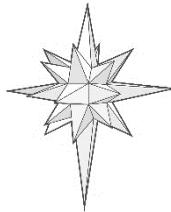


# Christmas Eve Family Service



*December 24, 2020*

*5:00 PM*



**saintJames**  
episcopal church | lancaster

## **Prelude**

*The Opening Gates*  
Abby Gardner, *organ*

Susan A. Pierce

## **PRAYER AT THE CRECHE**

Holy Jesus, to deliver us from the power of darkness you humbled yourself to be born among us and laid in a manger. Let the light of your love always shine in our hearts, and bring us at last to the joyful vision of your beauty, for you are now alive and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. **Amen.**

*Celebrant* Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**People** **And blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.**

**Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## **CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION**

*Celebrant*

Christ the light of the world has come to dispel the darkness of our hearts. Let us turn to the light and confess our sins.

*Celebrant and People*

**Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.**

*Celebrant*

May the God of all healing and forgiveness draw you to himself and cleanse you from all your sins, that you may behold the glory of his Son, the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **CHRISTMAS EVE CHILDREN'S PAGEANT**

### **A One-Act Play**

#### **NARRATOR #1**

This is the story of the first Christmas – the night Jesus Christ was born. This night is like no other night. It is a time to dream and to sing our way to Bethlehem, to the Mystery of Christmas. The children will show us how to go.

Jesus' birth brought hope and joy to the world. Hope in a world of wrongdoing and suffering. And joy that God had finally fulfilled the promise to send someone--a savior, or messiah--to Earth to go among the people and teach everybody God's peaceful and loving ways. That person would be God's greatest gift to all creation--God's son Jesus Christ.

To prepare the world for Jesus, God sent different women and men as prophets. Prophets are people who come so close to God, and God comes so close to them, that they know what is most important. They pointed the way to Bethlehem. Stop. Watch. Pay attention. Something incredible is going to happen in Bethlehem.

#### **PROPHET #1**

Behold, a young girl shall bring forth a son and his name will be Emmanuel - "God is with us." For unto us a child will be born, unto us a son shall be given.

**PROPHET #2**

And his name shall be called...Wonderful...the Prince of Peace...and there shall be no end to his kingdom.

**TOWNSPERSON #1**

The prophets foretell of a wonderful savior! Out of Bethlehem...one will go forth to be the King of Israel.

**TOWNSPERSON #2**

Yes, a baby who will grow up to lead us in God's ways!

**TOWNSPERSON #3**

And he will be with us forever! Hallelujah!

**NARRATOR #1**

Now when God was ready to give Jesus to the world, God chose a good and holy woman named Mary to be his mother. Mary lived in the little village of Nazareth and was engaged to be married to Joseph, a humble carpenter, who lived nearby.

**NARRATOR #1**

One day, when Mary was alone, God sent a messenger, the angel Gabriel, to appear before her.

**GABRIEL**

Hail, Mary. The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women.

**NARRATOR #1**

Mary was at first frightened and confused by this greeting of the Angel of God. But then Gabriel told her that God had chosen her to give birth to Jesus.

**GABRIEL**

Fear not Mary, for you are special in God's eyes. And behold, God has chosen you to bring forth a son. And you shall call him Jesus. And he will be called the Son of God. And the Kingdom of God shall have no end.

## **NARRATOR #1**

Mary now understood everything she had been told. And it filled her with great joy and happiness. She replied to Gabriel saying:

## **MARY**

I will happily carry out God's will.

## **NARRATOR #1**

Not long after he had spoken to Mary, the angel Gabriel appeared to Joseph one night as he slept. In Joseph's dream, the Angel of the Lord told him of God's plan.

## **GABRIEL**

Joseph, God has chosen you to be the father of God's son Jesus. And Mary will be his mother.

## **NARRATOR #1**

When Joseph awoke, he went to Mary with joy in his heart. Both Mary and Joseph had heard that God's son would be coming, and they were overjoyed to be chosen by God to be his parents.

## **NARRATOR #1**

And so Mary and Joseph went back to living their quiet lives, keeping God's secret only between themselves.

## **NARRATOR #2**

Now, at that time, the land they lived in was ruled by the Romans, who were mighty, but wicked rulers of an enormous empire. The chief ruler, a man named Caesar Augustus, was mean and greedy. He wanted to tax everyone in the land to raise money for himself and the Romans. So he issued a decree.

## **CAESAR AUGUSTUS**

Every person shall return to the place of their birth.

## **NARRATOR #2**

That way, Caesar would know every person who lived in his country, so they could be taxed.

