

Thursday, December 24, 2020

Nativity of Our Lord I: Christmas Eve, Year B

Introduction

In winter's deepest night, we welcome the light of the Christ child. Isaiah declares that the light of the long-promised king will illumine the world and bring endless peace and justice. The angels declare that Jesus' birth is good and joyful news for everyone, including lowly shepherds. Filled with the light that shines in our lives, we go forth to share the light of Christ with the whole world.

Confession and Forgiveness

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God,
who was in the beginning,
who makes a dwelling among us,
who covers us with justice and mercy.

Amen.

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

God of goodness and lovingkindness,
**we confess that we have sinned against you
and our neighbors.**

**We have turned away from your invitation to new life.
We have turned away from the lowly and downtrodden.
In your abundant mercy, forgive us our sins,
those we know and those known only to you,
for the sake of the one who came to live among us,
Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.**

Hear the good news of peace and salvation!
God forgives us all our sins,
not through our own work,
but through ✠ Jesus Christ, made known to all people.
With all who come to the manger,
rejoice in this amazing gift of grace.
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 Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Readings

Isaiah 9:2-7

Light shines: a child is born for us

Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]

God with us

First Reading: Isaiah 9:2-7

This poem promises deliverance from Assyrian oppression, a hope based on the birth of a royal child with a name full of promise. While Judah's king will practice justice and righteousness, the real basis for faith lies in God's passion for the people: The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this!

²The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.

³You have multiplied the nation,
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.

⁴For the yoke of their burden,
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors
and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

⁶For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Gospel: Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]

God's greatest gift comes as a baby in a manger. Angels announce the "good news of great joy" and proclaim God's blessing of peace.

¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Children's Meditation 4:00 pm only Pastor Janet Peterman

Christmas Eve Prayers
12/24/20, All services (4, 6:30 and 9)

A When I say, "Glory to God in the highest!" you respond, "**Fill us with joy!**"

Joining our voices with the song of the angels, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

Silence is kept as we gather our prayers

A We praise you, Almighty God, for the wonder of your presence with us this holy night! Glory to God in the highest!

C **Fill us with joy!**

A O God of Light: We like the way your light shines! Open our hearts to make room to receive you.

Glory to God in the highest!

C **Fill us with joy!**

A Father of Glory, bring peace and good will to all the peoples of the earth.

Remember families in any kind of trouble. *pause* Let your reconciling love restore peoples to each other. *pause* Establish peace on earth. Glory to God in the highest!

C **Fill us with joy!**

A O God, we praise you for the gift of life: For Jesus, born this holy night, to show us your heart of mercy and love. For children born this year. For parents expecting a child. *pause* Remember, as well, all who struggle to care for their children, and those who long yet for a child:

Glory to God in the highest!

C **Fill us with joy!**

A Remember, Father, those kept from us this night... *pause*

Those who struggle in body, mind, or spirit... *pause*

The grieving and the dying, and all who care for them... *pause*

Service personnel, with special support for those far from home... *pause*

And those dear to us, whom we name before you now... *pause*

hold silence as people pray silently

Glory to God in the highest!

C **Fill us with joy!**

A Blessed are you, O LORD God, for those who have gone before us and are at rest – memorialized and honored in the beauty of these poinsettias, and all our loved ones of blessed memory. *pause*

Glory to God in the highest!

C **Fill us with joy!**

A Into your hands, Father, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through the One born this night, Jesus, our Savior and Lord.

C **Amen.**

Offering Prayer

Gracious God,
you came to us as one unknown,
bringing joy and salvation to the earth.

Nourish us at your banquet table,
that with all who welcome your birth
we may proclaim your peace,
revealed in Jesus Christ, our Savior.
Amen.

Invitation to Communion

The Word is revealed in a manger, in simple bread and wine.
Come meet Christ in this meal.

Blessing After Communion

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Prayer after Communion

We give you thanks, gracious God,
that you have once again fed us from your very self
with the body and blood of Christ.
Through this mystery, send us forth
to proclaim your promise to a world in need,
through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior.
Amen.

Worshippers put on their coats, gather their belongings – we will not be returning to the sanctuary – make sure to keep their bulletins, which have the words to Silent Night, and take their candles with them. Ushers will direct them to the area where we will be singing outdoors. Please keep your masks on, as we care for each other. Socially distancing outdoors 10-15 feet apart by household will mean that we should be able to sing our hearts out together.

If you have trouble standing, a few folding chairs will be available.

When we are assembled, Kevin will lead us.

The Benediction and Dismissal will follow our singing.

Blessing

Almighty God,
who sent the Holy Spirit to Mary,
proclaimed joy through the angels,
sent the shepherds with good news,
and led the magi by a star,
bless you this day ✝ through the Word made flesh.

Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus.

Thanks be to God.

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Prayers prepared by Interim Pastor Janet S. Peterman

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