

Therefore let us read and mark in Holy Scripture the story of the loving purposes of God from the days of our first disobedience unto the glorious redemption brought us by this Holy Child; let us celebrate the yearly remembrance of His birth with hymns and songs of praise.

But first let us pray for all the needs of the whole world;
... for peace on earth and goodwill among all His people;
... for unity and brotherhood within the church He came to build, and especially for our congregation.

...And because this would rejoice His heart, let us remember in His name the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry, and the oppressed, the sick and those that mourn, the lonely and the unloved, the aged and the little children, all those who know not the Lord Jesus or who love him not or who by sin have grieved his heart of love.

...Lastly let us remember before God all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore and in a greater light, that multitude which no man can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom in the Lord Jesus we are one forevermore.

... These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the throne of heaven in the words which Christ himself has taught us:

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;
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.**

CAROL

From Heaven Above (vs. 1-3)

#268

1 "From heav'n above to earth I come
to bear good news to ev'ry home!
Glad tidings of great joy I bring
to all the world, and gladly sing:"

2 "To you this night is born a child
of Mary, chosen virgin mild;
this newborn child of lowly birth
shall be the joy of all the earth."

3 "This is the Christ, God's Son most high,
who hears your sad and bitter cry,
who will himself your Savior be
and from all sin will set you free."

FIRST READING *Genesis 3:9-15, 17-19*

⁸They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

⁹But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, 'Where are you?' ¹⁰He said, 'I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.' ¹¹He said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?' ¹²The man said, 'The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.'

¹³Then the Lord God said to the woman, 'What is this that you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent tricked me, and I ate.'

¹⁴The Lord God said to the serpent,

'Because you have done this,
 cursed are you among all animals
 and among all wild creatures;
upon your belly you shall go,
 and dust you shall eat
 all the days of your life.

¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman,
 and between your offspring and hers;
he will strike your head,
 and you will strike his heel.'

¹⁷And to the man he said,
'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife,

 and have eaten of the tree
about which I commanded you,
 "You shall not eat of it",
cursed is the ground because of you;
 in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life;

¹⁸ thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;
 and you shall eat the plants of the field.

¹⁹ By the sweat of your face
 you shall eat bread
until you return to the ground,
 for out of it you were taken;
you are dust,
 and to dust you shall return.'

FIRST CAROL

Hark, the Herald Angels Sing

#270

1 Hark! The herald angels sing,
 "Glory to the newborn king;
 peace on earth, and mercy mild,
 God and sinners reconciled."
Joyful, all you nations, rise;
 join the triumph of the skies;
 with angelic hosts proclaim,
 "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Refrain Hark! The herald angels sing,
 "Glory to the newborn king!"

Continued on next page...

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, incarnate deity!
Pleased as man with us to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel! *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 we no more may die,
born to raise each child of earth,
born to give us second birth. *Refrain*

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, alt.

SECOND READING *Isaiah 9:2, 6-7*

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...
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.

SOLO *The People that Walked in Darkness* *G.F. Handel (1685 - 1756)*
from *The Messiah*
Joshua Bassette, bass

THIRD READING *Isaiah 11:1-11*

A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
2 The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.
3 His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide by what his ears hear;
⁴ but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

⁶ The wolf shall live with the lamb,
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
and a little child shall lead them.
⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze,
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
⁸ The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.
⁹ They will not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain;
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.

THIRD CAROL

Joy to the World

#267

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> | <p>3 No more let sin and sorrow 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.</p> <p>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.</p> |
|--|---|

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

FOURTH READING

Micah 5:2-5a

²But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.
³Therefore he shall give them up until the time

when she who is in labor has brought forth;
then the rest of his kindred shall return
to the people of Israel.

⁴And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.

And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great
to the ends of the earth; ⁵and he shall be the one of peace.

FOURTH CAROL

O Little Town of Bethlehem, Verses 1, 3, 4

#279

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.

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;
oh, come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Immanuel!

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.

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835-1893

FIFTH READING

Luke 1:26–38

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

FIFTH CAROL*Your Little Ones, Dear Lord*

ELW #286

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1 Your little ones, dear Lord, are we,
and come your lowly bed to see;
enlighten ev'ry soul and mind,
that we the way to you may find.</p> <p>2 With songs we hasten you to greet,
and kiss the ground before your feet.
Oh, blessed hour, oh, sweetest night
that gave you birth, our soul's delight.</p> | <p>3 Oh, draw us wholly to you, Lord,
and to us all your grace accord;
true faith and love to us impart,
that we may hold you in our heart.</p> <p>4 Until at last we too proclaim,
with all your saints, your glorious name;
in paradise our songs renew,
and praise you as the angels do.</p> |
|---|---|

Text: Hans A. Brorson, 1694-1764; tr. Harriet Krauth Spaeth, 1845-1925, alt.