## **NARRATOR #2**

And so Joseph and Mary left Nazareth to return to the small village of Bethlehem, about 90 miles away, where Joseph had been born. Mary was about to have the baby, so it was hard for her to walk. Sometimes she rode on a donkey. It is also hard to ride on a donkey when you are about to have a baby, so sometimes she got down again and walked. They must have been the last people coming up the road to Bethlehem that night.

When they arrived, the city was already very crowded with other people who had come back to be registered, and all of the inns were full. But Joseph sought shelter at several inns anyway, in the hope that someone might spare a room for Mary. It was late, and Mary was so weary.

## **JOSEPH**

We have traveled a long way and my wife is very tired. Is there any room at your inn?

## **INNKEEPER #1**

Sorry, my inn is full!

## **INNKEEPER #2**

My inn is full....Are you crazy? It's the holidays!

## **NARRATOR #2**

And so it went at every inn. But one innkeeper looked at Mary, who was great with child, and felt sorry for her. He said:

## **INNKEEPER #3**

I have no room in my inn. But you may stay in my stable out in the back.

## **JOSEPH**

We thank you very much for your kindness.

## **NARRATOR #2**

The stable was for animals – for the donkeys, cows and sheep that people had brought with them. But Mary and Joseph were grateful for any shelter they could get that night in the little town of Bethlehem.

## **NARRATOR #2**

Stars brightened slowly in the sky. All creation held its breath. Suddenly, from the stable, came the cry of a newborn child! The baby is born, the one we have been waiting for! Here is the Christ Child, the Mystery of Christmas!

## **ANGELS**

Hallelujah!

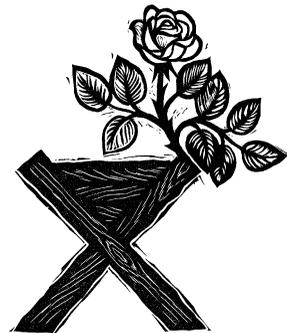
## **NARRATOR #2**

The Lord Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, the Everlasting Prince of Peace—for he is called all these things—was born to Mary and Joseph. And to make the baby Jesus comfortable, Mary wrapped him in swaddling—clean strips of white cloth – and laid him down gently in the soft hay in the manger, the animals' feeding box.

## **ANGELS AND CONGREGATION**

### *AWAY IN A MANGER*

*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.*



### **NARRATOR #3**

That same night there were shepherds watching their flocks of sheep on the steep hills surrounding Bethlehem. The shepherds were poor people who wore rough, simple clothing. For them, nights were usually dark, cold and lonely.

But the night that Jesus was born, the angel Gabriel suddenly appeared above them in the sky.

### **NARRATOR #3**

The shepherds had never seen an angel, and they were afraid. Their hearts were beating so loudly. When they could hear something besides their own hearts, they thought they heard singing in the sky. That also scared them until they heard the words of the Angel of God:

### **GABRIEL**

Do not be afraid. I bring you tidings of great joy. Peace on earth and good will to all. A Child is born! Go. Hurry. Run to Bethlehem to see the Child who will change everything.

### **SHEPHERD #1**

Please tell us where we can find him there!

### **GABRIEL**

You shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

### **NARRATOR #3**

Then suddenly a whole host – a multitude – of heavenly angels appeared in the sky! And they heralded, or announced, the news of the baby Jesus. “Glory to God in the highest!” they exclaimed. “And on earth, peace!”

## ANGELS AND CONGREGATION

### *HARK, THE HERALD ANGELS SING*

*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!"  
Hark, the herald angels sing.  
"Glory to the newborn king."*



### **NARRATOR #3**

When the angels had departed, the shepherds decided that they should go see the baby Jesus right away.

### **SHEPHERD #2**

Let us go to Bethlehem!

### **SHEPHERD #3**

Yes! Let us see this wondrous child that God has told us about!

### **NARRATOR #3**

The shepherds were the first to see and to worship the Christ Child. They glorified and praised God. Just seeing Jesus filled them with hope for all people. "Joy to the world!" they cried, "The Lord our Savior has come!"

## CONGREGATION

### *JOY TO THE WORLD*

*Joy to the world, the Lord has 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.*

## NARRATOR #3

The word about Jesus' birth began to spread. Mary treasured these things and pondered them in her heart. And little by little the stable filled with men and women from near and far.

## NARRATOR #3

Meanwhile, in a land far to the east of Bethlehem, there were three Magi (*pronounced: madge-eye*), people of great knowledge. Of all the things they knew, they knew the most about the stars. One day they saw a wild star that was not on any of their maps of the sky.

## MAGI #1

That star is amazing! It's so bright!

## MAGI #2

Yes, it's as if it's trying to tell us something.

## MAGI #3

Maybe it is! Could it be a sign that the Savior has come? The one that the prophets wrote of so long ago?

## NARRATOR #3

The Magi knew where all of the stars were supposed to be in the sky, but this star moved. So when it moved, they were curious, and followed it. It led them to the stable where the Christ Child was born.

