

God's Word Gives Our Lives Direction



CandleLight Service ♦ December 19, 2021

Candlelight Service

December 19, 2021 – 6:30 PM

*The majority of tonight's service will proceed 'unannounced.' Please note that the words to each song are printed in your bulletins, but will also be up on the screen. In addition, please make sure you have a candle to be used at the end of the service.

*** Please stand in body or in spirit.**

Prelude

Opening Song Video: *"To Thee My Heart I Offer"* – Elaine Hagenburg

Welcome/Announcements

Call to Worship

* Opening Carol: LUYH #76 v. 1-3 *"O Come, All Ye Faithful"*

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. God of God, Light of Light eternal,
lo, he abhors not the virgin's womb;
Son of the Father, begotten, not created;

Refrain

3. Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above:
"Glory to God, all glory in the highest!"

Refrain

Words: attr. John F. Wade, 1743; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1841, and others, P.D.;
Music: attr. John F. Wade, 1743; desc. © 1947 Hymns Ancient and Modern,
admin. Hope Publishing Company; CCLI #678905

*(During the singing of this carol the children are invited forward
to participate in the Choir & Bell Choir)*

GOD CREATES LIGHT

Sanctuary is entirely dark; the first candle is lit.

(Readers – Link Family)

Reader 1: God's salvation story stretches from before creation and into the coming time when there will be a new heaven and a new earth and God's people will be with him for eternity. God uses light in amazing ways throughout God's grand story. As we reflect on the birth and life of Jesus, let us consider how light and darkness play into God's mighty works. First, God creates light.

Reader 2: *Genesis 1:1–5* (Pew Bible pg. 1)

Reader 1: Once upon a time, the universe was hidden in darkness. There were no stars to shine at night, no sun to rise or set, and no moon to reflect light to the earth. In fact, light didn't even exist! But God did the impossible: God brought light out of darkness. Can you imagine? One moment, there was no such thing, but then God speaks, and with God's words God separates the light from the darkness! From the first pages of the Bible to the very last, light is an important theme. Tonight, as we trace the theme of light from Genesis to Revelation, we worship Jesus, the light of the world, born to deliver us from darkness.

Song of Reflection: LUYH #85 v. 1 *"Silent Night, Holy Night"*

1. 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.

GOD IS LIGHT

The second candle is lit. (Readers – Link Family)

Reader 1: God uses light and is tied to light in amazing ways all through God's grand story. As we reflect on the birth and life of Jesus, let us consider again how light and darkness play into God's mighty works.

First God creates light. Second, God is light!

Reader 2: 2 Chronicles 7:1-5 (Pew Bible pg. 431)

Reader 1: When God appeared to the Israelites in the desert, God appeared to them as light. Each day, the light of God led the people as they traveled from Egypt to Canaan. When God moved from the tabernacle into the temple, the light of God's glory was so bright and glorious that people couldn't even look at God! Many years later, when Jesus was born on a dark night in Bethlehem, the bright light of the angels shone down on the shepherds, and once again the light of God's presence was so glorious that the shepherds were terrified!

* Song of Reflection: GH #215 v. 1-4

"While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks"

1. While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
all seated on the ground, the angel of the Lord came down,
and glory shone around, and glory shone around.
2. "Fear not," said he for mighty dread
had seized their troubled mind -
"Glad tidings of great joy I bring
to you and all mankind, to you and all mankind."
3. "To you, in David's town this day,
is born of David's line
the Savior, who is Christ the Lord,
and this shall be the sign: and this shall be the sign:
4. "The heavenly Babe you there shall find
to human view displayed,
all meanly wrapped in swaddling bands,
and in a manger laid, and in a manger laid.

*"While Shepherds Watched Their flocks by Night"; George Frederic Handel /
Nahum Tate Public Domain; CCLI #678905*

GOD SENDS HIS LIGHT TO THE NATIONS

The third candle is lit.

(Readers – Irene Feddema and Elaine Zonnefeld)

Reader 3: So far we've seen two ways that light and darkness play into God's mighty works.
In creating the world, God also creates light.
Then we learn that God is light!
Now we learn that in an act of grace,
God sends God's light to the nations!

