

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE 2023

(ADAPTED BY MARIE L. JOHNSON 12-2023)

PEACE CAME TO EARTH

Pastor: **End of hymn sing announcement -** The children will remain in the nativity scene at the end of the service so that you will have the opportunity to take pictures. Please refrain from taking pictures during this special worship service.

+ PREPARATION +

CONGREGATIONAL HYMN

“O Come, All Ye Faithful” (LSB 379:1–3)

[Children will process to the front of the church during the processional hymn and sit in the choir loft.]

INVOCATION

P In the name of the Father and of the ✙ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

OPENING SENTENCES

Isaiah 9:6

P For to us a child is born,

C to us a son is given;

P and the government shall be upon His shoulder,

C and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor,

P Mighty God, Everlasting Father,

C Prince of Peace.

CHRISTMAS MEDITATION

Pastor will offer a brief meditation or use the children's message for this service. All children in the congregation are invited to come forward for the lesson.

OFFERING – 387 v.1&2 “Joy to the World”

THE MESSAGE PRESENTED BY THE CHILDREN

+ THE PROMISE OF PEACE +

[Dim the lights]-Greyson

Project the Bible symbol or display the Bible poster or banner. (Sylvia and Brennli)

[Teachers line up at the lectern]

- Marie:** In the beginning, God created a perfect world filled with sparkling stars, majestic mountains, verdant valleys, and amazing animals. There was no sickness, no pain, and no death. The people God had made lived at peace with the animals, with each other, and with God. Then one day, the people were tempted to doubt God's Word and to question the gifts He had already given them. They disobeyed God and took what God had commanded them not to take, bringing sin into the world.
- Heather:** When sin entered the perfect world God had made, perfect peace was lost. The man and woman hid from God and blamed each other and God for what they had done. Peace was replaced by shame and hurt and sickness and death. But God, in love, had mercy on the people He had made! He promised to send a Savior to bring back the peace that had been lost.
- Alison:** We read about God's first promise of a Savior in Genesis 3:15, when He spoke judgment on the serpent who had deceived Adam and Eve: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." The Savior would take upon Himself the punishment that man deserved. He would defeat sin, death, and Satan and restore the relationship between God and man.
- Wendy:** Hundreds of years passed while God's people waited, sometimes wondering if God had forgotten the promise He had made in the Garden of Eden. But God had not forgotten. He sent prophets such as Isaiah to remind the people that He would one day fulfill His promise to restore peace.
- Megan:** Isaiah prophesied about the promised Savior, saying, "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

[Children move to the front]

ACTION RHYME

"To Us a Child Is Born" (OAR 181)

To us a Child is born	<i>(Rock arms, as if holding a baby.)</i>
To us a Son is given.	<i>(Hold both arms out, as if giving something.)</i>
This Christmas we receive	<i>(Place hands on heart.)</i>
The blessed gift of heaven.	<i>(Point up.)</i>

CHILDREN'S SONG

"God Loves Me Dearly" (LSB 392:1, 3)

God loves me dearly,
 Grants me salvation,
 God loves me dearly,
 Loves even me. *Refrain*

Refrain:
 Therefore I'll say again:
 God loves me dearly,
 God loves me dearly,
 Loves even me.

He sent forth Jesus,
 My dear Redeemer,
 He sent forth Jesus
 And set me free. *Refrain*

Text: August Rische, 1819–1906; tr. composite. Public domain.

[Children return to choir loft]

[turn on the lights]-Greyson

Congregation HYMN

"Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus" (LSB 338)

+ PEACE IS PROCLAIMED +

[Dim the lights]-Greyson

Project the angel symbol or display the angel poster or banner. (Sylvia and Brennli)

[Readers to the lectern]

Sylvia: Malachi, the last prophet recorded in the Old Testament, foretold that God would send a messenger to prepare the way of the promised Savior. Four hundred years later, when John the Baptist was born, his father, Zechariah, proclaimed these words about John, who was the messenger: "And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation to His people in the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1:76–79).

Brennli: The promised Prince of Peace was about to arrive! God sent an angel to Mary with the proclamation that she would be the mother of the Savior. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus. He 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 father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end" (Luke 1:30–33).

Greyson: God also sent an angel to proclaim this good news to Joseph. Matthew 1:20–23 tells us, "An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.' All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 'Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel' (which means, God with us)."

