## December 24, 2023 Nativity of Our Lord I: Christmas Eve Candlelight – Email/At Home Missal

**The ZOOM link for today’s service, which opens at 6.30 pm on December 24, 2023, can be found here:**

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship December 24, 2023 6:30 pm ZOOM room opens; service begins at 7:00 pm.**

**Join Zoom Meeting click here:**[**https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88459652204?pwd=Qmsxd29zd2pWTFp3ZDBkVWtBMUFkQT09**](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88459652204?pwd=Qmsxd29zd2pWTFp3ZDBkVWtBMUFkQT09)

**Meeting ID: 884 5965 2204 Passcode: 258375**

**You don’t have to have a computer or internet to connect to any of our church Zoom services; you can also just call in on one of these numbers (long distance charges may apply): (All Canadian numbers). You can also access the ZOOM from your telephone by using the “One tap mobile” option:**

**+12042727920,,88459652204#,,,,\*258375# Canada;**

**+14388097799,,88459652204#,,,,\*258375# Canada**

**Dial by your location:**

**+1 778 907 2071 Canada**

**+1 780 666 0144 Canada**

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+1 647 558 0588 Canada**

**Meeting ID: 884 5965 2204 Passcode: 258375**

**Find your local number:** [**https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kdS7kdwPro**](https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kdS7kdwPro)

**……………………………………….**

**IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 24TH –DECEMBER 31ST, 2023:**

**Here is the YouTube link for the service from last Sunday, December 17th, 2023:** <https://youtu.be/FNpnuWb6PpE>

**……………………………………….**

**Coming Events** (save these dates) **bold print - events being held here at St. Peter’s**

**Dec. 25 Christmas Day Service 10:00 am**

**Feb. 14 Ash Wednesday Service 7:00 pm**

Apr. 5-7 Bishop’s spiritual Retreat for Lay Persons (Mount Carmel, Niagara Falls)

**The Life of St. Peter’s for the week of December 24 – December. 31, 2023**

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

**Sunday 10:00 am Worship Service**

**……………………………………….**

1. **Pastoral Visit:** Pastor Laura is available for visits by appointment by calling the church office, 519-653-4721. Whether you have a particular pastoral concern or would just like some one-to-one time to get to know Pastor Laura, she would love to meet with you.
2. **……………………………………….**
3. **Prayer List:**  Bill, Don, Tammy, Alice, Don, Lynn, Helen, Sharon, Donald, Shirley, Clara, Carol, Jeff, Aaron, MacKenzie, Rhett, Linda, Jan Ken, Lee, Maria, Deborah, Fred, Anne, Sherri, Panagiota.
4. **……………………………………….**

## We need you to help feed our neighbourhood! The freedom Centre has joined with Cambridge Community Table to offer a meal to our community twice a month on Tuesday night. We need volunteers: Food Preparation, set up, take down, meet and Greet. Every hour you can give once or twice a month. Call for information 519-591-6518 or email [rosemary@freedomcentre.ca](mailto:rosemary@freedomcentre.ca).

1. **……………………………………….**
2. **Weekly Bible Study**: Resumes again on Wednesday January 17th, 2023 at 10:30 am in the Art Room. Everyone is welcome!
3. **……………………………………….**
4. To our members and friends who supported **St. Peter's "Wrap up your shopping" Christmas Fundraiser**.
5. I am confident you will enjoy the Atwood Heritage Summer Sausage, Esta Chocolates, and Snyder's Organic Maple Syrup. Merry Christmas! Alex Black
6. **……………………………………….**
7. The red poinsettia in the chancel has been placed by Bill and Patricia Hewitt. The white poinsettia has been placed by Barbara Berg. Our sincere thanks for their thoughtfulness and generosity - they will be enjoyed by all!
8. **……………………………………….**

**Presiding Pastor: Rev. Laura Sauder**

**Organist & Director of Music: Bradley Moggach**

**Assisting Minister: Barb Burden**

**Reader: Barbara Berg**

**Land Acknowledgement:**

A: With good and grateful hearts we acknowledge that the land upon which we live, work, play, and worship, is the same land upon which the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and the Attawandaron (or Neutral) peoples first lived, worked, played, and prayed to Creator. Calling the earth upon which they stood, Mother Earth, they cared for the earth as they would care for their mother. Let us take an example from our Indigenous forbears and neighbours, and show gratitude to our Mother Earth. May we be ever mindful of what she has provided for us, even to the next seven generations.

