



**St. Andrew's PDX,
Christmas Eve 2021, 9 P.M.**

GATHERING

Prelude

Time to Center- *The Word Became Flesh* *Video from the Work of the People*

Lighting of the Christ Candle

Leader: The poet, Ann Weems, wrote:

“What I’d really like to give you for Christmas is a star.../
Brilliance in a package,/

something you could keep in the pocket of your jeans/
or in the pocket of your being.”

We’ve come tonight for the light,
for the shining candles

and the smiles on young faces

and the brilliance of tears on a neighbor’s cheek.

But remember the words of the psalmist:

“Give to the Lord, all families of the nations—
give to the Lord glory and power!

Give to the Lord the glory due his name!

Bring gifts!

Enter his courtyards!

Bow down to the Lord in his holy splendor!

Tremble before him, all the earth!”

On this Christmas Eve,

we tremble at the wonder we remember together:

God entered our world in the body of a poor child,

born on a dark night in a chilly stable,

with only a manger for his bed.

God entered the world and took on human form
to show us how to live in hope, peace, joy and love.
(*Light previous candles.*)

When we light the Christ candle,
we remember the star above the stable.
We celebrate the light coming into the darkness.

People: *Glory to God in the highest!*
We give thanks for the brilliance of stars!
We give thanks for the birth of Jesus Christ, God with us.

Leader: Do you see it now clearly?
The light lit in the window for you,
this is light that darkness cannot, will not overcome,
it is for you and for all,
Jesus Christ, light of the world.

People: *Alleluia! Amen.*

***Hymn** *Love Has Come* Glory to God #110

Welcome

Confessional Meditation

I invite you to get comfortable, put both feet on the floor, and, focus your eyes on the Christ candle and Advent Candles burning in the frame before you. Take three deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth. In...out. In...out. In...out.

Now, if you are comfortable doing so please close your eyes or soften your gaze.

Carry the light of Christ into your heart and let it illumine anything that hides there that produces shame or guilt or fear or despair. Whatever you find in that light, know this, the child whose birth we celebrate this night **LOVES YOU ANYHOW**. Let that light fill your being and illumine all that is precious and beautiful in you, as you surrender to God all that needs forgiving or healing. Keep letting that light shine as you breathe in deeply God's love for you in Christ.

1 minute of silence.

The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.
You are welcomed home by the light of Christ,
Know that we are forgiven, and be at peace.

Carol *O Little Town of Bethlehem* vv. 3 and 4 Glory to God #121

THE WORD

A Responsive Reading from the Book of Psalms *Psalm 107: 7-10*

Lower Voices: **Give to the Lord, all families of the nations—
give to the Lord glory and power!**

Higher Voices: *Give to the Lord the glory due his name!
Bring gifts!
Enter his courtyards!*

Lower Voices: **Bow down to the Lord in his holy splendor!
Tremble before him, all the earth!**

Higher Voices Tell the nations, “The Lord rules!
Yes, he set the world firmly in place;
it won’t be shaken.

He will judge all people fairly.”

Leader: Holy Wisdom, Holy Word.

People: ***Thanks be to God.***

Carol *Hark the Herald Angels Sing* vv. 1 and 3 Glory to God #119

A Reading from the Gospel According to Luke *Luke 2:1-20*

Carol *Away in a Manger* vv. 1 and 3 Glory to God #114

Meditation on God’s Word *Pastor Sarah Sanderson-Doughty*

RESPONSE TO GOD’S WORD

Carol *Once in Royal David’s City* vv. 1, 2, and 4 Glory to God #140

Prayers of Intercession

When the world was dark
and the city was quiet,
you came.

You crept in beside us.

And no one knew.
Only the few
who dared to believe
that God might do something different.

Will you do the same this Christmas, Lord?

Will you come into the darkness of tonight's world;
not the friendly darkness
as when sleep rescues us from tiredness,
but the fearful darkness,
in which people have stopped believing
 that war will end
 or that food will come
 or that a government will change
 or that the Church cares?

Will you come into that darkness
and do something different
to save your people from death and despair?

Will you come into the quietness of this town,
not the friendly quietness
as when lovers hold hands,
but the fearful silence when
 the phone has not rung,
 the letter has not come,
 the friendly voice no longer speaks,
 the doctor's face says it all?

Will you come into that darkness,
and do something different,
not to distract, but to embrace your people?

And will you come into the dark corners
and the quiet places of our lives?

We ask this not because we are guilt-ridden
or want to be,
but because the fullness our lives long for
depends on us being as open and vulnerable to you
as you were to us,
when you came,
wearing no more than diapers,
and trust human hands
to hold their maker.

Will you come into our lives,
if we open them to you

and do something different?

When the world was dark
and the city was quiet
you came.

You crept in beside us.

Do the same this Christmas, Lord.
Do the same this Christmas.
Amen.

Worshipping God with our Tithes and Offerings

Invitation to Generosity

A Reading from Bernard of Clairvaux who lived from 1090-1153; “You have come to us as a small child, but you have brought us the greatest of all gifts, the gift of eternal love. Caress us with your tiny hands, embrace us with your tiny arms, and pierce our hearts with your soft, sweet cries.” Our offering tonight will be entirely dedicated to the preparation of kits for refugees arriving in Portland. We remember that the Holy Family were refugees when Jesus was but a small child and we respond with gratitude to the gift of Christ given to us, by helping to make life easier for new and vulnerable neighbors. Stay tuned for an opportunity to assemble these kits in January. You can leave offerings in the plates by the entrances to the sanctuary or by selecting Christmas offering on Kindrid, and then Christmas Eve, or by dropping a check in the mail with Christmas Eve on the memo line.

Offertory Anthem *O Holy Night*

Response of Praise: *What Child Is This*, verse 3 Glory to God #145

Prayer of Dedication

***These gifts, O God, we give
so that those who have left behind their homes,
often has lost everything,
might have something.
May your love take on flesh for those in need
who receive these gifts
as you took on flesh for all of us
that holy night long ago. Amen.***

SENDING

Sharing the Light of Christ

The lights are dimmed. The ushers will come and light their candles from the Christ candle and will distribute the light throughout the congregation. Please do not tip a lighted candle, lest hot wax spill. Worshippers are home are invited to dim the lights in their home and light candles or artificial lights and raise them up before their cameras.

Silent Night GTG #122

This is a beloved hymn in this congregation.

Blessing Poem

First Coming, by Madeleine L'Engle

*He did not wait till the world was ready,
till men and nations were at peace.
He came when the Heavens were unsteady,
and prisoners cried out for release.*

*He did not wait for the perfect time.
He came when the need was deep and great.
He dined with sinners in all their grime,
turned water into wine.*

*He did not wait till hearts were pure.
In joy he came to a tarnished world of sin and doubt.
To a world like ours, of anguished shame
he came, and his Light would not go out.*

*He came to a world which did not mesh,
to heal its tangles, shield its scorn.
In the mystery of the Word made Flesh
the Maker of the stars was born.*

*We cannot wait till the world is sane
to raise our songs with joyful voice,
for to share our grief, to touch our pain,
He came with Love: Rejoice! Rejoice!*

***Closing Carol**

Joy to the World

GTG #134

This is a beloved hymn in this congregation

And All God's People Say

Postlude