



CHRISTMAS DAY FESTIVAL SERVICE

Friday, December 25, 2020

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Christmas, as John Writes It

As We Gather

The world hears a sentimental story, a typical account of an underdog hero who has come to fight against all sorts of wrongs. Today we hear from John the same story but with the revelation that the Child is the Word, that this is no ordinary birth but the Word made flesh, and that this story is not about sentiment but salvation. In the midst of this all is the reality that the world lies in the darkness of sin and death—but not all of it. To those who believe on His name, the light shines and the darkness has not and cannot overcome it. Here is where we are. We see the Word by faith, hear His promise of salvation by faith, live in His light by faith, and rejoice that we are the sons and daughters of God by faith.

Organ Prelude

Ringing of the Tower Bell

391 Rejoice, Rejoice This Happy Morn

P Rejoice, rejoice this happy morn,
A Savior unto us is born,
The Christ, the Lord of glory!
His lowly birth in Bethlehem
The angels from on high proclaim
And sing redemption's story!

C **My soul, extol**
God's great favor;
Bless Him ever
For salvation;
Give Him praise and adoration!

PREPARATION

Invocation

- P** In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

Opening Sentences

Psalm 43:4; 124:8

- P** I will go to the altar of God,
C to God my exceeding joy.
P Our help is in the name of the Lord,
C who made heaven and earth.

379 O Come, All Ye Faithful

sts. 1, ref, 2-4

- 1** 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
- ref** O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord!
- 2** Highest, most holy,
Light of Light eternal,
Born of a virgin, a mortal He comes;
Son of the Father
Now in flesh appearing! Refrain
- 3** Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God
In the highest: Refrain
- 4** Yea, Lord, we greet Thee,
Born this happy morning;
Jesus, to Thee be glory giv'n!
Word of the Father
Now in flesh appearing! Refrain

Confession and Absolution

- P** Recalling our sin and God's mercy, let us examine our lives and consciences.

Silence for self-examination

C I confess to God Almighty, before the whole company of heaven and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned in thought, word, and deed by my fault, by my own fault, by my own most grievous fault; wherefore I pray God Almighty to have mercy on me, forgive me all my sins, and bring me to everlasting life. Amen.

P The almighty and merciful Lord grant you pardon, forgiveness, and remission of all your sins. In the stead and by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ, I, a called and ordained servant of the Word, forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P May the Lord, who has begun this good work in us, bring it to completion in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. The peace of the Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

WORD

380 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

1 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 the_angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!" Refrain

ref Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

2 Christ, by highest heav'n adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold Him come,
Offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail the_incarnate Deity!
Pleased as Man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel! Refrain

3 Hail, the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
Ris'n with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth. Refrain

Introit

Psalm 98:1-4; antiphon: Isaiah 9:6

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Oh sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things!
His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.
The LORD has made known his salvation;
he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations.
He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of
Israel.

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.
Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth;
break forth into joyous song and sing praises!

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Salutation

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

P Let us pray.

Almighty God, grant that the birth of Your only-begotten Son in
the flesh may set us free from the bondage of sin; through Jesus
Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and
the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Old Testament

Isaiah 52:7-10

⁷How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of him who brings good news,
who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness,
who publishes salvation,
who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."

⁸The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice;
together they sing for joy;
for eye to eye they see
the return of the LORD to Zion.

⁹Break forth together into singing,
you waste places of Jerusalem,
for the LORD has comforted his people;
he has redeemed Jerusalem.

¹⁰The LORD has bared his holy arm
before the eyes of all the nations,
and all the ends of the earth shall see
the salvation of our God.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Epistle

Hebrews 1:1-12

¹Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. ³He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

⁵For to which of the angels did God ever say,

“You are my Son,
today I have begotten you”?

Or again,

“I will be to him a father,
and he shall be to me a son”?

⁶And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says,

“Let all God’s angels worship him.”

⁷Of the angels he says,

“He makes his angels winds,
and his ministers a flame of fire.”

⁸But of the Son he says,

“Your throne, O God, is forever and ever,
the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom.

⁹You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness;
therefore God, your God, has anointed you
with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.”

¹⁰And,

“You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning,
and the heavens are the work of your hands;

¹¹they will perish, but you remain;
they will all wear out like a garment,

¹²like a robe you will roll them up,
like a garment they will be changed.

But you are the same,
and your years will have no end.”

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

381 Let Our Gladness Have No End

1 Let our gladness have no end, alleluia!
For to earth did Christ descend, alleluia! Refrain

Ref On this day God gave us
Christ, His Son, to save us;
Christ, His Son, to save us.