**Welcome remarks**

**Call to Worship & Candle Lighting**

P: On this holiest of nights,  
***C: we come, joining the shepherds  
who are stunned by wonder.***

P: On this most silent night,  
***C: we come, our hopes and dreams  
joining those of Mary and Joseph.***

P: On this night of carols and candlelight,  
***C: we come, our glad songs joining  
with the choirs of angels over us.\****

P: On this blessed night, our watching and waiting is over. Your love has been born in our world. May this love burn as brightly in our hearts as the flame of a candle, bringing your peace and blessing to everyone we meet.

***The Christ candle is lit***

*\*~ written by Rev. Thom Shuman, Lectionary Liturgies. Posted on LiturgyLink.*[*http://www.liturgylink.net/*](http://www.liturgylink.net/)

**Gathering Hymn: ELW # 283 ‘O Come, All Ye Faithful’**

1 O come, all ye faithful,

joyful and triumphant!

O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;

come and behold him,

born the king of angels:

***Refrain***

***O come, let us adore him,***

***O come, let us adore him,***

***O come, let us adore him,***

***Christ the Lord!***

2 The highest, most holy,

light of light eternal,

born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;

Son of the Father

now in flesh appearing! ***Refrain***

3 Sing, choirs of angels,

sing in exultation,

sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!

Glory to God

in the highest: ***Refrain***

4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee,

born this happy morning;

Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n!

Word of the Father,

now in flesh appearing: ***Refrain***

*(Title: O Come, All Ye Faithful; Text: attr. John Francis Wade, 1711-1786; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802-1880, sts. 1, 3-4; tr. unknown, st. 2; Public Domain; Music: attr. John Francis Wade; Public Domain; Reprinted and Streamed with permission under ONE LICENSE, License #A-727610. All rights reserved.)*

**Greeting:**

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you always.

***C: And also with you.***

**Prayer of the Day:**

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus’ presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.\*

**Lesson Introduction**

**Isaiah 9:2-7**

Our first reading tonight comes from the prophet Isaiah, who lived and prophesied in the 8th century before Christ. Isaiah’s words were addressed to a particular time and place, but his words continued to speak down through the ages.

As we hear Isaiah’s prophetic words this night, it’s important to remember that biblical prophets are not predictors of the future. Their role was to guide the people in following God’s way – offering words of both judgment and hope.

Biblical scholars make a strong argument that Isaiah was speaking of a king who would ascend to the throne in his lifetime; possibly King Hezekiah. But as we know well, these particular words transcend the time and place in which they were first spoken. These are words that spoke powerfully to the earliest Christians. Words that expressed who they knew Jesus to be. The one whose arrival heralded the dawning of a new age.

As we listen this night to Isaiah’s words – we give thanks for God’s faithfulness through the ages; and the fulfilment of this faithfulness – as we understand it – in the gift of Jesus. Let us listen to the word…

***Reader:***

*A passage from* Isaiah 9:2-7. *May we be equipped by these words to walk in love for God, ourselves, our neighbours, all people, and all God’s creation. (Brief pause)*

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.  
    On those living in a pitch-dark land, light has dawned.  
You have made the nation great;  
    you have increased its joy.  
They rejoiced before you as with joy at the harvest,  
    as those who divide plunder rejoice.  
As on the day of Midian, you’ve shattered the yoke that burdened them,  
    the staff on their shoulders,  
    and the rod of their oppressor.  
Because every boot of the thundering warriors,  
    and every garment rolled in blood  
    will be burned, fuel for the fire.  
A child is born to us, a son is given to us,  
    and authority will be on his shoulders.  
    He will be named  
    Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
    Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.  
There will be vast authority and endless peace  
    for David’s throne and for his kingdom,  
    establishing and sustaining it  
    with justice and righteousness  
    now and forever.