[Children stand and sing from choir loft]

CHILDREN'S SONG

"To Us a Child Is Born" (OAR 181)

Refrain:

To us a Child is born,
To us a Son is given.
This Christmas we receive
The blessed gift of heaven.

The prophets spoke about
The Savior God would send,
The glorious Prince of Peace
Whose kingdom shall not end. *Refrain*

[turn on the lights]-Greyson

HYMN

"Of the Father's Love Begotten" (LSB 384:1, 3)

[Children to the front during verse 3]

+ THE PRINCE OF PEACE +

[Dim the lights]-Greyson

Project the manger symbol or display the manger poster or banner. (Sylvia and Brennli)

- Christian:** The birth of Jesus Christ from Luke chapter 2: “In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.
- Leighton:** This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town.
- Naomi:** 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.
- Ledger:** 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” (Luke 2:1–7).
- Walter:** “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.
- Braxxton:** And the angel said to them, ‘Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a 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.’
- Kambree:** 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!’”
(Luke 2:8–14).
- Lynna:** “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.’
- Lebron:** 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.
- Hawken:** 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” (Luke 2:15–20).
- Isabella:** The baby born in Bethlehem was the promised Prince of Peace, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, our Savior! God the Father sent His only Son into this world to live a perfect life in our place, die on the cross for our sins, and rise again to life, giving us the sure hope of eternal life.
- Evelyn:** All who believe in Him shall have peace with God once more.
- Korbin:** Romans 5:1 declares, “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

CHILDREN'S SONG

"To Us a Child Is Born" (OAR 181)

Refrain:
To us a Child is born,
To us a Son is given.
This Christmas we receive
The blessed gift of heaven.

The angels sang God's praise
Amid the heavens bright.
We also join in song
And fill the church with light. *Refrain*

The shepherds left the sheep
They watched in nearby fields
To see the Lamb of God
In human flesh revealed. *Refrain*

[Children return to choir loft]

[turn on the lights]-Greyson

Congregation HYMN

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" (LSB 357:1, 4)

[Children move to front] *[Dim the lights]-Greyson*

+ PEACE FOR ALL PEOPLE +

Project the dove on the earth symbol or display the dove on the earth poster or banner. (Sylvia and Brennli)

CHILDREN'S SONG

"Away in a Manger" (LSB 364; OAR 185)

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.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.
I love Thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
And take us to heaven to live with Thee there.

Text: *Little Children's Book*, Philadelphia, 1885, sts. 1-2; *Vineyard Songs*, Louisville, 1892, st. 3, alt. Public domain.

Elena: The shepherds couldn't keep the good news of the Savior to themselves. They returned glorifying and praising God for all they had seen and heard. How beautiful it is when we share the Good News of the Savior, who brings peace to the world.

Teagan: Isaiah 52:7 tells us, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.'"

CHILDREN'S SONG

"To Us a Child Is Born" (OAR 181)

Refrain:

To us a Child is born,
To us a Son is given.
This Christmas we receive
The blessed gift of heaven.

We also kneel before
The Babe in humble stall,
The Lord our Righteousness
Who came to save us all. *Refrain*

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All children return to their seats.

[turn on the lights]-Greyson

APOSTLES' CREED

**C I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life ✠ everlasting. Amen.**

RESPONSIVE READING

- P** Lord, let Your servants go in peace;
C Your word has been fulfilled.

- P** Our eyes have seen the salvation which You have prepared in the sight of every people;
C A light to reveal You to the nations and the glory of Your people Israel.

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

PRAYER

- P** Let us pray.
C Heavenly Father, we thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus Christ, to take away our sins and bring peace to our fallen world. Help us to share Your message of love and forgiveness with others so that they may also find peace in You. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

BENEDICTION

- P** Joy to the world, the Son of God, our Savior, has come! The peace of the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit be with you today and every day.
C Amen.

HYMN

“Silent Night” (LSB 363)

Children sing first verse in German followed by the first verse in English, then the congregation sings the remaining verses while the children line up in the manger scene.

Recessional Hymn: Silent Night**LSB 363**

Children stanza 1 in German:

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht!
Alles schläft, einsam wacht
Nur das heilige Elternpaar
Das im Stalle zu Bethlehem war,
Bei dem himmlischen Kind,
Bei dem himmlischen Kind.

Children stanza 1 in English:

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.

Congregation:

***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!***

(Children move to create manger scene)

***Silent night, holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.***

Pastor: Announcement (about worship and about pictures) – The children will remain in the nativity scene for photos.
Thank you for coming.