

Preparation for Worship

*"I compare the holiday season with the way a child listens to a favorite story. The pleasure is in the familiar way the story begins, the anticipation of familiar turns it takes, the familiar moments of suspense, and the familiar climax and ending."
~Fred Rogers*

Prelude

6:30—7:00 p.m.

Alexandra Thompson Lee, cello
Bank Limtham, piano

Opening Sentences

Leader: There is good news of great joy for all!

People: Our Savior is born, Christ the Lord.

Prayer of Adoration

Glory to you, God of life, for you send your only-begotten Son, that we might have new life. Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ, for you come in flesh and dwell among us, that we might become your own. Glory to you, Holy Spirit for you direct and rule our lives. Glory to you, great God of life, and to your child, Jesus Christ, and to the Holy Spirit, now and forevermore. Amen.

***Processional Hymn 133**

O Come, All Ye Faithful

*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;
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!*

*God of God, Light of Light,
Lo! He abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Very God, begotten, not created:
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!*

*Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above;
Glory to God, in the highest.
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!*

*Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,
Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!*

Please be seated after the hymn.

Lighting of the Christ Candle

Leader: Throughout the season of Advent, we have lit candles of hope, peace, joy, and love. Tonight we light the candle of Christ, in whom we hope; who grants us peace; who comes with joy; who is the full expression of God's love. "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

People: Those who lived in a land of deep darkness, on them light has shined."

Litany for Christmas

Leader: The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all.

People: Glory to God in the highest!

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

People: Glory to God in the highest!

Leader: For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given.

People: Glory to God in the highest!

Leader: His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

People: Glory to God in the highest!

Leader: To us is born in the city of David a Savior, Christ the Lord.

People: Glory to God in the highest!

Leader: And the Word became flesh and dwelled among us.

People: Glory to God in the highest!

Call to Prayer

Christ came to us in the night, when all was quiet and all was still. Let the joy of this night create in you a new quiet, a new stillness, in which the living Christ can come to you again, changing you, giving you new hope for old fears, new trust for old doubts, new life for all that is tired and careworn. Together let us pray

Gathering Prayer

**God of love, all year long we pursue money and power,
but you come to us in poverty and weakness.**

**All season long, we covet material gifts,
but what you alone offer is everlasting.**

**Through this Jesus who comes among us as grace and truth,
forgive us, heal us, correct us.**

Let our lives be renewed, to echo the angels' song.

**Amid all the busyness and noise of Christmas,
open us anew to your transforming love. Amen.**

Silent Prayers

Words of Assurance

To all of you who have burst into laughter in the middle of self-importance, or blinked back tears at the sight of an everyday hurt, or dreamed so hard about what ought to be that you find yourselves forever disconcerted at what is, or tried to change and could not, or could and did, or rejoiced in oneness, or despaired in aloneness: To all of you God sent not words, but a child to comfort, lead, forgive, and save.

***Response**

Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Welcome

Prayer for Illumination

Come to us again, as you came so long ago: not in pomp or ceremony, not in power or glory, but in simplicity, in humility, in the darkness of our world, casting new light on old things, giving us new vision. Come as one newborn, and speak to us from this old, old story. Amen.

Scripture Lesson:	Isaiah 9:2, 6-7	Unto Us a Child Is Born
Hymn 147	<i>The First Nowell</i>	verses 1-3, 6; remain seated
Scripture Lesson:	Isaiah 11:1-3a, 4a, 6-9	The Peaceable Kingdom
Anthem	<i>O Little Town of Bethlehem</i>	Jason Robosky, saxophone
Scripture Lesson:	Luke 1:26-35, 38	The Annunciation to Mary
Solo	<i>In the Bleak Midwinter</i>	Britney Yauger Limtham

Scripture Lesson:	Luke 2:1, 3-7	No Room at the Inn
Hymn 115	<i>Away in a Manger</i>	Remain seated
Scripture Lesson:	Luke 2:8-20	The Shepherds and Angels
Hymn 119	<i>Hark! The Herald Angels Sing</i>	Remain seated
Scripture Lesson:	Matthew 2:1-12	The Magi
Anthem		Alexandra Thompson Lee, cello
Scripture Lesson:	John 1:1-14	The Word Became Flesh
Solo	<i>Two French Carols: Pat-a-Pan, Il Est Né</i>	Jason Robosky, alto saxophone
Sermon	“The Things We Keep”	Rev. Dr. Brian Snyder

Prayers of the People and the Lord’s Prayer

Leader: O Christ, our Light,

People: Hear our prayer.

All: **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 debts, as we forgive our debtors;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

Offertory Invitation

Offertory Anthem	<i>O Holy Night</i>	Art Thomas, baritone
-------------------------	---------------------	----------------------

*Sharing the Light of Christ

*Silent Night	<i>Stille Nacht</i>	Cello
----------------------	---------------------	-------

Choir and Congregation:

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.

Choir Only:

Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight;
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing “Alleluia:
Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born!”

Choir and Congregation:

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.

Choir and Congregation:

Silent night, holy night! Wondrous star, lend thy light;
With the angels let us sing,
Alleluia to our King;
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born.

***Charge and Benediction**

***Closing Hymn 134**

Joy to the World!

***Postlude**

*The Hallelujah Chorus
The congregation is invited to sing along.*