The zeal of the Lord of heavenly forces will do this. *(CEB)*

God’s Story, Our Story ***C: Thanks be to God.***

**Gospel Acclamation: ACS Setting 12:**

**Alleluia *(repeat)***

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**A Christmas Participation Story**

**Shepherds “Yo, Sheep!”**

**Sheep “Baa!”**

**Night Silent night, holy night (sung w/piano or organ accompany)**

**Angel Hallelujah! Hallelujah! (sung w/piano or organ accompany)**

**Good news “****Yes!” (with fist pump)**

**Great Joy Woohoo!**

**Baby “Ahhh”**

**The Holy Gospel according to Luke**

***C: Glory to you, O Lord.***

Long ago in a country far away from this one, there were *shepherds…****(C: Yo, sheep!)***

watching over their *sheep…****(C: Baa!)***

by *night.* ***(C: Silent night, holy night)***

Being good *shepherds…****(C: Yo, sheep!)***

they protected their *sheep,* ***(C: Baa!)***

made sure they had food to eat and water to drink, and gathered them together at *night…****(C: Silent night, holy night)***

for protection. The *shepherds…****(C: Yo, sheep!)***

were listening to the soft sounds of the *sheep…****(C: Baa!)***

as they quieted down to go to sleep. The dark sky was full of shimmering stars that *night.* ***(C: Silent night, holy night)***

And then..all sound stopped and an *angel…* ***(C: Hallelujah! Hallelujah!)***

appeared to them. They were bathed in light, almost as if they glowed from within. The shepherds…***(C: Yo, sheep!)***

were frightened and so were the *sheep.* ***(C: Baa!)***

The *angel…****(C: Hallelujah! Hallelujah!)***

spoke to them. “Don’t be afraid. I have some *good news…* ***(C: Yes!)***

to share. My *good news…****(C: Yes!)***

will bring *great joy…****(C: Woohoo!)***

to all people. The *good news…****(C: Yes!)***

is this: this very day in David’s town, a *baby…* ***(C: Ahhh)***

was born. And this *baby…****(C: Ahhh)***

is your savior—Christ the Lord.” The *shepherds…****(C: Yo, sheep!)***

were amazed and so were the *sheep*.***(C: Baa!)***

What they thought was going to be like every other evening had turned into a holy *night*.***(C: Silent night, holy night)***

The *angel…****(C: Hallelujah! Hallelujah!)***

told them to go into Bethlehem where they would find the *baby*.***(C: Ahhh)***

Then the sky was filled with *angels…****(C: Hallelujah! Hallelujah!)***

singing praises to God, proclaiming the *good news…****(C: Yes!)***

with *great joy…****(C: Woohoo!)***

then they were gone. The *shepherds…****(C: Yo, sheep!)***

looked at each other and at the *sheep*.***(C: Baa!)***

“We should go to Bethlehem and see the *baby…*,”***(C: Ahhh)***

they said. So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and the *baby…****(C: Ahhh)***

lying in a manger. When the *shepherds…****(C: Yo, sheep!)***

saw him, they told Mary and Joseph what the *angel…****(C: Hallelujah! Hallelujah!)***

had told them about the *baby*.***(C: Ahhh)***

And that they had come to see the *good news…****(C: Yes!)***

for themselves so that they could share the *great joy*.***(C: Woohoo!)***

Everyone who heard what the *shepherds…****(C: Yo, sheep!)***

said was amazed. Mary listened to all that was said and treasured it in her heart. The *shepherds…****(C: Yo, sheep!)***

went back into the hills to their *sheep…****(C: Baa!)***

singing praises to God for all they had heard and seen. It had been just as the *angel…****(C: Hallelujah! Hallelujah!)***

had told them. They had knelt before the *baby…(****C: Ahhh)***

received the *good news…****(C: Yes!)***

felt the *great joy*…***(C: Woohoo!)***

and when they were finally settled down, turned to each other and proclaimed, “What a *night*!”***(C: Silent night, holy night)***

The Gospel of the Lord. ***C: Praise to You, O Christ.***

1. **Engaging with the Story**

**Luke 2:8-20 – Sermon**

Through the season of Advent here at St Peter’s – in these weeks leading up to Christmas – we’ve been placing ornaments on our Chrismon tree. What makes a Chrismon tree different from a Christmas tree is that each one of the ornaments is a symbol for Jesus. Each one represents something about who Jesus is for us. Over these weeks we’ve talked about how Jesus is our Saviour, our sure foundation, our cup of salvation, our Good Shepherd, and the Christ – God’s anointed one. Tonight, we add one final piece to our tree – a star.

