

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING AND MEDITATION

by Pastor Schwartz

HYMN (Congregation) – “O Come, All Ye Faithful”

Oh, come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
Oh, come ye, oh, come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him, born the King of angels.
Oh, come, let us adore him,
Oh, come, let us adore him,
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation;
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above.
Glory to God, all Glory in the highest.
Oh, come, let us adore him,
Oh, come, let us adore him,
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

“SHOUT THE GOOD NEWS”

A Christmas Cantata by Lloyd Larson

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“SHOUT THE GOOD NEWS”

REFRAIN:

*Shout the good news for the Lord is coming!
Shout the good news from the mountain’s height!
Loudly proclaim that a new day dawns,
A day of glorious Light!*

*Shout the good news for the Lord is coming!
Shout the good news from the mountain’s height!
People of God, celebrate His coming,
The King of glory and might!*

“Comfort, comfort my people,”
Says the holy Lord who reigns on high,
“Comfort, speak comfort to my people;
Tell them that the Lord has heard their cry!”

REFRAIN

Prepare the way for the Lord;
Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
Prepare the way for the Lord;
Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed!

REFRAIN

SHOUT THE GOOD NEWS!

READINGS:

The messengers of God are prominently found throughout the Old Testament. They were voices of promise as well as voices of admonition as the Creator of the universe communicated with a chosen people about their sin and His faithful love.

The Old Testament prophets provided hope for the people of Israel living in bondage and spiritual darkness while awaiting the dawn of a new day when the Messiah would come, delivering them from sin's guilt and punishment into a world of freedom and joy.

The prophet Isaiah offered reassuring words to a people desperately in need of that good news: *Be strong, do not fear! Your God will come...He will come to save you. Go up on a high mountain. Lift your voice with a shout' lift it up and do not be afraid. Say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God!" For to us a Child is born; to us a Son is given.* (Isaiah 35:4; 40:9; 9:6)

Though it was Isaiah who gave assurance that this Messiah would surely come, it was the prophet Micah who told from where this promised One would come: *You, Bethlehem, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come One who will be ruler over Israel.* (Micah 5:2)

Hear the promise of God.

“Unto Us a Child Shall Come”

For unto us a Child shall come;
Born unto us God’s Holy Son;
Sent from the throne of grace above,
A gift from God’s own heart of love.

For unto us a Child shall come;
A virgin shall conceive God’s Son.
This Child shall come and with us dwell:
“God with us,” Emmanuel.

The government shall be upon His shoulders.
He shall be called the Wonderful Counselor,
The Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace,
Eternal Prince of Peace.

For unto us a Child shall come;
Born in the town of Bethlehem:
A humble place for heaven’s King.
Let earth and heaven’s praises ring!
Prepare your heart for heaven’s King!

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 prophets of heaven,
Their great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.

Unto us a Child shall come.

READINGS:

Those used by God to declare messages of hope and promise were not limited to the Old Testament. The New Testament recites the story of Zechariah and Elizabeth who were chosen late in life to birth their first child, a son. They were to name him John.

An angel messenger promised that this son would bring them joy and that He would be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from birth.

Though devout and faithful servants of God, the news that they would bear a child in their elderly years was difficult to accept. But God's promises are true, and in due time Elizabeth gave birth to her son. In accordance with the angel's instructions, she and Zechariah name him John.

This son, who would eventually be known as John the Baptist, became the messenger foretold hundreds of years before by Isaiah. He was the...*voice of one calling, "In the desert prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed."* (Isaiah 40: 3-5a)

“PREPARE THE WAY”

The Lord shall come to Israel. Prepare the way of the Lord.
The promised King, Emmanuel! Prepare the way of the Lord .
With gifts of mercy, grace and peace,
He comes to grant our souls release!

The glad refrain, sing it loud and well:
“Prepare the way of the Lord.”
Sing praises to our God on high!
Prepare the way of the Lord.

The appointed time is drawing nigh. Prepare the way of the Lord.
The Messiah comes to set us free, restore our hope and liberty.
O do you hear the herald’s cry: “Prepare the way of the Lord.”

Listen to the prophet who comes to bring good news:
“Every valley shall be lifted and the hills made low
As you prepare the way of the Lord.”
The long dark night shall soon be o’er.
Prepare the way of the Lord .
Death’s threat’ning clouds shall be no more!
Prepare the way of the Lord.
The sun of life and righteousness
Shall come to dispel our darkness.
Sing praise to God forevermore! Prepare the way of the Lord.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

Prepare the way of the Lord.

READINGS:

Angel messengers were again sent by God to prepare devoted servants for their ordained assignments as the earthly parents of the promised Messiah. A young maiden named Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, a descendant of King David.

The angel Gabriel went to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, and told Mary that she had been selected to give birth to God's Son. Mary was overwhelmed and perplexed by the news: *"How can this be since I am a virgin?"* (Luke 1:34)

The angel answered: *"The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. This holy One will be called the Son of God."* Mary responded: *"I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said."* (Luke 1:35; 1:38)

An angel of the Lord also appeared to Joseph saying: *"Do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because what is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a Son, and you are to name Him Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins."* (Matthew 1:20b-21)

“My Soul Glorifies the Lord”

My soul glorifies the Lord, my God,
The maker of heaven and earth.
I'll praise the name of the Lord, my God,
For the promise of this holy birth.
And His servant I'll be in this great mystery
As His plan is revealed for the world to see.
My soul glorifies the Lord, my God,
My soul glorifies the Lord.

