

**Christmas Eve  
December 24, 2023  
5:00 P.M.**

**Gathering  
*God invites us to enter His presence***

**Prelude**        *O Come, All Ye Faithful; O Little Town of Bethlehem*  
                         *Brass Choir & Piano*

**Welcome & Announcements**

**Preparation for Worship** (*Time for Silent Preparation*)

 **Call to Worship** (*Responsively*)

The people walking in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
**on those living in the land of the shadow of death  
a light has dawned.**  
Jesus Christ is our life and light.  
In his name and in his power, let us worship God!  
—based on Isaiah 9:2, NIV

 **Invocation**

All glory to you, great God,  
for the gift of your Son,  
light in darkness and hope of the world,  
whom you sent to save us.  
With singing angels  
let us praise your name  
and tell the earth his story,  
that all may believe, rejoice, and bow down,  
acknowledging your love  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

**Lighting of the Christ Candle**

*Come, Light Our Hearts*

*McCracken*

*Chorus*  
*For You, O Lord, our souls in stillness wait.*  
*For You, O Lord, our souls in stillness wait.*  
*Truly our hope is in You.*  
*Truly our hope is in You.*

*Verse 1*  
*O Lord of life, our only hope,*  
*Your radiance shines on all who look*  
*to You in the dark.*

*Emmanuel come,  
come light our hearts.*

*Chorus*

*Verse 2  
O joy above all other loves,  
in You we find more than enough.  
We come as we are;  
O heal and restore,  
come light our hearts.*

*Chorus*

*Tag  
Truly our hope is in You.*

### **Christ Candle Reading**

*The Steinginga Family*

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
We light this candle because Jesus, the light of the world,  
was born on this day,  
and he brightens all things.  
**Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!**



**Hymn 124**  
**125**

*Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus (Verses 1,2)*  
*Joy to the World! (Verses 1,2,4)*

### **Confessing**

***God invites us to be honest with Him***

### **Call to Confession**

Prepare the way of the Lord! Let us make our confession to God.

### **Prayer of Confession** *(Responsively)*

Arise, shine: for your light has come.  
**O God, we live as if the light  
had never defeated the darkness in the world or in us.**  
And the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.  
**We confess that we ignore the Christ  
you sent to be among us, to be in us.**  
For behold, darkness shall cover the earth,  
and thick darkness the peoples;  
but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you.  
**We've kept the birth of your Son confined to the Christmas season  
and do not yearn for his birth each moment in our waiting hearts.**  
And nations shall come to your light,  
and kings to the brightness of your rising.  
**Lord, you came to us in the fullness of time.**

**Forgive us for not opening our eyes to your coming  
It's time that we prepare for your coming.  
Let the earth ring with song. Let the light break forth.  
Let us all rejoice in the miracle of love.  
Let Christ come into the fullness of our time. Amen.**

—based on Isaiah 60:1-3

## **Time for Silent Confession**

### **Assurance of Pardon** *(Responsively)*

The days are surely coming, says the Lord,  
when I will fulfill the promise I made  
to the house of Israel and the house of Judah.  
In those days and at that time I will cause  
a righteous Branch to spring up for David;  
and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.  
In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety.  
And this is the name by which it will be called:  
“The Lord is our righteousness.”  
People of God: Jesus Christ, our Lord,  
whose coming we announce in this season, is our righteousness.  
In Christ, we are made right with God.  
**Thanks be to God!**

*Leader: This is the Promise of the Lord*

**All: Thanks be to God!**

### **Gloria Patri**

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,  
And to the Holy Ghost:  
As it was in the beginning,  
Is now and ever shall be, world without end.  
A-men, A-men.*

### **Offering**

***Thankful of the gifts God has given us, we offer ourselves to Him***

**Invitation** Remember the words the Lord Jesus himself said:  
“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”  
—from Acts 20:35, NIV

### **Offering**

**Offertory** *Away in A Manger* *Brass Choir/Piano*

### **Doxology**

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host;  
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. A-men.*

## Prayer of Dedication

God of wonder, we offer you these humble gifts,  
signs of your goodness and mercy. Receive them with our  
gratitude, that through us all people may know  
the riches of your love in the Word-made-flesh. **Amen.**

## **Proclaiming** *God speaks to us through His Word*

## Hymn 123 *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*

### **Scripture Reading** *Luke 2:1-20*

**2** In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole empire should be registered. <sup>2</sup> This first registration took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. <sup>3</sup> So everyone went to be registered, each to his own town.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family line of David, <sup>5</sup> to be registered along with Mary, who was engaged to him and was pregnant. <sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. <sup>7</sup> Then she gave birth to her firstborn son, and she wrapped him tightly in cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

<sup>8</sup> In the same region, shepherds were staying out in the fields and keeping watch at night over their flock. <sup>9</sup> Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, for look, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people:<sup>11</sup> Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you, who is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup> This will be the sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped tightly in cloth and lying in a manger."

<sup>13</sup> Suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying:

<sup>14</sup> Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and peace on earth to people he favors!

<sup>15</sup> When the angels had left them and returned to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go straight to Bethlehem and see what has happened, which the Lord has made known to us."

<sup>16</sup> They hurried off and found both Mary and Joseph, and the baby who was lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup> After seeing them, they reported the message they were told about this child, <sup>18</sup> and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary was treasuring up all these things in her heart and meditating on them. <sup>20</sup> The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had seen and heard, which were just as they had been told.

**Sermon** *"Rejoice! Rejoice!"  
Rev. Tim Latham*

! Hymn 132  
133

*Angels We Have Heard on High (V. 1, 3)  
Hark! The Herald Angels Sing (All Verses)*

**Responding**  
*We respond to God's Word*

! Profession of Faith

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God.

**He was in the beginning with God.**

All things came into being through him, and without him not  
one thing came into being.

**What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the  
light of all people.**

The light shines in the darkness,  
**and the darkness did not overcome it.**

**Commissioning**  
*God sends us out into the world as His witnesses*

**Lighting of the Candles**

*Ushers will come forward to light their candles and then light  
all other candles as the congregation remains seated and  
quiet. Then we will stand to sing "Silent Night".*

**Caution:** *Please don't tip lighted candles.*

! Hymn 147

*Silent Night  
(Guitar—Greg Mauer, Vocals—Kelly Fox)*

***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,  
Heavenly hosts sing al-le-lu-ia;  
Christ the Savior is born!  
Christ the Savior is born!***

***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.***

**Christmas Blessing & Benediction**

(Please blow out candles and place them in the baskets at the top of the stairs as you exit)

 **Benediction & Blessing**

 **Postlude**