This particular stylized star is called the nativity star or Star of Bethlehem. It’s not so much a symbol for Jesus as it points us to Jesus, in the same way it pointed the wise men to Jesus. Some Biblical scholars have commented that the Bethlehem star may in fact be the fulfilment of a messianic prophecy from the book of Numbers in the Hebrew Scriptures.1

I can’t help but notice that the nativity star contains a cross. I couldn’t find any information about this, but I would guess it’s intentional – to connect this star with the one whose death and resurrection brought salvation for the world.

Even though the star doesn’t represent Jesus, it does represent the place and time that Jesus – God’s Word made flesh – was born into our world. And so on this Christmas Eve, it feels appropriate to place this star at the top of our Chrismon tree, to draw our attention to the promise that the baby whose birth we celebrate tonight is the Savior of the world.

*Star is placed on the tree.*

So, we have a Bethlehem star at the top of our Chrismon tree, but perhaps you noticed that in the story we just read together, there was no mention of this star.

In Luke’s version of events, on that Christmas night, as the shepherds watch their flocks, it wasn’t a star but an angel that appears in the night sky to proclaim to them the good news that the Christ, their Saviour has been born this day in the nearby town of Bethlehem.

Overcome with awe and wonder (and curiosity), they run to Bethlehem to see for themselves if this heavenly message could really be true. And just as the angel said, they find Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. Amazed by what they’ve seen, the shepherds return home glorifying and praising God.

For the shepherds this was a life-altering moment. And even though that night everything changed, in many ways nothing had changed. The shepherds must return home because there are still sheep that need to be tended.

But I like to imagine, that back among the flocks by night, the shining stars in the sky were forever a reminder of the miracle they witnessed on that Christmas night. The twinkling of the stars a sign of the promise that their Saviour had been born.

Luke doesn’t mention the Bethlehem star (this shows up in Matthew’s version of events). The only stars in Luke’s version of events are the same stars that we can see on any clear night. But I think it’s worth paying attention to these other, ordinary, run-of-the-mill stars too.

Big shining star moments are rare in our world and in our lives. If we’re lucky, we’ll experience those kinds of faith affirming moments a handful of times.

Most of the time, God’s love and peace and joy show up like ordinary stars in the sky – like the stars the shepherds would have seen while they watched their flocks by night. Not blinding, earth-shattering or life-altering, but twinkling, reliable, and true (and beautiful nonetheless).

Because the thing is, whether we can see them or not – whether it’s a cloudy night or during the day – we can trust that the stars are there.

This is the promise of Christmas. The promise that God’s peace and love are sure and true, even when they seem hidden from us. And we need these small glimpses, as much as the big ones.

There is much that is not right in the world this night. I think of our siblings in Christ in the Holy Land who are marking Christmas under the shadow of war. This year, churches in the Holy Land are not marking Christmas with the usual festivities. There will be no celebrations as they long and pray for peace. And we join our prayers for peace with theirs.

Christmas may not always feel cheery, but the promise of Christmas is the promise that even while the world is a mess, God’s love and peace are born, nonetheless. The promise of Christmas is that God’s love and peace will surprise us just when we need it; like the shepherds were surprised that night long ago on the hills outside Bethlehem.

When we leave here tonight, whether it’s cloudy or clear, even with the light pollution from the city, we can trust that the stars are shining with the promise that into the darkness of night, God’s gift of salvation has been born, for us and for our whole weary world. AMEN.

