

December 24, 2024; 7 pm
Christmas Eve

We Gather Together

Prelude “Angels from the Realms of Glory”

arr. Edwin C. Johnson

GTG 143 “Angels from the Realms of Glory” vs. 1

please join in singing with our cantors: *Katy J., Mary J., Bill J., Joanne M., Kim M., Phyllis M., and Carol, W*

***Welcome** to tonight's special Service of Worship. Whether you are with us in person, joining us live on zoom or watching on our YouTube channel, we are glad you are here. For those in person, please use the time before worship to fill in the Friendship Pad in your pew. We extend a special welcome to our visitors, and if you have not already received your welcome gift, please pick one up as you leave the sanctuary after worship.*

Copies of the Glory to God hymnal and Common English Bibles are available at the back of the sanctuary for your use during worship.

Welcome

Rev. Dr. Craig R. Alwin

Ringing of the Bell and entrance of the Light of Christ

Lighting of the Christ Candle

Alwin Family

Reader One: Beloved, today we welcome the Christ Child, the fulfillment of our joy, as we proclaim with the prophet Isaiah, “For 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” (Isaiah 9:6).

Congregation: Christ our joy has come near. Emmanuel, God with us, has come to dwell with us as a tiny baby. “His 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” (Isaiah 9:7).

Reader Two: We light these candles as a sign of Christ coming to dwell with us, to live in the neighborhood of vulnerable humanity as a vulnerable child. May the light of Christ warm our hearts and light our way as we share the joy of God's salvation wherever we go.

Light all the candles of the Advent Yule Log as we sing "O Little Town of Bethlehem". <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/come-let-us-adore-him-advent-candle-lighting-liturgy-2024>

Sung Response GTG 121 "O Little Town of Bethlehem" (vs 1)

***Responsive Prayer**

Jolene S.

God of surprising love and hope,
we come this evening to the manger,
gazing lovingly on the child born to bring hope to the world.

Open our hearts tonight as we hear the story anew.

Help us to be guided by the light of Jesus Christ.

that we may truly feel the power of your love

and with joy, bring that love to all we meet.

In Jesus' name, we pray. AMEN.

***Sung Response GTG 133 "O Come All Ye Faithful"**

God's Word Is Proclaimed

Scripture Psalm 96:1-4, 10

Pastor Craig

Sing to the Lord a new song!

Sing to the Lord, all the earth!

Sing to the Lord! Bless his name!

Share the news of his saving work every single day!

Declare God's glory among the nations;

declare his wondrous works among all people

because the Lord is great and so worthy of praise.

He is awesome beyond all other gods.

Tell the nations, "The Lord rules!

Yes, he set the world firmly in place;

it won't be shaken.

He will judge all people fairly."

Sung Response GTG 123 “It Came Upon the Midnight Clear” vs. 1

Scripture Jeremiah 23:5-6

Jolene S.

The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up a righteous descendant from David’s line, and he will rule as a wise king. He will do what is just and right in the land. During his lifetime, Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And his name will be The Lord Is Our Righteousness.

Sung Response GTG 140 “Once in Royal David’s City” vs. 1

Scripture Isaiah 11:1–10

Cathy W.

A shoot will grow up from the stump of Jesse;
a branch will sprout from his roots.
The Lord’s spirit will rest upon him,
a spirit of wisdom and understanding,
a spirit of planning and strength,
a spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord.
He will delight in fearing the Lord.
He won’t judge by appearances,
nor decide by hearsay.
He will judge the needy with righteousness,
and decide with equity for those who suffer in the land.
He will strike the violent with the rod of his mouth;
by the breath of his lips he will kill the wicked.
Righteousness will be the belt around his hips,
and faithfulness the belt around his waist.
The wolf will live with the lamb,
and the leopard will lie down with the young goat;
the calf and the young lion will feed together,
and a little child will lead them.
The cow and the bear will graze.
Their young will lie down together,
and a lion will eat straw like an ox.
A nursing child will play over the snake’s hole;
toddlers will reach right over the serpent’s den.
They won’t harm or destroy anywhere on my holy mountain.
The earth will surely be filled with the knowledge of the Lord,
just as the water covers the sea.

On that day, the root of Jesse will stand as a signal to the peoples. The nations will seek him out, and his dwelling will be glorious.

Sung Response GTG 140 “Once in Royal David’s City” vs. 4

Scripture Isaiah 9:2-7

Mary B.

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.

On those living in a pitch-dark land, light has dawned.

You have made the nation great;

you have increased its joy.

They rejoiced before you as with joy at the harvest,

as those who divide plunder rejoice.

As on the day of Midian, you’ve shattered the yoke that burdened them,

the staff on their shoulders,

and the rod of their oppressor.

Because every boot of the thundering warriors,

and every garment rolled in blood

will be burned, fuel for the fire.

A child is born to us, a son is given to us,

and authority will be on his shoulders.

He will be named

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,

Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

There will be vast authority and endless peace

for David’s throne and for his kingdom,

establishing and sustaining it

with justice and righteousness

now and forever.

The zeal of the Lord of heavenly forces will do this.

Sung Response GTG 119 “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” v.1

Gospel Luke 2:1-14

In those days Caesar Augustus declared that everyone throughout the empire should be enrolled in the tax lists. This first enrollment occurred when

Quirinius governed Syria. Everyone went to their own cities to be enrolled.

Since Joseph belonged to David’s house and family line, he went up from the city of Nazareth in Galilee to David’s city, called Bethlehem, in Judea. He went to be enrolled together with Mary, who was promised to him in marriage and

who was pregnant. While they were there, the time came for Mary to have her baby. She gave birth to her firstborn child, a son, wrapped him snugly, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the guestroom. Nearby shepherds were living in the fields, guarding their sheep at night. The Lord's angel stood before them, the Lord's glory shone around them, and they were terrified.

The angel said, "Don't be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people. Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord. This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great assembly of the heavenly forces was with the angel praising God. They said, "Glory to God in heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors."

Response GTG 113 "Angels We Have Heard on High" v.1

Gospel Luke 2:15-20

Cathy W.

When the angels returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go right now to Bethlehem and see what's happened. Let's confirm what the Lord has revealed to us." They went quickly and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. When they saw this, they reported what they had been told about this child. Everyone who heard it was amazed at what the shepherds told them. Mary committed these things to memory and considered them carefully. The shepherds returned home, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. Everything happened just as they had been told.

Response GTG 113 "Angels We Have Heard on High" v. 2

Meditation "A New Song"

Rev. Dr. Craig Alwin

We Respond to God's Word

Prayers of the People

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.

Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who have sinned against us.

And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

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

Offertory "Christmas Suite"

Handbell Choir

***Offering GTG 145** "What Child is This" vs. 3

***Offertory Prayer**

***We Spread the Light of Christ**

(The ushers will light the candles of persons on the aisles. Each person will then light the candle of the next person down the pew. For safety, please DO NOT TIP A LIT CANDLE. Please tip the unlit candle toward the lighted candle.)

***Hymn GTG 122** "Silent Night"

Jesus Christ, the Light of the World!

Jesus Christ, the Light of the World!

(Please extinguish your candles)

***Hymn GTG 134** "Joy to the World"

***Blessing**

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me won't walk in darkness but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

Jesus also said, "You are the light of the world... let your light shine before others, so they may praise your Father in Heaven." (Matthew 5:14-16)

Turn to someone next to you and share this blessing with each other:

**May the light of Christ shine upon you,
and be reflected upon all those you meet.**

***Hymn GTG 136** "Go, Tell It on the Mountain" v. 1

Postlude "Go Tell It"

arr. by Aaron David Miller