### **NARRATOR #3**

When they saw the Christ Child, the Three Magi fell on their knees in humble worship. They gave him gifts of bright gold, sweet-smelling frankincense and perfume-like myrrh, brought so far with so much love. And now we all have come, following the star, to find God-with-us. We come, as people have come all through the ages, to bring our own gifts to the Child, who is God's gift to us. We have been shown the way into the Mystery of Christmas. So let us sing, for this night is holy and filled with overflowing silence.

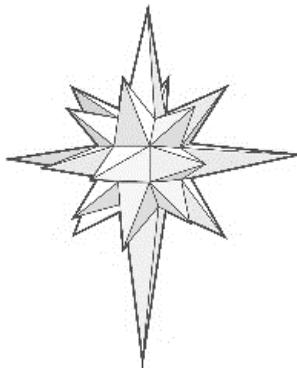
### **CONGREGATION**

#### *SILENT NIGHT*

*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.*

### **ALL NARRATORS**

And that is the story of the first Christmas.



## The Collect

O God, you have caused this holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light: Grant that we, who have known the mystery of that Light on earth, may also enjoy him perfectly in heaven: where with you and the Holy Spirit he lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.

## The Peace

Celebrant His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God

**People The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.**

Celebrant Glory to God in the highest.

**People And peace to God's people on earth.**

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

**People And also with you.**

## Music

*Light A Candle For Peace*  
Saint James Children's Choir  
StephJo Wise, *director*

Light a candle for peace  
Light a candle for love  
Light a candle that shines all the way  
around the world  
Light a candle for me  
Light a candle for you  
That our wish for world peace  
Will one day come true! (repeats)

Light a candle for peace  
Light a candle for love  
Light a candle that shines all the way  
around the world  
Light a candle for me  
Light a candle for you  
That our wish for world peace  
Will one day come true!

Sing peace around the world  
Sing peace around the world  
Sing peace around the world  
Sing peace around the world

## **The Lord's Prayer**

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

**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,  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Celebrant says

God our Father, in this night you have made known to us again the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: confirm our faith and fix our eyes on him until the day dawns and Christ the Morning Star rises in our hearts. To him be glory both now and forever. **Amen.**

## **Blessing & Dismissal**

May the Father,  
who has loved the eternal Christ  
from before the foundation of the world,  
shed that love upon you his children. **Amen.**

May Christ,  
who by his incarnation gathered into one  
things earthly and heavenly,  
fill you with joy and peace. **Amen.**

May the Holy Spirit,  
by whose overshadowing Mary became the God-bearer,  
give you grace to carry the good news of Christ. Amen.  
And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son,  
and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you for ever. **Amen.**

Let us go forth in the name of Christ Jesus. **Alleluia, alleluia.**  
Thanks be to God. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

## **Postlude**

*O Tannenbaum*  
William Wright, *piano*

Arr. by Vince Guaraldi

## 2020 Christmas Pageant Cast

<b>Reader (Collect)</b>	Holly Kallis
<b>Narrator 1</b>	Madelline Sowel
<b>Narrator 2</b>	Philip Norris
<b>Narrator 3</b>	Isabella Price-Dubble
<b>Prophet 1</b>	Sophia Sowel
<b>Prophet 2</b>	Mason Clark
<b>Townsperson 1</b>	Elli Yaeger
<b>Townsperson 2</b>	Ben Gilburg
<b>Townsperson 3</b>	Cora Strickler
<b>Gabriel</b>	Amalia Tejada
<b>Jesus</b>	Andrew Clark
<b>Mary</b>	Annaliese Peachey
<b>Joseph</b>	Ishmael Watson
<b>Caesar Augustus</b>	Liam Clark
<b>Roman Soldier</b>	
<b>Innkeeper 1</b>	Emerson Pritchett
<b>Innkeeper 2</b>	Meredith Leistra-Jones
<b>Innkeeper 3</b>	Natalia Dygul
<b>Angels</b>	Nilsa Dyrli Hermeling, Anabel Grant, Charlotte Bash, Ellie Bash
<b>Animals</b>	Jan Dygul, Samuel Strickler, Max Stimpert
<b>Shepherd 1</b>	Ben Williams
<b>Shepherd 2</b>	Ben Grant
<b>Shepherd 3</b>	Stewart Carter
<b>Shepherds</b>	Timmy Clark, Oliver Pritchett, Sam Gilburg
<b>Star</b>	Emilia Leistra-Jones
<b>Magi 1</b>	August Martin
<b>Magi 2</b>	Beatrice Howell
<b>Magi 3</b>	Liam Pritchett



The flowers at the Altar are given to God and  
in memory of:

