

Christmas Eve service.

Call to Worship

All through this season of Advent, we have encountered Hope, Peace and Joy and Love. Today we will hear the story of God's wonderful love. Today we will be challenged to believe in all that God can do. Open our hearts, Lord, that we may be ready for your love. AMEN.



MP 539 'Once in royal David's city'
verses 1, 2, 4 & 6

Candle lighting.

Isaiah 52:7-10 ⁷How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!" ⁸Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices; together they shout for joy. When the LORD returns to Zion, they will see it with their own eyes. ⁹Burst into songs of joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem, for the LORD has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem. ¹⁰The LORD will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God.

Opening Prayer Lord, remind us that, like Mary, each one of us is a bearer of your Good News. We are called to proclaim hope, peace, joy, and love in your name. Open our hearts and our spirits today to receive with great joy the love that you have for us. Lord, we are so excited. Christmas Eve is here. We are impatient to hear the whole story. Slow us down again, Lord. As we hear Mary say "Yes!" to God's good news, help us to remember that God continually calls us to be those who will bear the good news to those in need. Forgive us when we forget to do that. Heal our wounds and bind up our spirits. Enable us to go into your world offering our lives, our gifts, our talents, for your glory. In Jesus' Name, we pray. AMEN.

2nd Reading: Ps.98

¹Sing to GOD a brand-new song. He's made a world of wonders!

He rolled up his sleeves, He set things right.

²GOD made history with salvation,

He showed the world what he could do.

³He remembered to love us,

a bonus to his dear family, Israel—indefatigable love.

The whole earth comes to attention.

Look—God’s work of salvation!

⁴Shout your praises to GOD, everybody!

Let loose and sing! Strike up the band!

⁵Round up an orchestra to play for GOD,

Add on a hundred-voice choir.

⁶Feature trumpets and big trombones, Fill the air with praises to King GOD.

⁷Let the sea and its fish give a round of applause,

with everything living on earth joining in.

⁸Let ocean breakers call out, “Encore!”

And mountains harmonize the finale.

⁹A tribute to GOD when he comes,

when he comes to set the earth right.

He’ll straighten out the whole world.

He’ll put the world right, and everyone in it.

MP 503 ‘O little town of Bethlehem’

3rd Reading: Lk.2,1-20 **The Birth of Jesus**

¹⁻⁵ About that time Caesar Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Empire. This was the first census when Quirinius was governor of Syria. Everyone had to travel to his own ancestral hometown to be accounted for. So Joseph went from the Galilean town of Nazareth up to Bethlehem in Judah, David’s town, for the census. As a descendant of David, he had to go there. He went with Mary, his fiancée, who was pregnant. ⁶⁻⁷ While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. She gave birth to a son, her firstborn. She wrapped him in a blanket and laid him in a manger, because there was no room in the hostel. ⁸⁻¹² There were shepherders camping in the neighbourhood. They had set night watches over their sheep. Suddenly, God’s angel stood among them and God’s glory blazed around them. They were terrified. The angel said, “Don’t be afraid. I’m here to announce a great and joyful event that is meant for everybody, worldwide: A Saviour has just been born in David’s town, a Saviour who is Messiah and Master. This is what you’re to look for: a baby wrapped in a blanket and lying in a manger.” ¹³⁻¹⁴ At once the angel was joined by a huge angelic choir singing God’s praises: Glory to God in the heavenly heights, Peace to all men and women on earth who please him. ¹⁵⁻¹⁸ As the angel choir withdrew into heaven, the shepherders talked it over. “Let’s get over to Bethlehem as fast as we can and see for ourselves what God has revealed to us.” They left, running, and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. Seeing was believing. They told everyone they met what the angels had said about this child. All who heard the shepherders were impressed. ¹⁹⁻²⁰ Mary kept all these things to herself, holding them dear, deep within herself. The shepherders returned and let loose, glorifying and praising God for everything they had heard and seen. It turned out exactly the way they’d been told!

MP 211 Hark! The herald angels sing' 3 verses.

4th Reading: Hebr.1,1-4

¹Going through a long line of prophets, God has been addressing our ancestors in different ways for centuries. ²Recently he spoke to us directly through his Son. By his Son, God created the world in the beginning, and it will all belong to the Son at the end. ³This Son perfectly mirrors God, and is stamped with God's nature. He holds everything together by what he says - powerful words! ⁴The Son Is Higher than Angels, far higher than any angel in rank and rule.

Intercession Let us pray. Loving God, you gave us your Son, the Saviour of all, lying in a manger. On this holy night bring us into the mystery of your love. Join our voices together with the angelic host above that we may give you the glory on high. Help us to be like the shepherds and look on this special gift with awe and wonder. the one for whom we have waited, Jesus Christ, your Word made flesh, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, let us pray for the Church around the world as it celebrates the birth of Christ. give your wisdom to all governments, Grant peace to those living with conflict and violence, that they may live once more in peace we pray for all who are cold, hungry, or alone this night be with them Lord as they struggle to find the hope and joy that we all have in knowing you. We pray for all who are anxious, depressed, or ill. Draw near to those who find this season a time of pain or grief, and to all who are suffering or sick, especially those we remember in our own hearts ... we especially think of John and the family that they may feel the comfort of this holy night. Uphold them Lord in your care. Let us pray for parents, and families. It is a special time but so hectic for them give them a time of quiet and strengthen them in the bonds of love and commitment. Let us pray for ourselves and for the blessings of Christmas. May we feel you ever near us. Amen.

Reading: Jn.1:1-14

The Word Became Flesh ¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome^{ed} it. ⁶ There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. ⁸ He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. ⁹ The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹ He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹² Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of

God— ¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. ¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Now as Fergus plays O Holy night we can focus on the saviour of the world's birth.

And be still and know that he is God's own Son.

O Holy Night **no words Fergus playing** using this as the sermon maybe a nice slide of the nativity on the screen would be good.

MP 393 'Joy to the world' 3 verses.

Benediction. Go, singing a song to the God of our salvation. Sing of mighty deeds and glory. Join the heavenly chorus and sing: "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace." Sing of God's salvation from day to day. Jesus Christ is born today!