The angel came from heaven on high,
God's majesty displayed:
“Joseph, humble child of God, you need not be afraid.
God has chosen you to guide His one and only Son.
Though you may not fully understand,
This is God's perfect plan.
This is God's holy plan”

Holy, holy, holy, holy is the Lord.
Holy, holy, holy. My soul glorifies the Lord.

The angel Gabriel came from on high,
In glorious light arrayed.
“Mary, gentle child of God, you need not be afraid.
God has chosen you to bear His one and only Son.
Though you may not fully understand,
This is God's perfect plan,
This is God's holy plan.”

Holy, holy, holy.
My soul glorifies the Lord.

READINGS:

Late in Mary's pregnancy, she and Joseph left Nazareth in response to the Roman decree that a census be taken. Because Joseph belonged to the house and line of David, they went to Bethlehem.

While in Bethlehem, the time came for the Baby to be born. Mary gave birth to her first-born Son. She wrapped Him in cloths and placed Him in a manger in the stable where they had taken refuge because they were unable to find a room in the town.

At this same time, there were shepherds out in nearby fields keeping watch over their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, the night sky shone as bright as day and they were terrified! An angel of the Lord appeared to them saying:

"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy! Today, in the town of David, a Savior has been born. He is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find the Baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly, a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to all people." (Luke 2: 10-14)

"SING GLORIA"

It was a night like any night near Bethlehem,
As the shepherds watched their flocks of sheep
near Bethlehem.

Then an angel host appeared,
"We've good news for you to hear:
Christ, the Lord, is born tonight!"

"Gloria!" The angels sang to God on high.
"Gloria! The Lord is born this night."
"Gloria!" Let all creation join the song!
Sing praises to the newborn King!

The angel said, "Go to the town of Bethlehem,
And there you'll find the newborn King in Bethlehem.
He's in a manger stall, the Savior born to all.
The King of kings is born this night!"

"Gloria!" The angels sang to God on high.
"Gloria! The Lord is born this night."
"Gloria!" Let all creation join the song!
Sing praises to the newborn King!

Sing Gloria, Sing Gloria!
Lift your voices, let them ring!
Sing praises to the newborn King!

Sing "Gloria!"

READINGS:

After the angels had departed, the shepherds said to one another: *“Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened which the angel of the Lord has told us about.”* (Luke 2:15b)

So they hurried to Bethlehem where they found Mary, Joseph, and the newborn Baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen Him, they spread the word about what they had witnessed.

All who heard their story were amazed! But Mary treasured all of these things and pondered them in her heart.

The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen.

“THE INFANT KING”

The shepherds arrived in the village of Bethlehem
Seeking the infant King.
And in a stable small, as the angel had told them,
They found Him, the newborn King.

The shepherds revealed how the angel had told them
To seek out the infant King.
“Wrapped in swaddling cloths,
In a manger you’ll find Him.
Go worship the newborn King.”

Christ is born this night, the promised Messiah,
God’s envoy of love, gift of grace.
Christ is born this night, come kneel down before Him,
Give thanks, share the news, sing His praise.

Mary rejoiced in the wonder around her
As she cradled the infant King:
The shepherds, the Child, and the music of angels.
Praise to the newborn King!

This, this is Christ the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,
the Babe, the Son of Mary!

Jesus, the infant King.

READINGS:

On the eighth day following Christ's birth, Mary and Joseph took their newborn Son to the temple in Jerusalem to dedicate Him to God in accordance with God's law.

While they were there, Simeon, a righteous and devout servant of God, also arrived at the temple, having been prompted by the Holy Spirit. Simeon had been promised by God that he would not die before he had seen the Christ.

There was also an elderly prophetess, Anna, who lived at the temple, worshipping God day and night. At this moment she, too, came up to Mary and Joseph while giving thanks to God for this One that all of Israel had been awaiting. Simeon and Anna gave witness that day to the fulfilled promises of God as they celebrated the birth of Jesus.

Like Simeon and Anna, like the Old Testament prophets, like Mary and Joseph, the angelic hosts, and Judean shepherds, we are all witnesses to the birth of the Christ Child.

And like prophets of old, like Zechariah and Elizabeth, John the Baptist and so many others who have gone before us, we are challenged to go forth as messengers of God with the good news that the Messiah and Savior from sin has come!

Come, let us adore Him. Let us celebrate His birth. Joy to the world! The Lord, this Child of promise,
the Savior of the world, has come!

“CHILD OF PROMISE SHOUT THE GOOD NEWS”

This is the Child of Promise
Born to set God’s people free:
Messiah King, now lives among us,
Gift of love and victory!

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.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy.

Shout the good news for the Lord is coming!
Shout the good news from the mountain’s height!
Loudly proclaim that a new day dawns,
A day of glorious Light!

Shout the good news for the Lord is coming!
Shout the good news from the mountain’s height!
People of God, celebrate His coming,
The King of glory and might!

Go, tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and ev’rywhere;
Go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!

Shout the Good News!

HYMN (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 you nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With th’ angelic host proclaim,
“Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
Hark! The herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King!”

Hail, the heav’nly Prince of Peace!
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Ris’n with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that we no more may die,
Born to raise us from the earth,
Born to give us second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King!”

PRAYER

BLESSING by Pastor Rutschow

Saturday evening:

Please join the choir and members of our church for a free dessert luncheon in our fellowship hall at the end of the hallway beyond the entryway. Tours of our school facilities are available upon request. Just ask one of our choir members or pastors for assistance with this.

The choir would also like to take this opportunity to extend a truly sincere THANK YOU to everyone who helped make this event possible. There are too many to mention by name, but you know who you are. Your work is greatly appreciated!

For more information on our church, preschool, elementary school and service times, please visit our website at gsdg.org.

May God bless your Christmas celebrations!!