1 Numbers 24:17

**Hymn of the Day: ELW # 300 ‘The First Noel’**

1 The first Noel the angel did say

was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;

in fields where they lay, keeping their sheep,

on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

***Refrain***

***Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel!***

***Born is the King of Israel.***

2 They looked up and saw a star

shining in the east beyond them far;

and to the earth it gave great light,

and so it continued both day and night. ***Refrain***

3 And by the light of that same star

three wise men came from country far;

to seek for a king was their intent,

and to follow the star wherever it went. ***Refrain***

4 This star drew near to the northwest,

o'er Bethlehem it took its rest;

and there it did both stop and stay

right over the place where Jesus lay. ***Refrain***

5 Then entered in those wise men three,

full rev'rently upon their knee,

and offered there in his presence

their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense. ***Refrain***

*(Title: The First Noel; Text: English traditional; Public Domain; Music: English tradional, arr. John Stainer, 1840-1901; Public Domain*

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**Prayers of Intercession:**

A:Trusting in God’s good news of great joy for all people, we offer our prayers for ourselves, our neighbors, and the world God loves.

A brief silence.

Glory to you, God, for the song of the angels, proclaiming to the world Christ’s holy birth. Give your church a joyful song to sing, that we bring the good news of peace and salvation to all people. Hear us, O God.

**C:** **Your mercy is great.**

Glory to you, God, for the stars that shine in the depth of the night. Provoke awe in our hearts at the expansive mystery of the cosmos. Open us to find beauty in the clear darkness of night and in the first glimmers of dawn. Hear us, O God. **C:** **Your mercy is great.**

Glory to you, God, for the child born to us who establishes a kingdom of justice and righteousness. Break bonds of oppression, bring reconciliation to warring lands, and establish peace from this time onward and forevermore. Hear us, O God. **C:** **Your mercy is great.**

Glory to you, God, for Mary’s loving care. Lead us to tend to one another in time of need. Share the comfort of your presence with all people tonight who are alone or separated from loved ones due to estrangement, incarceration, or illness (especially we pray for Linda, Jeff, Sherri, Panagiota, each one of the beloved children on our prayer list, and all who we name before you now…). Hear us, O God. **C:** **Your mercy is great.**

Glory to you, God, for the faithfulness of the shepherds in their vocation. Grant rest to any who feel exhausted from their work during this season: retail and restaurant workers, church musicians, administrative staff, and clergy, organizers of charitable-giving events, and service workers doing essential tasks. Hear us, O God. **C:** **Your mercy is great.**

Glory to you, God, for the multitude of the heavenly host. We rejoice in the zeal of all your saints who have witnessed the appearing of your grace, and who reveal to us your salvation for all. Hear us, O God. **C:** **Your mercy is great.**

Abide with us, O God of mercy, and receive our prayers according to your abundant grace.

**Amen.\***

**Share the peace of Christ:**

Angels said it to startled shepherds,

Jesus said it to frightened followers,

And now these words which come from heaven

are shared to make us whole and make us one.

Peace be with you.

**C: And also with you.** \*\*\*\*

*(A Wee Worship Book – Liturgy for Holy Communion A #30810; Type: Words; First Line: Call to worship – Gather us in; Language: English (pages 80-92); Contributors: Iona community; Text: © 1999, WGRG, Iona community, GIA Publications, Inc; exclusive North American agent. All rights reserved. Used by permission. Reprinted and Streamed with permission under ONE LICENSE, License #A-727610. All rights reserved.)*

**Offering**

**Offering Hymn: ELW # 296 ‘What Child Is This’**

1 What child is this, who, laid to rest,

on Mary's lap is sleeping?

Whom angels greet with anthems sweet

while shepherds watch are keeping?

This, this is Christ the king,

whom shepherds guard and angels sing;

haste, haste to bring him laud,

the babe, the son of Mary!

2 Why lies he in such mean estate

where ox and ass are feeding?

Good Christian, fear; for sinners here

the silent Word is pleading.

Nails, spear shall pierce him through,

the cross be borne for me, for you;

hail, hail the Word made flesh,

the babe, the son of Mary!

3 So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;

come, peasant, king, to own him.

The King of kings salvation brings;

let loving hearts enthrone him.

Raise, raise the song on high,

the virgin sings her lullaby;

joy, joy, for Christ is born,

the babe, the son of Mary!

