

A CELEBRATION OF WORSHIP

Christmas Eve

December 24, 2020

7:00 p.m.

The Silent Prayer and Meditation – read *Psalm 96*

The Prelude

Greensleeves

Davis/Shirk, arr.

Scott Shirk, soprano saxophone; Brendan Shirk, oboe; Aaron Shirk, cello

The Welcome

The Call To Worship

Lighting the *Christ Candle*

. . . “Good news of great joy,” the angel said, “for to you a savior is born.”

“Peace on earth,” the choir sang, “for God reigns in the highest.”

“Follow me,” the star beckoned, “For hope was born in Bethlehem.”

As we light the Christ candle,

we watch for the Christmas story around us.

Emmanuel has come and is coming.

Come, all ye faithful, and worship God.

The Prayer of Adoration

Glorious God, on this Christmas Eve, we sing beloved carols of Bethlehem, of shepherds and angels, of Mary and Joseph, and the infant Jesus, our Savior. Is there yet a new song we can sing to You? A song to be learned from the heavens and the earth: where the roar of the sea, the exultation of the fields, and the joy of the trees are already raised in a chorus of glad rejoicing, ready to welcome You. Even if no ear may hear Your coming, help us hear the music of creation. Then, with the whole cosmos, we will sing of Your salvation, declare Your glory, and in a crescendo of praise, bless Your Name: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace! Amen.

Carol 133

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!

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation! Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!

Glory to God, all glory in the highest! REFRAIN

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning, Jesus, to thee be all glory given;

Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing! REFRAIN

The Prayer of Confession

God of Love Incarnate, we confess that, with the shepherds, we are terrified of Your glory; for in glory’s light we see plainly all that is wrong in the world: how oppression still enslaves; how garments of war are still stained with blood; how those seeking refuge still find no place of safety; how fear, tyranny and injustice yet pervade. We also see what is wrong in us: how passionately we pursue the things of this world, but forget to ponder the mystery of faith; how we do not practice the peace You intend in our relationships, our community, or even in the church. Like the shepherds, we want to follow and find You. Forgive us our sins, we pray, and help us not be afraid ... (time for silent confession).

The Assurance of Pardon

God’s gift of Jesus is for all of us;

it outshines all other things and fills us with joy.

It is new life for today and a gift we can share with others.

This is great news!

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Alleluia! Amen!

The Gloria Patri (spoken)

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: World without end. Amen.

The Peace and Greeting

The peace of Christ be with you all. **And also with you!**

(Please stand to greet one another in the name of Christ. For those worshipping at home, please share Christ's peace with someone outside Your home this week.)

The Prayer for Illumination

The Prophecy *Isaiah 9:2-7*

Carol 129

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

*Lo, how a rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung, of Jesse's lineage coming,
by faithful prophets sung. It came a floweret bright,
amid the cold of winter, when half spent was the night.*

*Isaiah 'twas foretold it, the rose I have in mind, with Mary we behold it, the virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright she bore for us a Savior,
when half spent was the night.*

*This flower, whose fragrance tender with sweetness fill the air,
dispels with glorious splendor the darkness everywhere.*

Enfleshed, yet very God, from sin and death he saves us and lightens every load.

The Birth in Bethlehem *Luke 2:1-7*

The Anthem

How Far Is It to Bethlehem?

Mack Wilberg, arr.

Chris Fisher, Hannah Fisher, Mary Ann Casey, Roy Jarnecke, Larry Casey

*How far is it to Bethlehem? Not very far. Shall we find the stable room lit by a star?
Can we see the little child, is he within? If we lift the wooden latch, may we go in?
May we stroke the creatures there, ox, ass or sheep? May we peep like them and see Jesus asleep?
If we touch his tiny hand will He awake? Will he know we've come so far just for his sake?
Great kings have precious gifts, and we have naught, little smiles and little tears are all we brought.
For all weary children Mary must weep, here, on the bed of straw, sleep, children, sleep.
God in his mother's arms; babes in the byre, sleep, as they sleep who find their heart's desire.*

The Announcement to the Shepherds *Luke 2:8-14*

The Moment with Children

Carol 113

Angels We Have Heard on High

*Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.*

REFRAIN: Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.

*Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heavenly song? REFRAIN*

*Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee Christ, the Lord, the newborn King. REFRAIN*

The Visit of the Shepherds *Luke 2:15-20*

The Anthem

The Snow Lay on the Ground

Howard Helvey, arr.

The Meditation

Bleak or Bright

The Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

The Lord's Prayer

**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 debts,
as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Carol 121

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.*

*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.*

*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!*

Sharing the Light of Christ

Living God, come to our world. May the love of Christ shine brightly, at the center of our lives, spreading warmth and light, in us, in our homes, our neighborhoods, in this congregation, and everywhere. Use all that we have and all that we are as You bring light into every darkness, ease heavy burdens, and turn our infectious warring into Your endless peace. Glory be to You Eternal God, in the Name of Jesus Christ the Light of the World. Amen.

Carol

Silent Night, Holy 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.*

The Charge and Benediction

Carol 134

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 earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.*

*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 Postlude

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

F. Mendelssohn, arr. A.L. Page

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Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming – Text: German Carol; stanzas 1, 2 trans. Theodore Baker, 1894, alt.; stanza 3 trans. Harriet Knuth Spaeth, 1985, alt.; Public Domain

How Far Is It to Bethlehem? – Mack Wilberg, arr., Oxford University Press, 2001

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