

## Ante Communion Service: December 24, 2022: Christmas Eve

### Hymn 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 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. Amen.*

*Celebrant* Blessed be the Holy Trinity, one God, the fountain of living water, the rock who gave birth, our light and our salvation. **Amen.**

*Celebrant* Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*A moment of silence for self-reflection*

*Celebrant* Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*People* **God of all mercy, we confess that we have sinned against you,  
opposing your will in our lives.  
We have denied your goodness in each other, in ourselves,  
and in the world you have created. We repent of the evil that enslaves us,  
the evil we have done, and the evil done on our behalf.  
Forgive, restore, and strengthen us through our Savior Jesus Christ,  
that we may abide in your love and serve only your will. Amen.**

*Celebrant* Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

*Celebrant* The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

Let us pray: **Almighty God, you gave us your only Son to take on our human nature and to illumine the world with your light. By your grace adopt us as your children and enlighten us with your Spirit, through Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

**First Reading****Isaiah 9:2-7**

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;  
 those who lived in a land of deep darkness--on them light has shined.  
 You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy;  
 they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder.  
 For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders,  
 the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.  
 For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood  
 shall be burned as fuel for the fire.  
 For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders;  
 and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
 His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace  
 for the throne of David and his kingdom.  
 He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness  
 from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm 96***Cantate Domino*

1 Sing to the Lord a new song; \*  
**sing to the Lord, all the whole earth.**  
 2 Sing to the Lord and bless his Name; \*  
**proclaim the good news of his salvation from day to day.**  
 3 Declare his glory among the nations \*  
**and his wonders among all peoples.**  
 4 For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; \*  
**he is more to be feared than all gods.**  
 5 As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols; \*  
**but it is the Lord who made the heavens.**  
 6 Oh, the majesty and magnificence of his presence! \*  
**Oh, the power and the splendor of his sanctuary!**  
 7 Ascribe to the Lord, you families of the peoples; \*  
**ascribe to the Lord honor and power.**  
 8 Ascribe to the Lord the honor due his Name; \*  
**bring offerings and come into his courts.**  
 9 Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; \*  
**let the whole earth tremble before him.**  
 10 Tell it out among the nations: "The Lord is King! \*  
**he has made the world so firm that it cannot be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity."**  
 11 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea thunder and all that is in it; \*  
**let the field be joyful and all that is therein.**  
 12 Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy before the Lord when he comes, \*  
**when he comes to judge the earth.**  
 13 He will judge the world with righteousness \*  
**and the peoples with his truth.**  
 Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.  
**As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. World without end. Amen.**

**Second Reading****Titus 2:11-14**

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Gospel****Luke 2:1-14**

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

**Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered.

This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.

All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.

Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see-- I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger."

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

**Sermon****Hymn****The First Noel**

*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.*

*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]*

*And by the light of that same star the wise men came from country far;  
to seek for a king was their intent, and to follow the star wherever it went. [Refrain]*

*Then let us all with one accord sing praises to our heavenly Lord,  
who hath made heaven and earth of nought, and with his blood mankind hath bought. [Refrain]*

Nicene Creed            *Said by all.*

**We believe in one God, the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father.  
Through Him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit,  
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day He rose again in accordance with the Scriptures.**

**He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come  
in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father  
and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified.**

**He has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.**

**We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins.**

**We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

### **Prayers of the People**

Let us pray to God, who came among us in the birth of Jesus:

Gracious God, as a star rose, and drew people from great distances to Bethlehem that they might greet the Christ-child; draw us, your church, and all of your people to you – that we might be the church and the people who you call us to be. Lord, in your mercy,            **Hear our prayer.**

As you gave Mary your Holy Spirit, filling her with the delight of your presence; fill us with your Spirit, and renew our lives. Lord, in your mercy,            **Hear our prayer.**

As Gentiles streamed to Jesus' light, and kings to the brightness of his rising; Draw our nation, our president, and all in authority, to his brightness. Lord, in your mercy,            **Hear our prayer.**

As angels sang 'glorias' to you and proclaimed peace on earth, and goodwill among all peoples; bring us your peace, and bring an end to and terror and strife.  
Lord, in your mercy,            **Hear our prayer.**

As Jesus was born in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn; be especially present with those who have nowhere to lay their head, those who are vulnerable, and those who are hungry.  
Lord, in your mercy,            **Hear our prayer.**

As your son came to proclaim the forgiveness of sins, and the gift of life eternal; give to the departed eternal rest and let light perpetual shine on them.  
Lord, in your mercy,            **Hear our prayer.**

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

For those who are sick, especially \_\_\_\_\_.

For those who have died especially \_\_\_\_\_.

*Celebrant:* O Lord our God, may the light and hope of this night, and of your Son's incarnation, reassure our hearts that you are among us, that you hear our prayer, and that you will be with us always, even to the end of the age. In the name of Jesus our Christ we pray. **Amen.**

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we pray together:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name,  
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

We pray together for Christ's presence:

**My Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament of the bread and wine.  
I love you above all things, and long for you in my soul.  
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come spiritually into my heart.  
I embrace you and unite myself entirely to you; never permit me to be separated from you.  
Amen.**

*Celebrant:* While we long to receive the sacrament of Christ's Body,

*People:* **We become the sacrament of Christ's Body.**

*Celebrant:* Let your lives be manna to feed our hunger for communion.

*People:* **The love we share becomes bread for the world.**

## **Blessing**

May Christ, who by his Incarnation gathered into one, things earthly and heavenly, fill you with his joy and peace; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be in you, among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**

## **Hymn**

### **Silent 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 thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.*

## **Dismissal**

Go in peace and hope and joy to love and serve the Lord. Alleluia, Alleluia!  
**Thanks be to God. Alleluia, Alleluia!**