

ORDER OF SERVICE

Call to Worship: Ringing of the bell

First Advent Candle is Lighted

Hymn

“THE ADVENT OF OUR KING”

#331

1. The advent of our King Our prayers must  
now employ,

And we must hymns of welcome sing In  
strains of holy joy.

2. The everlasting Son Incarnate deigns to be,  
Himself a servant's form puts on To set His  
servants free.

3. O Zion's daughter, rise To meet your lowly  
King,

Nor let your faithless heart despise The peace  
He comes to

bring.

4. As judge, on clouds of light, He soon will come  
again

And His true members all unite  
With Him in heav'n to reign.

5. Before the dawning day Let sin's dark deeds  
be gone,

The sinful self be put away The new self now  
put on.

▲ 6. All glory to the Son, Who comes to  
set us free,

With Father, Spirit, ever one Through all  
eternity.

### The Invocation

P We make our beginning in the name of the Father and of  
the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

### The Confession of Sins

*from John 3:16-19;8:12*

P For God so loved the world that He gave His only  
begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not  
perish but have eternal life.

C **For God did not send His Son into the world to  
condemn the world, but that the world through Him  
might be saved.**

P He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who  
does not believe is condemned already, because he has not  
believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.  
And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into  
the world, and men loved darkness rather than light,  
because their deeds were evil.

**All: Jesus declares: “I am the Light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”**

*Time of Silent Confession for those sins which are weighing on our hearts*

*P* Let us now confess our sins to God our Father:

**All: O Lord Jesus, I confess I have not always sought Your Light in my thoughts and words and deeds. For these times when I have loved darkness rather than light, I ask Your forgiveness. I pray that You will shine in my heart with the gift of faith through the Holy Spirit, and the Joy of the Father’s Eternal Love; that I might always walk in Your glorious and saving Light. Amen.**

*The Absolution*

*II Corinthians 4:6*

*P* Rejoice and be glad, “For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of god in the face of Jesus Christ.” By His death and resurrection we have the assurance of sins forgiven. Go now, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, walk by faith in the One True light of life.

*C* **Amen.**

*Congregation may be seated*

*Second Advent Candle is Lighted*

*Scripture Reading*

*Luke 1:5-26, selected verses*

There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias. So it was that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, his lot fell to

burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. The angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. For he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from His mother’s womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, ‘to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,’ and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” And Zacharias said to the angel, “How shall I know this?” And the angel answered and said to him, “I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings. But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time.” And so it was, as soon as the days of his service were completed, that he departed to his own house. Now after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived; and she hid herself five months. Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth.

*P* This is the Word of the Lord.

*C* **Thanks be to God.**

## THE LIGHT OF CHRIST SHINES IN MARY’S HEART

### Scripture Reading

*Luke 1:39-45*

Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, “Blessed are you

among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord.” ’

*P* This is the Word of the Lord.

*C* **Thanks be to God.**

*Hymn* “MY SOUL REJOICES” #933

- 1 My soul rejoices, My spirit voices---  
Sing the greatness of the Lord!  
For God my Savior Has shown me favor---  
Sing the greatness of the Lord!  
With praise and blessing, Join in confessing  
God, who is solely Mighty and holy---  
O sing the greatness of God the Lord!  
His mercy surely Shall rest securely  
On all who fear Him, Love and revere Him---  
O sing the greatness of God the Lord!
- 2 His arm now baring, His strength declaring---  
Sing the greatness of the Lord!  
The proud He scatters, Their rule He shatters---  
Sing the greatness of the Lord!  
Oppression halted; The meek exalted.  
Full are the hungry; Empty, the wealthy---  
O sing the greatness of God the Lord!  
Here is the token All that was spoken  
To Abr’ham’s offspring God is fulfilling---  
O sing the greatness of God the Lord!

*Third Advent Candle is Lighted*

THE LIGHT OF CHRIST SHINES IN JOSEPH’S LIFE

## Fourth Advent Candle is Lighted

### Scripture Reading

Matthew 1:22-25

Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: “Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.” Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus.

*P* This is the Word of the Lord.

