

A SERVICE OF THE WORD & SACRAMENT

December 24, 2023

The Prelude

The Welcome & Announcements

The Silent Preparation

-THE LORD CALLS US TO WORSHIP-

The Salutation

Romans 1:7b

^{7b} Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Call to Worship

Matthew 2:10-11

¹⁰ When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. ¹¹ And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

Hymn #299

Joy to the World, the Lord is Come

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.
2. Joy to the earth! The Savior reigns:
let men their songs employ;
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
3. No more let sins and sorrows 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.
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.

The Invocation & Prayer of Praise

Unison:

"The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers. Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully. He will receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation. Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob. Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle! Lift up your heads, O gates! And lift them up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory!

-THE LORD ASSURES US OF HIS FORGIVENESS-

The Call to Confession

1 John 2:1-2

¹ My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. ² He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

The Confession of Sin

- ❖ Silent Prayers of Confession
- ❖ General Prayer of Confession

Unison:

Holy God, Lord most gracious! Rebuke us not in your anger, nor chasten us in your wrath! Holy you are, and we cannot stand in your presence. Yet you have called us to come to you. We feel unworthy, for we have failed you again and again. We feel like running away, yet you keep calling us. Have mercy on us, O God. Have mercy!

Holy God, Father most gracious! Rebuke us not in your anger, nor chasten us in your wrath! Heal us from our sin, for we are troubled. Deliver us for the sake of your steadfast love. Our sins trouble us, O God. We are troubled by how they have hurt others. We are troubled by how they have hurt us. Your ways are right! O righteous God! And whenever we have refused to follow them we have found out how right they are. Have mercy on us, O God. Have mercy!

Holy God, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Have mercy on us for the sake of your Son, who died to free us from our sins. To you be honor and glory! Amen.

(based on Psalm 6, Confession and Supplication 1 from *Leading in Prayer* by H. O. Old)

The Assurance of Pardon

Matthew 1:21

²¹ She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

Hymn #318

Angels We Have Heard on High

1. Angels we have heard on high,
sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply
echo back their joyous strains.

Refrain:

*Gloria in excelsis Deo,
gloria in excelsis Deo.*

2. Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
Say what may the tidings be,
which inspire your heav'nly song? *[Refrain]*

3. Come to Bethlehem and see
him whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn King. *[Refrain]*

The Prayer of the Church

John 16:23-24

²³ In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. ²⁴ Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

-THE LORD INSTRUCTS US FROM HIS WORD-

The Old Testament Reading

Micah 5:1-9

¹ Now muster your troops, O daughter of troops; siege is laid against us; with a rod they strike the judge of Israel on the cheek. ² But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from old, from ancient days. ³ Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel. ⁴ And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. ⁵ And he shall be their peace. When the Assyrian comes into our land and treads in our palaces, then we will raise against him seven shepherds and eight princes of men; ⁶ they shall shepherd the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod at its entrances; and he shall deliver us from the Assyrian when he comes into our land and treads within our border. ⁷ Then the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples like dew from the Lord, like showers on the grass which delay not for a man nor wait for the children of man. ⁸ And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the nations, in the midst of many peoples, like a lion among the beasts of the forest, like a young lion among the flocks of sheep, which, when it goes through, treads down and tears in pieces, and there is none to deliver. ⁹ Your hand shall be lifted up over your adversaries, and all your enemies shall be cut off.

The New Testament Reading

Luke 2:1-21

¹ Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, ² just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, ³ it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴ that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught. ⁵ In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, ⁶ of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁷ And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. ⁸ But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years. ⁹ Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, ¹⁰ according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹¹ And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. ¹² And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. ¹³ And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. ¹⁴ But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. ¹⁵ And you will have joy and gladness, and many

will rejoice at his birth, ¹⁵ for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. ¹⁶ And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, ¹⁷ and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared." ¹⁸ And Zechariah said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." ¹⁹ And the angel answered him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. ²⁰ And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time." ²¹ And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple.

The Sermon

Rev. Dr. Michael J. Matossian

His Name Is John

Luke 2:1-21

Hymn #308

Good Christian Men, Rejoice

1. Good Christian men, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
give ye heed to what we say:
Jesus Christ is born today;
earth and heav'n before him bow,
and he is in the manger now.

Christ is born today!
Christ is born today!

2. Good Christian men, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
now ye hear of endless bliss:
Jesus Christ was born for this!
He hath opened heaven's door,
and man is blessed evermore.

Christ was born for this!
Christ was born for this!

3. Good Christian men, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
now ye need not fear the grave:
Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all
to gain his everlasting hall.

Christ was born to save!
Christ was born to save!

-THE LORD FEEDS US FROM HIS TABLE-

The Confession of Faith

The Nicene Creed

Unison:

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.
And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of his Father before all worlds;

God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God;
begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
Who, for us and for our salvation,
came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary,
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered and was buried:
and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures;
and ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father;
and he shall come again, with glory,
to judge both the living and the dead
whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life;
who proceeds from the Father and the Son;
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified;
who spoke by the prophets.

And we believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins;
and we look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Celebration of the Lord's Supper

- ❖ Words of Institution
- ❖ The Breaking of the Bread
- ❖ The Sharing of the Cup

-THE LORD DISMISSES US TO HIS SERVICE-

The Benediction

2 Corinthians 13:14

¹⁴ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

The Doxology #150C

Sing Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

Sing hallelujah! Praise the Lord!
Praise God within his sacred courts!
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Praise, praise him in his heav'nly height!
Praise, praise him for his deeds of might!
O praise him! O praise him!
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Hallelujah!