*(Title:**What Child Is This; Text: William C. Dix, 1837-1898; Public Domain; Music: English ballad, 16th cent.; Public Domain*

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**Offering Prayer:**

A: God of abundance,

receive and bless these gifts we have offered.

Join our hearts with the song of the angels,

and gather us at your table of celebration.

Strengthen us to share with all the world

the abundance of your grace upon grace,

poured out in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.

**Amen.\***

You are invited to prepare your table with bread and wine, or crackers and juice, whatever is available to you, so that you may participate in the meal.

**Meal: Click here for the communion liturgy from worship on YouTube:**

[**https://youtu.be/ViXmTzRsfU4**](https://youtu.be/ViXmTzRsfU4)

**Great Thanksgiving: ACS Setting 12: ‘Dialogue…’ (page 36) (sung)**

The Lord be with you. **C: And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **C: We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **C: It is right to give our thanks and praise**

**ACS Setting 12: ‘Preface…’ *(Christmas)***

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,

that we should at all times and in all places

give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,

through our Savior Jesus Christ.

In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh

you have opened the eyes of faith

to a new and radiant vision of your glory,

that, beholding the God made visible,

we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see.

And so, with all the choirs of angels,

with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,

we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**ACS Setting 12: ‘Holy, Holy, Holy…’ *(page 36 )***

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,**

**God of pow’r and God of might,**

**heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna, hosanna in the highest.**

**Hosanna, hosanna in the highest.**\*

**Thanksgiving at the Table:**

On the night before he showed us the full extent of his love,

our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;

broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:

Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,

and gave it for all to drink, saying:

This cup is the new covenant in my blood,

shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

**The Lord’s Prayer:**

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those

who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial

and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,

and the glory are yours,

now and forever. **Amen.**

**Invitation to Communion:**

This is Christ’s table. All are welcome here to receive God’s abundant gifts of love, mercy, grace, and forgiveness.

I invite those at home, and those in the building communing by fellowship cup, to take your bread or cracker as we say together, “The body of Christ, given for us.”

And, as we take our cup we say, “The blood of Christ, shed for us.”

**Communion Music: ACS Setting 12: ‘Be known to us….’ *(page 40 )***

**Choir Anthem**

**ELW # 281 ‘Silent Night, Holy Night’**

**ACS Setting 12: ‘Be known to us….’ *(page 40 )***

**Be known to us, Lord Jesus, in the breaking of the bread.**

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

**Be known to us, Lord Jesus, in the breaking of the bread.**

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.\***

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**Choir Anthem**

**ELW # 281 ‘Silent Night, Holy Night’**

1 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.

2 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!

3 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.

*(Title: Silent Night, Holy Night! Text: Joseph Mohr, 1792-1849; tr. John F. Young, 1820-1885; Public Domain; Music: Franz Gruber, 1787-1863; Public Domain; Reprinted and Streamed with permission under ONE LICENSE, License #A-727610. All rights reserved.)*

P: May the body and blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ strengthen you, and keep you, in his grace.

***C: Amen.***

**Prayer after Communion:**

A: God our redeemer,

you have fed us at this table

with gifts of grace, truth, and life.

As you have gathered us in joy,

send us forth as messengers of your peace.

Make us shine with the good news of your glory,

born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.\*

**Blessing:**

This Christmas, may we be like the manger,

ready to receive God.

May we be like the angels,

singing God’s glory for all to hear.

May we be like the shepherds,

raising our heads heavenwards

that we might look upon earth’s riches with new eyes.

May the Christ Child find rest in our hearts.

*Source: Spill the Beans: Worship & Learning Resources for All Ages, Issue 17*

And may

God bless you and keep you,

☩ Jesus grant you grace and truth,

and the Spirit send peace upon your hearts,

this night and always.

Amen.\*

**Sending Hymn: ELW # 267 ‘Joy to the World’**

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 all 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 sin and sorrow 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.

*(Joy to the World; Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748; Public Domain; Music: English melody, 18th cent.; arr. Lowell Mason, 1792-1872; Public Domain*

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**Dismissal:**

A: Christ the Savior is born!

Go in peace. Proclaim this good news.

***C: Thanks be to God.\****

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