*C* **Thanks Be To God.**

### Hymn

#341

“LIFT UP YOUR HEADS, YE MIGHTY GATES”

- 1 Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates!  
Behold, the King of glory waits.  
The King of kings is drawing near;  
The Savior of the world is here.  
Life and salvation He doth bring;  
Therefore rejoice and gladly sing.  
To God the Father raise  
Your joyful of praise.
- 2 A righteous Helper comes to thee;  
His chariot is humility,  
His kingly crown is holiness,  
His scepter, pity in distress.  
The end of all our woe He brings;  
Therefore the earth is glad and sings,  
To Christ the Savior raise  
Your grateful hymns of praise.

- 3      How blest the land, the city blest,  
Where Christ the ruler is confessed!  
O peaceful hearts and happy homes  
To whom this King in triumph comes!  
The cloudless sun of joy is He  
Who comes to set His people free.  
    To God the Spirit raise  
Your happy shouts of praise.
- 4      Fling wide the portals of your heart;  
Make it a temple set apart  
From earthly use for heav'n's employ,  
    Adorned with prayer and love and joy.  
So shall your Sov'reign enter in  
And new and nobler life begin.  
To God alone be praise  
For word and deed and grace!
- 5      Redeemer, come and open wide  
My heart to Thee; here, Lord, abide!  
O enter with Thy grace divine;  
They face of mercy on me shine.  
Thy Holy Spirit guide us on  
Until our glorious goal is won.  
Eternal praise and fame We offer to Thy name.

## THE LIGHT OF CHRIST SHINES AS FORETOLD

### *The Christ Candle is Lighted*

signifying the coming of the Light of the World

*Hymn*      "O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM"  
#361

- 1      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.

- 2 For Christ is born of Mary, And gathered all above,  
While mortals sleep, The angels keep Their watch of  
wond'ring love.  
O morning stars together Proclaim the holy birth  
And praises sing to God, the King, And peace to men on  
earth.
- 3 How silently, how silently, The wondrous Gift is giv'n!  
So God imparts to human hearts  
The blessings of His heav'n.  
No ear may hear His coming, But in this world of sin,  
Where meek souls will receive Him, still  
The dear Christ enters in.
- 4 O holy Child of Bethlehem, Descend to us, we pray;  
Cast out our sin, and enter in, Be born in us to - day.  
We hear the Christmas angels The great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel.

GOD'S LIGHT SHINES WITH GOOD WILL  
TOWARD MEN

*Hymn*      "O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL"      #379

- 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: 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

***Congregation Please Rise For 4th Verse***

- 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



*The "Christmas" Gospel* Luke 2:1-20 & Matthew 2:1-4

And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you; You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!" So it was when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us." And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King

of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.” When Herod the king heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

*P* This is the Word of the Lord.

*C* **Thanks be to God**

*Hymn* “GENTLE MARY LAID HER CHILD”

#374

- 1 Gentle Mary laid her child Lowly in a manger;  
There He lay, the Undefined, To the world a stranger.  
Such a babe in such a place, Can He be the Savior?  
Ask the saved of all the race Who have found His  
favor.
- 2 Angels sang about His birth,  
Wise Men sought and found Him;  
Heaven’s star shone brightly forth  
Glory all around Him.  
Shepherds saw the wondrous sight,  
Heard the angels singing;  
All the plains were lit that night,  
All the hills were ringing.
- 3 Gentle Mary laid her Child Lowly in a manger;  
He is still the Undefined But no more a stranger.  
Son of God of humble birth, Beautiful the story;  
Praise His name in all the earth; Hail the King of glory!

THE LIGHT OF CHRIST SHINES UPON THE  
GENTILES

*The Christmas Eve Message*

Luke

2:1-20

Christmas Prayers

Candle Lighting

Hymn “SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT”

#363

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,  
Heav'nly 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 Lord's Prayer [ALL]

**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**

## *The Benediction of Our Lord*

*P* The grace of our Lord T Jesus Christ and the love of  
God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit be  
with you all.

*C* **Amen.**

[Please extinguish hand-held candles after “Amen”]

## *Closing Hymn* “JOY TO THE WORLD” #387

- 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.
- 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.

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*Soli + Deo + Gloria*

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*Servants for tonight's Festival are:*

*Pastor Neil K. Wonnacott*

*Organist: Anita Eichinger*

*Elders: Board of Lay Ministry*

*Ushers: Paul Wonnacott*

*Participants: St. Paul's Youth 3<sup>rd</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grade.*

**Thank you to all who participated in sharing  
the Good News of Christmas this evening.**

*Acknowledgements*

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