

# CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE WITH CAROLS AND HOLY COMMUNION

December 24, 2016

## PRELUDE

**AS WE GATHER.....**An old song expresses the yearning well: "I'll be home for Christmas, if only in my dreams." This time of year, we long to be home, to be surrounded by family, to remember simpler times. Home is more than a place. It's more than family. It's a sense of belonging. Today, we celebrate the God who left His home to join us here, so heaven could be our home. We'll celebrate with many old songs; you'll recognize some if not all of them, as we praise this Jesus who opened up heaven to be our home. The Lord Himself bless you as He welcomes you home today!

## WELCOME

Pastor: Our opening song invites all to come home and worship Jesus, who was born on Christmas morning.

## CHORAL ANTHEM

The Wondrous Story

By Don Besig

## PREPARING OUR HEARTS

Pastor: We gather in the name of our loving, saving God, father, Son, and Holy Spirit gathered on this holy night, to reflect on the mystery of birth,

**People: The awesome mystery of Christ's birth, the birth of God in the flesh.**

Pastor: We pause on this holy eve, to step back from the Christmas rush.

**People: We need to keep our focus clear, and remember that Christ's birth is the reason for the season.**

Pastor: Give us peace and calm in our hearts now, Lord, fill us with Your presence as we mark this Holy Night of Your birth.

**People: Let this be for us a special night, A Holy Night different from all others, because it is Your Birthright**

## READING

Isaiah 9:2-7

Pastor: It's like we were sitting in darkness. It's like we were living in the land of the shadow of death. In a way, it's like we were in a war we could not win. We were weary, and we just wanted to go home. About 2700 years ago, God spoke through the prophet Isaiah:

Pastor: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;

**People: those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.**

Pastor: You have multiplied the nation; You have increased its joy;

**People: they rejoice before You as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil.**

Pastor: For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, You have broken as on the day Midian.

**Pastor: For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire.**

Pastor: For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder.

**People:** and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

**Pastor:** Of the increase of His government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over His kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.

**Pastor:** The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

### **DEVOTION**

**Pastor:** Jesus chose to make His home here, on this dusty, dirty earth, in a little town named Bethlehem.

### **CAROL "Green Book" 41                      O Little Town of Bethlehem**

O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie!  
Above the 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.

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!

*Note; not recorded in red*

### **READING**

*Luke 2:1-7*

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to 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, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

### **DEVOTION**

**Pastor:** God didn't hide what He had done; He told shepherds that He came for them!

### **CAROL "Green Book" 71                      Angels We have Heard on High**

Angels we have heard on high, Sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
And the mountains in reply, Echoing their joyous strains.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?  
What the gladsome tidings be Which inspire your heav'nly song?  
Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo

**READING***Luke 2:8-20*

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and 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 among those with whom he is pleased!" When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

**DEVOTION**

Pastor: The King chose to make His first home a barn. He did that for us!

**CAROL "Green Book" 67***Away in a Manger*

Away in a manger, no crib for his 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.

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.

**READING***Titus 2:11-14*

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

**DEVOTION****OFFERING**

## CHRISTMAS PRAYER

Pastor: Lord Jesus, You left Your home in heaven to join us here on this broken earth. You left the warmth of Your Father's embrace to join us in the cold world. You fill us with awe.

**People: Lord Jesus, accept our offering of praise.**

Pastor: You came to die for us, to take our guilt, so we can find a home in heaven. Infant King, we confess our sin and rejoice that You've taken it from us. O Jesus, it is good that you have made a home for us in heaven with You.

**People: Lord Jesus, accept our offering of praise.**

Pastor: So many don't know what You've done for us. They think their homes are here. Open our mouths to share the wonder of what You did on Christmas. Open our eyes to opportunities and give us wisdom and courage to speak of Your grace.

Pastor: O Jesus, use us for Your glory. Help us look forward to home, and we pray the words You taught us:

**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.**

## WORDS OF INSTITUTION

### THE DISTRIBUTION

## CLOSING CAROL "Green Book" 65      Silent Night, Holy Night

*(Individual candles will be lit during the singing, and extinguished after the Benediction. Those with lit candles remain still as those without lit candles bend their candles to receive the light.)*

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 your holy face,  
With the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at your birth,  
Jesus, Lord, at your birth.

### **BENEDICTION**

### **POSTLUDE**