Reader 4: Isaiah 60:1–3, 19–20 (Pew Bible Pg. 738)

Reader 3: In the Bible, walking in the light means living obediently to God. To walk in darkness means to walk apart from God.
The Bible says that since Adam and Eve first sinned, the world has once again been covered in darkness. Even so, God promised to send God's light into the world, and God's plan was to shine God's light to all the nations of the world.

* Song of Reflection: LUYH #61 v. 1,2,6,7

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

1. O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Refrain

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.*

2. O come, O Wisdom from on high,
who ordered all things mightily;
to us the path of knowledge show
and teach us in its ways to go.

Refrain

6. O come, O Bright and Morning Star,
and bring us comfort from afar!
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night
and death's dark shadows put to flight.

Refrain

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.*

7. O come, desire of nations, bind
all peoples in one heart and mind.
Bid all our sad divisions cease,
and be thyself our King of peace.

Refrain

Words: Psalterium Canticum Catholicarum, Köln, 1710; tr. Composite, P.D.;
Music: French processional, 15- c. P.D.; arr. Evangelical Lutheran Worship ©2006
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Ministry of Music: *“Light of the World” – Glory Craig*

JESUS COMES AS THE LIGHT

The fourth candle and the Christ candle are lit.

(Readers - Irene Feddema & Elaine Zonnefeld)

Reader 3: Now we’ve seen three ways that light and darkness play into God’s mighty works. In creating the world, God also creates light. Then we learn that God is light. And as the light, God sends God’s light to the nations. But God is not finished. In the fullness of time, Jesus came as the light!

Reader 4: *John 1:1–3; John 8:12 (Pew Bible pgs. 1049, 1059)*

Reader 3: Jesus is the true light of the world, and he entered into the darkness of our sinful and broken world. The Christmas story is full of light, from the light of the angels who appeared to the shepherds to the light of the star that the Magi followed in order to find Jesus. At Christmas, we worship Jesus as the light who shines in the darkness and gives light to all nations.

* Song of Reflection: LUYH #80 v. 1,3 *“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 hosts proclaim,
“Christ is born in Bethlehem!”

Refrain

Hark! the herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King!”

2. Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold him come,
offspring of the virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
hail the incarnate Deity,
pleased as man with us to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel.

Refrain

3. Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
risen with healing in his wings.
Mild, he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth.

Refrain

Words: Charles Wesley, 1739, alt., P.D. Music: Felix Mendelssohn, 1840; adapt.
William H. Cummings, 1856, P.D.; CCLI: 678905

WE PREFER THE DARKNESS

The four candles are extinguished.

(Readers – Brad De Kok & Alyssa Ackermann)

Reader 5: Light and darkness play into God’s mighty works.
However, we need to reflect on how people
respond to the light of God.
In our sinful brokenness, we prefer the darkness.

Reader 6: *John 3:19–21* (*Pew Bible pg. 1052*)

Reader 5: Sadly, even though Jesus came bringing the
beautiful light of God’s presence, our hearts
reject the light that God has brought.
Instead, we prefer the darkness.

We would rather decide for ourselves what is right and wrong. We put our own wants above our neighbor's. We say things that hurt others. We think and act selfishly. We prefer the darkness. Yet even in the darkness, we long for the comfort of the Light.

Song of Reflection: LUYH #56 v. 1-4

"Come, Though Long-Expected Jesus"

1. Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in thee.
2. Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art:
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.
3. Born thy people to deliver,
born a child and yet a king,
born to reign in us forever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.
4. By thine own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit
raise us to thy glorious throne.

Words: Charles Wesley (1744), P.D.; Music: Christian F. Witt's *Psalmodia Sacra*, 1715; adapt. Henry J. Gauntlett, 1861; desc. John W. Wilson © 1983 Hope Publishing Company; CCLI# 678905

JESUS DESCENDS INTO DARKNESS

(Readers – Brad De Kok & Alyssa Ackermann)

The Christ candle is extinguished, leaving the sanctuary dark except for the decorative candles.

Reader 5: Light and darkness play into God's mighty works.
God creates light. God is light. God sends
God's light to the nations.
And Jesus came as the Light.
In our sinful response, we prefer the darkness.
And in an act of amazing grace, Jesus descends
into the darkness for us so that we might know
the light of God's presence.

