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FM 99.1**

**THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD, December 24, 2020
Christmas Eve**

(P: pastor; C: congregation)

GREETING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE PREPARATION

ACCLAMATION FOR CHRISTMAS

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

C: And also with you.

P: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

C: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

P: Those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.

C: We have beheld Christ's glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.

P: For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given.

C: In him was life, and the life was the light of man.

BIDDING PRAYER

P: Beloved in Christ, let it be our care and delight to hear again the message of the angels, and in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, and the babe lying in a manger.

Let us read in Holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our disobedience unto the glorious redemption brought us by this holy child; and let us make this place glad with our carols of praise.

But first, let us pray for the needs of the whole world; for peace and goodwill over all the earth; for the mission and unity of the Church for which Christ died; and for this country and our communities.

And because this would rejoice God's heart, let us remember in Christ's name the poor and the helpless, the hungry and the oppressed, the sick and those who mourn, the lonely and the unloved, the aged and the little children, and all those who do not know the Lord Jesus, or who do not love him, or who by sin have grieved his heart of love.

Lastly, let us remember before God all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore and in a greater light, that multitude which no one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and in our Lord Jesus, we forevermore are one.

These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the throne of heaven, in the words which Christ himself has taught us:

**C: 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.**

CAROL: “O Little Town of Bethlehem” LBW 41

(Text and tune: Public Domain)

O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep The silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth The everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee tonight.
For Christ is born of Mary, And gathered all above
While mortals sleep, the angels keep Their watch of wond’ring love.
O morning stars, together Proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the king, And peace to all the earth!
How silently, how silently, The wondrous gift is giv’n!
So God imparts to human hearts The blessings of his heav’n
No ear may hear his coming; But, in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him, still The dear Christ enters in.
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 Christmas angels The great glad tidings tell;
Oh, come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!

THE SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

FIRST LESSON: Genesis 3:8-15, *God confronts Adam and Eve in the garden*

⁸And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?” ¹⁰And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.” ¹¹He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” ¹²The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” ¹³Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

¹⁴The LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. ¹⁵I 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.”

P: The word of the Lord. **C:** Thanks be to God!

CAROL: “What Child Is This” LBW 40

(Text and tune: Public domain)

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!
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!
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!

SECOND LESSON: Genesis 22:15-18, *The testing of Abraham*

¹⁵And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, ¹⁶and said, “By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, ¹⁸and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.”

P: The word of the Lord. **C:** Thanks be to God!

CAROL: “It Came upon the Midnight Clear” LBW 54

(Text and tune: Public domain)

**It came upon the midnight clear, That glorious song of old.
From angels bending near the earth To touch their harps of gold:
“Peace on the earth, good will to all, From heav’ns all gracious king.”
The world in solemn stillness lay To hear the angels sing.
Still through the cloven skies they come With peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heav’nly music floats O’er all the weary world.
Above its sad and lowly plains They bend on hov’ring wing,
And ever o’er its babel sounds The blessed angels sing.
And you, beneath life’s crushing load Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way With painful steps and slow:
Look now, for glad and golden hours Come swiftly on the wing;
Oh, rest beside the weary road And hear the angels sing!
For lo! The days are hast’ning on, By prophets seen of old,
When with the ever circling years Shall come the time foretold,
When peace shall over all the earth Its ancient splendors fling,
And all the world give back the song Which now the angels sing.**

THIRD LESSON: Isaiah 9:2, 6-7, *Light shines: a child is born for us*

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness--on them has light shined. ⁶For 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. ⁷Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

P: The word of the Lord. **C:** Thanks be to God!

