

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service



Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church
December 24, 2015

Candlelight Christmas Service

Thank you for joining us on this special evening. Tonight's service is a candlelight service. At the appointed time near the end of the service, candles for each congregation member will be lit from the Christ Candle, representing the light of Christ shining in our dark world of sin. Please note the reminders to hold the lit candles upright to avoid dripping wax. Parents are encouraged to consider and decide whether their children are able to hold a lit candle on their own.

PRESERVICE

The First Noel
Played by the Handbell Choir

Away in a Manger
Instrumental Duet

ORDER OF WORSHIP

WELCOME

OPENING HYMN

From Heaven Above to Earth I Come
Christian Worship #38

Stanza 1: All
Stanza 2: Women
Stanza 3: Men
Stanza 4: Choir
Stanza 5: Women
Stanza 6: Men
Stanza 7-8: All

During the singing of this hymn, the Advent candles that have marked our waiting and preparation will be lit. Tonight the Christ Candle will also be lit in celebration of the Savior's birth.

Please stand

Minister: In the name of the Father and of the Son (†) and of the Holy Spirit.
Congregation: Amen.

RESPONSIVE READING

Based on Christian Worship #33

M: All praise to you, eternal God! Now clothed in human flesh and blood,
C: you took a manger for your throne while worlds on worlds are yours alone.

M: Once did the skies before you bow; a virgin's arms contain you now
C: while angels, who in you rejoice, now listen for your infant voice.

M: O little Child, you were our guest that weary ones in you might rest;
C: forlorn and lowly was your birth that we might rise to heav'n from earth.

M: You came to us in darkest night to make us children of the light;
C: like angels in the realms divine around your throne we, too, will shine.

M: All this your love for us has done; by this our love for you is won;
C: For this our joyful songs we raise and shout our thanks in ceaseless praise.

HYMN

Angels We Have Heard on High Christian Worship #63 st. 1 & 3

1. An - gels we have heard on high, Sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,
3. Come to Beth - le - hem and see Him whose birth the an - gels sing;

And the moun - tains in re - ply, Ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.
Come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born King.

Glo - - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o;
Glo - - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

M: Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true light. Grant that as we have known on earth the wonder of that light, we may also behold him in all glory in the life to come; through your only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Please be seated

THE WORD

FIRST LESSON

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. You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as men rejoice when dividing the plunder. For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor. Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the

Isaiah 9:2-7 (NIV)

fire. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

SECOND LESSON

Titus 2:11-14 (NIV)

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed

hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

WORSHIP CHOIR

Christmas Grace
By Ruth Elaine Schram

*To take God's Son from heaven, to turn the Lord of all
Into a helpless infant, a baby weak and small.
To give to our Creator a fully human face!
This, this is Christmas grace.*

*The feet that walked in splendor on streets of purest gold,
Now wrapped in humble swaddling, now shiver from the cold.
The hand that Mary holds hung the moon and stars in space.
This, this is Christmas grace.*

*Grace to share our frailty, understand our fragile lot;
Jesus laid aside His power to be helped, trained, and taught.
To know the sting of hunger, feel the pain of grief and loss,
God's Son allowed Himself to be born for us!*

*He traded heaven's majesty, He left His glorious throne
For wood and hay and rubble, a shell of flesh and bone.
The Lord Almighty locked in a single time and place.
This, this is Christmas grace.*

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Please stand

GOSPEL

Luke 2:1-20 (NIV)

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no

room for them in the inn. And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom

his favor rests.” When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.” So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what

had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

HYMN

Once in royal David’s City
Christian Worship #50

SERMON

Let’s Go to Bethlehem

Please stand

CONFESSION OF FAITH *(Dr. Martin Luther’s Explanation to the Second Article of the Apostles’ Creed)*

C: I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord.

He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death.

All this he did that I should be his own, and live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness, just as he has risen from death and lives and rules eternally.

This is most certainly true.

Please be seated

OFFERING

Members of Grace respond to their Savior’s love with offerings that are given joyfully, generously, regularly, and in a way that is proportionate to how the Lord has blessed them. Their cheerful gifts support the mission and ministry of our congregation. If you are a guest today, please know that we do not expect you to contribute to our congregation’s work. However, if you would like to give an offering to the Lord in response to his love to you, we are happy to receive it and put it to work in God’s kingdom.