Barbara Adams  
John Adams  
Alfred C. Arnold+  
Alfred C. Arnold, Jr.+  
Clifford Julius Backstrand  
Virginia Parks Backstrand  
Thomas Barton+  
Beth Allison Bash  
Catherine Steele Batchelder  
Robert Charles Batchelder+  
Doris Biechler  
Millie Bissol  
Philip Bissol  
Harry A. Bitzer  
Margaret J. Bitzer  
+Samuel Bowman  
Kirsten Caroline Bowyer  
Walter R. Breed+  
Michael John Brogan  
Bertha Long Brubaker  
George Theodore Brubaker  
Margot Lasher Brubaker  
Martha Groff Brubaker  
Theodore Long Brubaker  
Glenn R. Bucher  
Jean E. Cence  
Thomas J. Cence  
Joseph Clarkson+  
Gertrude Connell

Betty Jane Davis  
Michael DeBerdine, Jr.  
Gus DeMuzio  
Arthur Byron Dodge  
Arthur Byron Dodge, Jr.  
Gretel Dodge  
James William Dodge  
Marion Cochran Dodge  
Nancy Clifford Howle Dodge  
Richard Keller Dodge  
William Franklin Dodge  
James Griswold Dodge+  
Clifford Douglass  
Irene Douglass  
Nellie Spalding Duckworth  
Joseph Peter Dunkel, Jr.  
Mary Ambrose Dunkel  
Charlotte Fitzpatrick  
Harry L. Garman  
Harry St. Clair Garman III  
Mary Della Geis  
Rose Geis  
William Geis, Sr.  
Bervin Lester Gerhart  
Serena Schmidt Gerhart  
Dora Goode  
Douglas Goode  
Jean Lasher Gregory  
Lloyd E. Gressle+  
Ellen Arnold Groff  
+Ronald H. Haines  
Mary T. Haines  
Jack Heckles  
John S. Heckles  
Mary G. Heckles  
David Thorne Holland

Virginia Provost Holland  
Jay Humphreys  
Levi S. Ives+  
Harriet Lane Johnston  
+Edward W. Jones  
Ann Jones  
Don Jones  
Donald Bliss Jones  
Nelson Keener  
Bertha Sauder Keepert  
John Emory Keepert  
Seymour (Red) Kelin  
Clinton Connolly Kemp  
Elizabeth Williams Kemp  
Joseph Kenefick  
Cyrus F. Knight+  
Nora Mae Kreider  
John C. Lasher  
Margaret Lasher  
Jane Lowe  
Peter Lowe  
Marie Mackey  
Sheldon Mackey+  
Anna Marotta  
Antone Marotta  
Manfred Marotta  
Mary Marotta  
Inge Marti-Hrabik  
Josef Marti-Schibler  
Julia Marti-Schibler  
Catherine G. McCool  
George W. McCool, Jr.  
Arthur G. McCormack  
Kathryn Irene Mehaffey  
Rhoda Mellinger  
Ann Meyers

Jim Meyers  
Mary Meyers  
Cheryl McCool Miller  
Harold E. Miller  
Josephine D. Miller  
Katherine G. Miller  
S. Isidor Mombert+  
William Augustus  
Muhlenberg+  
Frances D. Norwick  
Edmund G. Norwick III  
Edmund G. Norwick, Jr.  
John Pappas  
Edna Parsons  
Frank Parsons  
Roger Pickering+  
Claude Purdy  
Elizabeth Purdy  
Ellen Purdy  
Stephen C. Purdy  
Elwood Reynolds  
George K. Reynolds, Jr.

George K. Reynolds, Sr.  
Lillian Reynolds  
Robert N. Reynolds  
Isaac Leroy Rittenhouse  
Mary E. Rittenhouse  
Robert L. Rittenhouse  
Percy J. Robottom+  
Gladys Sabino  
Joseph Sabino  
Philip J. Sabino  
Richard W. Scheer  
Adam Schlesinger  
David Scott  
John O. Shirk  
Agnes Martha Solbak  
Ivar Karl Solbak  
Louise Souder  
Terry Spaar  
George N. Spalding  
Nellie Wallace Spalding  
Louisa Stahl

Raymond Stahl  
James F. Stewart  
Nancy Strong  
Newbold Strong  
Clifford Gray Twombly+  
Al Umbach  
Audrey Umbach  
Al Vajda, Sr.  
John D. Vajda, Sr.  
Margaret St.C. Warfel  
Victor J. Warfel  
Edward S. Watson+  
James Williamson  
Olivia Williamson  
Charles Howard Witmer  
Ethyl Howell Witmer  
Richard Howell Witmer  
Virginia Biggers Witmer  
Erica Brown Wood+  
Edna Garman Yeager  
Park E. Yeager

Merry Christmas