SIXTH READING*Luke 2:1-7*

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.

SIXTH CAROL*Away in a Manger*

#278

Sung by the youth

- 1 Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;
the stars in the bright 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 you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky
and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.
- 3 Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay
close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care
and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

Text: North American, 19th cent.

SEVENTH READING*Luke 2:8-20*

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.

SEVENTH CAROL

Go Tell It On the Mountain
Sung by the children of St. Paul's

#290

Refrain

Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and ev'rywhere;
go tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born!

2 The shepherds feared and trembled
when, lo, above the earth
rang out the angel chorus
that hailed our Savior's birth. *Refrain*

1 While shepherds kept their watching
o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens
there shone a holy light. *Refrain*

3 Down in a lonely manger
the humble Christ was born;
and God sent us salvation
that blessed Christmas morn. *Refrain*

Text: African American spiritual, refrain; John W. Work Jr., 1872-1925, stanzas, alt.

SERMON

The Rev. Johanna Rehbaum

HYMN*Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming*

#272

Choir will sing vs 1 in German, congregation is invited to sing on vs 2-4.

1 Lo, how a rose e'er blooming
from tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming
as seers of old have sung,
it came, a flow'r so bright,
amid the cold of winter,
when half-spent was the night.

2 Isaiah had foretold it,
the rose I have in mind;
with Mary we behold it,
the virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright,
she bore to us a Savior,
when half-spent was the night.

3 This flow'r, whose fragrance tender
with sweetness fills the air,
dispels with glorious splendor
the darkness everywhere.
True man, yet very God,
from sin and death he saves us
and lightens ev'ry load.

4. O Savior, child of Mary,
who felt our human woe;
O Savior, king of glory,
who dost our weakness know:
bring us at length, we pray,
to the bright courts of heaven
and into endless day.

Text: German carol, 15th cent.; tr. Theodore Baker, 1851-1934, sts. 1-2; Harriet R. Krauth, 1845-1925, st. 3; John C. Mattes, 1876-1948, st. 4

OFFERING

During this time, in joy and gratitude for the ways God continually dwells lovingly with us, and in support of the mission of our congregation, you are invited to make a gift online (www.stpaulspittsford.org/donate-now), or write a check and mail to St. Paul's Lutheran Church, PO Box #363, Pittsford, NY 14534.

OFFERTORY

In the Bleak Midwinter

Harold Darke (1888 – 1976)

St. Paul's choir

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter, long ago.

Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him, nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away when He comes to reign.
In the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

Enough for Him, whom cherubim, worship night and day,
Breastful of milk, and a mangerful of hay;
Enough for Him, whom angels fall before,
The ox and ass and camel which adore.

What can I give Him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give Him: give my heart.

-Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

~ ~ ~

*In preparation to hear the Gospel of the Incarnation,
light a candle and turn off the lights in your home.
Consider having additional candles available to light as well during the hymn.*

~ ~ ~

EIGHTH LESSON: John 1:1-5

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

EIGHTH CAROL

Silent Night, Holy Night

#281

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>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.</p> | <p>3 Silent night, holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
radiant beams from your holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth.</p> |
| <p>2 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!</p> | |

Text: Joseph Mohr, 1792-1849; tr. John F. Young, 1820-1885

COLLECT

Let us pray... As you came in the stillness of night, great God, enter our lives this night. Overcome darkness with the light of Christ's presence, so that we may clearly see the way to walk, the truth to speak, and the life to live for him, our Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

BLESSING

Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow, praises voicing, let us greet the morrow:
Christ the child is born for you!
May God Almighty, Father Son + and Holy Spirit bless you now and forever.
Amen

SENDING SONG

O Come, All Ye Faithful

#283

*This hymn is a collaboration across the Upstate NY Synod,
with singers and instrumentalists from across the synod. (Text on next page.)*

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 The 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*

Text: attr. John Francis Wade, 1711-1786; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802-1880, sts. 1, 3-4; tr. unknown, st. 2

DISMISSAL

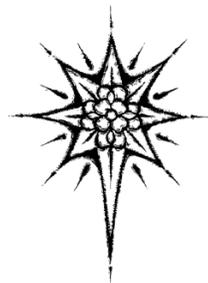
Go in peace. Christ is with you!

Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

In dulci Jubilo, BWV 729

J.S. Bach (1685-1750)



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