Please fill out the Friendship Register located in the red folder at the end of the pew and pass along. Thank You!



If you prefer, use your smart phone to give online by scanning this QR code.

OFFERTORY MUSIC

O Holy Night
Soloist: Jeff Weinstein

Please stand

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH—CHRISTMAS EVE

M: Oh gracious and almighty Father, we praise you that you kept your ancient promises by sending your everlasting Son in human flesh.

C: **On this holy night, receive our thanks and devotion, our songs and prayers.**

M: You sent Jesus as a lowly child to demonstrate your concern for all, the weak and lonely, the troubled and frightened, the timid and helpless. No one is overlooked by your ever-seeking eyes. No one is excluded from your upholding arms. No one is denied the comfort and help of your outstretched hand.

C: **Bless us with a childlike faith in the divine assurance that you love and care for us always.**

M: You sent Jesus as the Savior of the world to deliver all from the curse of sin, the power of death, and the torment of hell. He took our place. He was born under the law to set us free. He became the innocent lamb of sacrifice. He came to die and rise again in order that we might live eternally. Firmly implant this good news in our hearts, and fill us with an eager desire to spread the Word concerning what we have heard tonight.

C: **May all who hear the message, in every nation under heaven, be amazed and believe what is told them about the child.**

M: You sent Jesus as the Light of the world to drive out all darkness that would rob us of the full life that you intend for us. May the “joy that will be for all people” be our joy. May the “peace on earth to all on whom his favor rests” be our peace. May the treasure that Mary pondered in her heart be our treasure.

C: **For today in the town of David, a Savior has been born to us. He is Christ, the Lord. Amen.**

LORD’S PRAYER

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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Please be seated

HYMN

Where Shepherds Lately Knelt
Christian Worship #54

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

O Little Town of Bethlehem
Piano/Organ Duet

The pastor takes the light of the Christ candle to the assistants. They pass the light on to the congregation. Please tip only the unlighted candle to prevent wax from dripping.

SPOKEN RESPONSES

M: Rejoice! The Light of the World has come. That light transforms us with the brightness of His glory.

This is the message we have heard from Him and proclaimed to you: that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

C: If we say we have fellowship with Him but still walk in darkness, we lie, and do not live according to the truth.

M: But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another;

C: And the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all our sins.

M: You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and then cover its light. Instead they set the lamp on its stand, set up high, and it lights everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before everyone, that they may see your good works and give praise to your Father in heaven.

Let us pray. O God, as You make us glad by the yearly festival of the birth of Your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ, grant that we, who joyfully receive Him as our Redeemer, may with sure confidence behold Him when He comes to be our judge; who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

