

2024 – TRADITIONAL CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

On a long winter evening we gather to proclaim the coming of the light. Isaiah announces that the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Paul reminds us that the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all. In the familiar account of Christ's birth, the evening sky is bright with the heavenly host singing, "Glory to God in the highest." Amid our broken world we proclaim that the prince of peace is born among us. God comes to us in human flesh—in Christ's body and blood—so that we may be bearers of divine light to all the world.

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP

This Peaceful Night

Choir

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

GREETING

The grace of the newborn Jesus, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

Tonight we celebrate the coming of Jesus Christ, the Light of the World. This candle bears witness to his light in our lives.

(the first Advent candle is lit)

By the light of God's living, creating Word, our faith shines more brightly.

(the second Advent candle is lit)

With the coming of God's Son, our Emmanuel, the light shines still more brightly. *(the third Advent candle is lit)*

The light of our Lord continues to shine for all to see, as it glows in our lives of love and service to others. *(the fourth Advent candle is lit)*

Jesus is the Light of the World. Jesus is the light of our lives. Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and give glory to our Father in heaven. *(the Christmas candle is lit)*

GATHERING CAROL – O, Come, All Ye Faithful

#283

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✚ one God, whose steadfast love is everlasting. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God-with-us, we confess that we have turned away those seeking shelter, claiming there is no room when we have plenty. We have made power and wealth our idols, while you show us true glory: a baby in a manger. We have overlooked the shepherds, expecting good news in prettier packaging. Too often, we have valued violence instead of your peace. Turn us from our ways to your ways. Grant us the grace to begin again. Free us from all that keeps us bound, and forgive our sin, through Jesus Christ, who gives himself for us. Amen.

Hear the good news and rejoice! You are God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, ✚ forgiven in Christ, and freed to respond in joy. **Amen.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC *Let Our Praises Rise* Choir / Handbells

WORD OF GOD

1st Reading – Isaiah 9:2-7

CAROL – *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear* (vs. 1 & 4) #282

2nd Reading – Titus 2:11-14

CAROL – *Joy to the World* (vs. 1, 3-4) #267

Gospel – Luke 2:1-20

CAROL – *O Little Town of Bethlehem* (vs. 1, 3-4) #279

SERMON

CAROL – *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* #27

THE PRAYERS

God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

SHARING OF THE PEACE

OFFERING “*Angels We Have Heard on High*”

Handbells

OFFERING PRAYER

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

LORD’S PRAYER

HOLY COMMUNION – All are welcome!

Receive the wafer and choose the wine (light) or juice (dark) Gluten-free wafers available at center station.

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING AND PRAYER

CANDLE LIGHTING – *From the Christmas candle—which symbolizes Christ, the Light of the world—the individual candles are lit. Please tip unlit candles to receive the flame as the light is passed.*

CAROL OF LIGHT – *Silent Night*

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BLESSING

The God of love, Father, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit, lavish you with grace, illumine your path, and increase your joy, today and always. **Amen.**

Please extinguish your candles.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. The Word of God dwells in you richly.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

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