CAROL: “Cold December Flies Away” LBW 53

(Text and tune: Public domain)

**Cold December flies away At the rose red splendor.
April’s crowning glory breaks While the whole world wonders
At the holy unseen pow’r Of the tree which bears the flow’r.
On the blessed tree Blooms the reddest flow’r.
On the tree blooms the rose Here in love’s own garden, Full and strong in glory.
In the hopeless time of sin Shadows deep had fallen.
All the world lay under death. Eyes were closed in sleeping.
But, when all seemed lost in night, Came the sun whose golden light
Brings unending joy, Brings the endless joy
Of our hope, highest hope, Of our hope’s bright dawning, Son beloved of heaven.
Now the bud has come to bloom, And the world awakens.
In the lily’s purest flow’r Dwells a wondrous fragrance.
And it spread to all the earth From the moment of its birth;
And its beauty lives. In the flow’r it lives,
In the flow’r, and it spreads In its heav’nly brightness Sweet perfume delightful.**

FOURTH LESSON: Luke 2:1-7, *God with us*

²In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴And 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, ⁵to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. ⁶And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷And 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.

P: The word of the Lord. **C: Thanks be to God!**

CAROL: “Once in Royal David’s City” WOV 643

(Text and tune: Public domain)

**Once in royal David’s city stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby in a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ, her little child.
He came down to earth from heaven who is God and Lord of all,
And his shelter was a stable, and his cradle was a stall;
With the poor and meek and lowly, lived on earth our Savior holy.
And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own redeeming love;
For that child so dear and gentle is our Lord in heav’n above;
And he leads his children on to the place where he is gone.
Not in that poor lowly stable, with the oxen standing by,
We shall see him; but in heaven, set at God’s right hand on high;
There his children gather ’round, bright like stars, with glory crowned.**

FIFTH LESSON: Luke 2:8-20, *The birth of Messiah revealed to the shepherds*

⁸And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

¹⁵When 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.” ¹⁶And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

P: The word of the Lord. **C: Thanks be to God!**

CAROL: “Go Tell It On the Mountain” LBW 70

Refrain: **Go tell it on the mountain, Over the hills and ev’rywhere;
Go tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born!
While shepherds kept their watching O’er silent flocks by night,
Behold, throughout the heavens There shone a holy light. *Refrain:*
The shepherds feared and trembled When, lo, above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus That hailed our Savior’s birth. *Refrain:*
Down in a lonely manger The humble Christ was born;
And God sent us salvation That blessed Christmas morn. *Refrain:***

GOSPEL: John 1:1-18, *The word became flesh*

P: The Holy Gospel according to John, the first chapter. **C: Glory to you, O Lord!**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹²But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

¹⁵(John bore witness about him, and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.’”) ¹⁶And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.

P: The Gospel of the Lord. **C: Praise to you, O Christ!**

CAROL: “**Away in a Manger**” LBW 67

(Text and tune: Public domain)

**Away in a manger, no crib for his 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 poor baby wakes, But little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.
Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care And fit us for heaven to live with you there.**

Before the PRAYERS, the light from the large candle is spread throughout the congregation.

PRAYERS

P: Lord, hear our prayers and come to us,

C: bringing light into the darkness of our hearts; in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

P: Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light.

C: 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

CAROL: “**Silent Night, Holy Night!**” LBW 65

(Text and tune: Public domain)

**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.
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!
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.**

BLESSING

P: May Almighty God, who sent his Son to take our nature upon him, bless you in this holy season, scatter the darkness of sin, and brighten your heart with the light of his holiness.

C: Amen

P: May God, who sent his angels to proclaim the glad news of the Savior's birth, fill you with joy, and make you heralds of the Gospel.

C: Amen

P: May God, who in the Word made flesh joined heaven to earth and earth to heaven, give you his peace and favor.

C: Amen

P: And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son +, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you forever.

C: Amen

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

HYMN: "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" LBW 60

(Text and tune: Public Domain)

**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 angelic hosts proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new born king!"**

**Christ, by highest heav'n adored, Christ the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold him come, Offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see! Hail, incarnate deity!
Pleased as man with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel!
Hark the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"**

**Hail the heav'nborn 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 each child of earth, Born to give us second birth.
Hark the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"**

We strive to use our gifts and the best resources available to support people in their faith. To inquire about our sermons and/or the resources used to produce them please contact us through our church office. To God be the glory!

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