have
cho - sen, and ho - ly is your name.

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Zechariah's Song: The Benedictus

Pastor: Because Zechariah didn't believe Gabriel when he announced that the elderly priest would have a son, the LORD struck him mute as a sign that his promise would come true. For nine months his tongue was stilled. On the eighth day after John's birth, when the baby boy was to be circumcised, their relatives and neighbors wanted to name the child after Zechariah. Elizabeth said, "No! He is to be called John." Then the relatives and neighbors inquired of Zechariah, to find out what he wanted the child's name to be. He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone's astonishment he wrote, "His name is John." Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue was loosed, and he began to speak, praising God. "He was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, speaking the words of Zechariah's Song, which has become known as the Benedictus:

Men: "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come and has redeemed his people.

Women: He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago),

Men: Salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us—

Women: To show mercy to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, the oath he swore to our father Abraham:

Men: To rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

Women: And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High;

Men: For you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him,

Women: To give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins,

All: Because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace."

HYMN 41

"Let All Together Praise Our God"

All Let all together praise our God Before his highest throne;
Today he opens heav'n again And gives us his own Son,
And gives us his own Son.

Men He leaves his heav'nly Father's throne, Is born an infant small,
And in a manger, poor and lone, Lies in a humble stall,
Lies in a humble stall.

Women A wondrous change which he does make: He takes our flesh and blood,
And he conceals for sinners' sake His majesty as God,
His majesty as God.

All For us he opens wide the door Of paradise today.
The angel guards the gate no more; To God our thanks we pay,
To God our thanks we pay.

The Angels' Song: The Gloria in Excelsis

Pastor: In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register.

Women: So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.

Men: He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

Women: While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Pastor: And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

Men: But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

Pastor: Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

All: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”

Pastor: When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another,

Men: “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

Women: So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

Choir: “Angels Sing”

by Heather Sorenson

Gloria, Gloria! Shepherds watched their flocks by night, wise men saw a star so bright, prophets with their pen did write of things they’d not yet seen. After walking days and miles, Mary had a little child, Joseph and the cattle smiled while all of heaven beamed.

Heavenly praises ring, “Glory to the King,” angels sing.

Gloria! In excelsis Deo! Gloria! Heavenly praises ring, “Gloria to the King,” angels sing!

Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King: peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!” Joyful all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies. With angelic host proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!” Hark! The herald angels sing, “Gloria to the newborn King!”

Shepherds watched their flocks by night, wise men saw a star so bright, prophets with their pen did write of things they’d not yet seen. After walking days and miles, Mary had a little child, Joseph and the cattle smiled while all of heaven beamed!

Gloria! In excelsis Deo! Gloria! Heavenly praises ring. Gloria to the King!
With the angels sing, “In excelsis Deo!”

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The Shepherds’ Song of Praise

Choir: We’re not told in Scripture the very words that the shepherds spoke about Jesus the Savior. However, we know that they couldn’t keep the Good News to themselves. Luke continues: So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

Men: When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

Women: But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

All: The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Choir: May our lives, like the lives of the shepherds, be lives of praising our Savior from sin and telling others about the free gift of eternal life in him.

HYMN 54

“Where Shepherds Lately Knelt”

Where shepherds lately knelt and kept the angel’s word,
I come in half-belief, a pilgrim strangely stirred;
But there is room and welcome there for me,
But there is room and welcome there for me.

In that unlikely place I find him as they said:
Sweet newborn babe, how frail! and in a manger bed,
A still, small voice to cry one day for me,
A still, small voice to cry one day for me.

How should I not have known Isaiah would be there,
His prophecies fulfilled? With pounding heart I stare:
A child, a son, the Prince of Peace for me,
A child, a son, the Prince of Peace for me.

Can I, will I forget how Love was born, and burned
Its way into my heart unasked, unforced, unearned,
To die, to live, and not alone for me,
To die, to live, and not alone for me?

The Song of Simeon: The Nunc Dimittis

Pastor: When the time of their purification according to the Law of Moses had been completed, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord”. Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

All: “Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.”

Pastor: Because the LORD has allowed us to see the Christ-child through the eyes of faith, we also have the consolation that only he can give. That little baby grew, lived perfectly under God’s law for us, received on the cross the curse of the law that we deserved because of our sins, died, and rose again from the dead to assure us all that we have the free gift of life at peace with God today and forever.

HYMN 64 **“Let Us All with Gladsome Voice”**

Choir Let us all with gladsome voice Praise the God of heaven,
Who, to bid our hearts rejoice, His own Son has given.

All To this vale of tears he comes, Here to serve in sadness,
That with him in heav’n’s fair homes We may reign in gladness.

Choir We are rich, for he was poor; Is not this a wonder?
Therefore praise God evermore Here on earth and yonder.

All O Lord Christ, our Savior dear, Bless us and be near us.
Grant us now a glad new year. Amen, Jesus, hear us!

OFFERING

PRAYER

LORD’S PRAYER

BLESSING

Pastor: May the blessing of the eternal God be upon us: his light to guide us, his presence to shelter us, his peace to unite us.

All: Amen.

CLOSING HYMN 62 **“Joy to the World”**

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.

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.

*The special Christmas Day bulletin covers are given to the glory of our Savior by
Joy and Brian Schwark and family in loving memory of David and Bonny Zarbock.*

The poinsettias in the sanctuary and narthex are given to the glory of God by:



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