Reader 6: Matthew 27:45–46 (Pew Bible pg. 988)

Reader 5: Even though we have rejected the light of God’s presence, Jesus, the light of the world, entered into the darkness for us. On the cross, he experienced the darkness of rejection from God. The Father turned his face away from his Son, leaving him in utter darkness. Jesus endured the deepest darkness so that we might know the light of God’s presence. He triumphed over the darkness so that the curse of sin might be defeated.

* Song of Reflection: LUYH #92 v. 1,2,4 *“Joy to the World”*

1. Joy to the world! the Lord is come:
let earth receive her King,
Let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.
2. Joy to the earth! the Savior reigns:
let all their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills,
and plains repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
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.

Psalm 98; Words: Isaac Watts (1674-1748), 1719, P.D;
Music: Lowell Mason, 1948, P.D. CCLI #678905

The Christ candle is lit again.

GOD SHINES HIS LIGHT UPON US

(Readers – Bill and Glory Craig)

Reader 7: God uses light and is tied to light in amazing ways all through God’s grand story. When we encounter God’s saving grace through faith, we prefer Jesus rather than the darkness, and God shines God’s light upon us.

Reader 8: *Psalm 67:1–3* (Pew Bible pg. 570)

Reader 7: The psalmist prayed that the light of God’s face would shine upon God’s people so that God’s people might in turn shine God’s light to the world. Jesus tells us that we are the light of the world, and we are to make known God’s goodness to everyone we meet. May God help us each day to be a light in this dark world!

Song of Reflection: LUYH #90 v. 1-4 “*How Great our Joy*”

1. While by the sheep we watched at night,
glad tidings brought an angel bright.

Refrain

*How great our joy! Great our joy!
Joy, joy, joy! Joy, joy, joy!
Praise we the Lord in heaven on high!
Praise we the Lord in heaven on high!*

2. There shall be born, so he did say,
in Bethlehem a child today.

Refrain

3. There shall the child lie in a stall,
this child who shall redeem us all.

Refrain

4. This gift of God we’ll cherish well,
that ever joy our hearts shall fill.

Refrain

Words: traditional German carol, P.D.; Music: Traditional German melody; CCLI #678905

THE LIGHT OF HEAVEN (*Readers – Bill and Glory Craig*)

Reader 7: God uses light and is tied to light in amazing ways all through God’s grand story. God creates light. God is light. God sends God’s light to the nations. And Jesus came as the light. In Christ, we experience God shining God’s light upon us. And we long for the day when God will bring God’s redemption plan to fullness. In that day we will be forever in the light of heaven.

Reader 8: Revelation 21:1–2, 22–25 (Pew Bible pg. 1230)

Reader 7: One day, night will be no more.
The darkness of our sad and broken world
will be forever done away with.
In place of darkness, we will enjoy the radiance
of God’s presence for the rest of time.
Until that day, we live in hope!
Light has triumphed over darkness, and we await
the day when the light will shine forever more.
We will leave this place tonight as those who have
experienced the light of God’s presence, and we
are sent out as those who are the light of the
world.

Song Video of Reflection: *“One Still Night”*

* Song of Proclamation: LUYH #88 v. 1,2,4
“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

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 the 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 wondering love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the King, and peace to all on earth.
4. O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray.
Cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.

Words: Phillips Brooks (1835-1893) P.D.;

Music: Lewis H. Redner (1831-1908) P.D.

Ministry of Music: *“O Holy Night” – Men’s Group*

During this ministry of music, the Christ candle is used to light the readers’ candles, which are in turn used to light the candles of the congregants, until the sanctuary is lit with the candles of each person.

* Final Words and Announcements

* Closing Prayer

* Benediction: WS pg. 491 #1

* Song of Reflection: LUYH #85 v. 1-4 *"Silent Night, Holy Night"*

1. 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.
2. Silent night! Holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar,
heavenly hosts sing: "Alleluia!
Christ the Savior is born!
Christ the Savior is born!"
3. 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!
4. Silent night! Holy night!
Wondrous star, lend thy light;
with the angels let us sing
Alleluia to our King:
"Christ the Savior is born!
Christ the Savior is born."

Words: Joseph Mohr, 1818; tr. John F. Young, 1863, P.D

* Postlude

**Please extinguish your candle before departing
and have a Merry Christmas!*