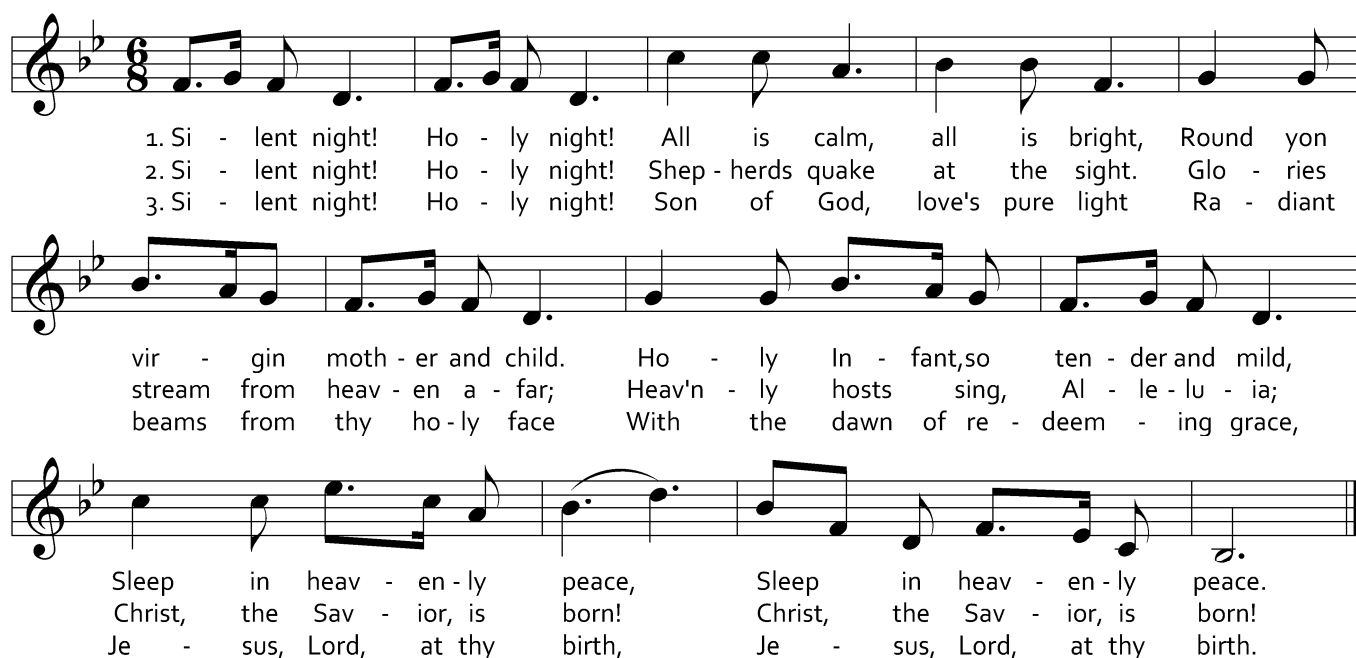
C: Amen.

M: The almighty and merciful God, the Father, the (†) Son, and the Holy Spirit bless you now and forever.

C: Amen! Glory to God in the highest! And peace to His people on earth!

CLOSING HYMN

Silent Night! Holy Night Christian Worship #60



1. Si - lent night! Ho - ly night! All is calm, all is bright, Round yon
2. Si - lent night! Ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake at the sight. Glo - ries
3. Si - lent night! Ho - ly night! Son of God, love's pure light Ra - diant

vir - gin moth - er and child. Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and mild,
stream from heav - en a - far; Heav'n - ly hosts sing, Al - le - lu - ia;
beams from thy ho - ly face With the dawn of re - deem - ing grace,

Sleep in heav - en - ly peace, Sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
Christ, the Sav - ior, is born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!
Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth.

*Following the singing of the hymn, please extinguish your candles by gently blowing them out.
Candles may be left in the baskets at either exit.*

THOSE ASSISTING IN WORSHIP THIS EVENING

Worship Leader Pastor Nathan Kassulke
Accompanist..... Tina Christianson
Handbell Choir Director & Offertory AccompanistMelissa Newbrey
Acolyte Jacob Miller
FluteLakeisha Johnson
Clarinet Missy Wiechmann
Worship Choir Director..... Teri Guenther
Piano/Organ Duet Tina Christianson & Melissa Newbrey
Ushers Dylan & Lucas Guenther, Tyler & Danny Koehler, Ferdie Kramm, Taylor Parra
Sound & Recording Tech..... Jeff Weinstein

HOLIDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Christmas Day Services Friday, December 25 10:00 AM at Grace-Benson 10:00 AM at Grace-Tucson	New Year's Eve Worship Thursday, December 31 7:00 PM at Grace-Tucson
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REGULAR SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

At Grace-Benson 451 W. Duane St 7:30 AM Worship Service	At Grace-Tucson 830 N. First Avenue 7:45 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM Worship Service
At Grace-Sahuarita 17675 S. La Canada Dr 9:45 AM Worship Service	At Grace-Vail Worshiping at Esmond Station School 9400 S. Atterbury Wash Way 10:00 AM Worship Service



Grace Lutheran Church is a member of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), a group of nearly 400,000 men, women, and children in nearly 1,300 congregations across the United States and Canada united by a common faith in Christ's saving love. We are committed to a common calling—encouraging each other in our faith and sharing God's gift of a Savior with the rest of the world.

For more information about our synod and what we believe visit: www.wels.net