2 Prophesied in days of old, alleluia!
God has sent Him as foretold, alleluia! Refrain

3 See, the loveliest blooming rose, alleluia!
From the branch of Jesse grows, alleluia! Refrain

4 Into flesh is made the Word, alleluia!
He, our refuge and our Lord, alleluia! Refrain

Holy Gospel

John 1:1-14

P The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the first chapter.

C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹²But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

376 Once in Royal David's City

1 Once in royal David's city
Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby
In a manger for His bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.

- 2 He came down to earth from heaven,
 Who is God and Lord of all,
 And His shelter was a stable,
 And His cradle was a stall;
 With the poor and mean and lowly
 Lived on earth our Savior holy.
- 3 For He is our childhood's pattern,
 Day by day like us He grew;
 He was little, weak, and helpless,
 Tears and smiles like us He knew;
 And He feels for all our sadness,
 And He shares in all our gladness.
- 4 And our eyes at last shall see Him,
 Through His own redeeming love;
 For that child so dear and gentle
 Is our Lord in heav'n above;
 And He leads His children on
 To the place where He is gone.
- 5 Not in that poor, lowly stable
 With the oxen standing by
 Shall we see Him, but in heaven,
 Set at God's right hand on high.
 Then like stars His children, crowned,
 All in white, His praise will sound!

Sermon "Christmas, As John Writes It"
 John 1:1-5, 14-16

The Second Article

With stanzas of hymn 370, "What Child is This"

370:1

- 1 What child is this, who, laid to rest,
 On Mary's lap is sleeping?
 Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
 While shepherds watch are keeping?
 This, this is Christ the king,
 Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
 Haste, haste to bring Him laud,
 The babe, the son of Mary!

P I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord,

370:2

- 2 Why lies He in such mean estate
 Where ox and ass are feeding?
 Good Christian, fear; for sinners here
 The silent Word is pleading.
 Nails, spear shall pierce Him through,
 The cross be borne for me, for you;
 Hail, hail the Word made flesh,
 The babe, the son of Mary!

- P** He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death.

370:3

- 3** So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh;
Come, peasant, king, to own Him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.
Raise, raise the song on high,
The virgin sings her lullaby;
Joy, joy, for Christ is born,
The babe, the son of Mary!

- P** All this He did that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.

Prayer of the Church

Organ Offertory and Steward *MINUTE*

Offering Prayer

SACRAMENT

Preface

- P** The Lord be with you.
C And also with you.
P Lift up your hearts.
C We lift them to the Lord.
P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
C It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

Proper Preface

- P** It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord; for in the mystery of the Word made flesh You have given us a new revelation of Your glory that, seeing You in the person of Your Son, we may know and love those things which are not seen. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

Sanctus “Holy, Holy, Holy”

Prayer of Thanksgiving

P Blessed are You, O Lord, our God, King of all creation, for You have had mercy on us and have given Your only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. In the beginning You created all things by Your Word; and in the fullness of time Your Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.

C Amen.

Words of Our Lord

Proclamation of Christ

P As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

C Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

P O Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, in giving us Your body and blood to eat and to drink, You lead us to remember and confess Your holy cross and passion, Your blessed death, Your rest in the tomb, Your resurrection from the dead, Your ascension into heaven, and Your coming for the final judgment. So remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

Lord's Prayer

C 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 trespasses
as we forgive those
who trespass 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 and ever. Amen.

Pax Domini

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C Amen.

Agnus Dei "Lamb of God"

Distribution Hymns

364 Away in a Manger

- 1 Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.
- 2 The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.
I love Thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.
- 3 Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
And take us to heaven to live with Thee there.

Text: Public domain

368 Angels We Have Heard on High

- 1 Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply,
Echoing their joyous strains. Refrain
- ref Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Gloria in excelsis Deo.
- 2 Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heav'nly song? Refrain
- 3 Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn King. Refrain

Text: Public domain

390 Let Us All with Gladsome Voice

- 1 Let us all with gladsome voice
Praise the God of heaven,
Who, to bid our hearts rejoice,
His own Son hath given.
- 2 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.
- 3 We are rich, for He was poor;
Is not this a wonder?
Therefore praise God evermore
Here on earth and yonder.

- 4** Christ, our Lord and Savior dear,
Be Thou ever near us.
Grant us now a glad new year.
Amen, Jesus, hear us.

Text: Public domain

Post-Communion Thanksgiving

- P** Let us pray.
O Lord, Jesus Christ, the true light who comes into the world to enlighten all people, grant that Your light shine forth in us and through us, that we may carry the holy joy of this day into all eternity; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** Amen.

Benedicamus

- P** Let us bless the Lord.
C Thanks be to God.

387 Joy to the World

- 1** 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.
- 2** Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let men their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
- 3** 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.

Benediction

- P** Go in peace. Serve the Lord.
C Thanks be to God.
P The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.
- C** Amen.

**4 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.**

✠ Soli Deo Gloria ✠
To God Alone Be Glory

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