

*An Evening
of
Readings & Carols*



Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Oakey 2025

Stand

Welcome & Invocation

P In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Reading

Psalm 96:1–9; antiphon: v. 2

Oh sing to the LORD a new song;

sing to the LORD, all the earth!

Sing to the LORD, bless His name;

tell of His salvation from day to day.

Declare His glory among the nations,

His marvelous works among all the peoples!

For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised;

He is to be feared above all gods.

For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols,

but the LORD made the heavens.

Splendour and majesty are before Him;

strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.

Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples,

ascribe to the LORD glory and strength!

Ascribe to the LORD the glory due His name;

bring an offering, and come into His courts!

Worship the LORD in the splendour of holiness;

tremble before Him, all the earth!

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forevermore. Amen.

Sit

Reading: We begin tonight with the singing of some Advent hymns. Why sing Advent hymns at a Christmas Carols Evening?

Advent means “coming” or “arrival.” Traditionally, the church had devoted the Advent season to a meditation on the threefold coming of the Saviour: 1. His coming

in the flesh. 2. His spiritual coming in the hearts of men, women, and children through Word and Sacrament, and 3. His final coming on the Day of Judgement. In only a few short days, we shall celebrate Jesus' coming in the flesh - His human birth. Therefore, it is fitting and proper that we sing Advent-themed hymns to prepare our hearts to rejoice over the miracle of Christmas. In that miracle lies our highest hope for time and eternity. In that miracle lies "forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation" for every one of us.

331 The Advent of Our King

1 The advent of our King
Our prayers must now employ,
And we must hymns of welcome
sing
In strains of holy joy.

2 The everlasting Son
Incarnate deigns to be,
Himself a servant's form puts on
To set His servants free.

3 O Zion's daughter, rise
To meet your lowly King,
Nor let your faithless heart
despise
The peace He comes to bring.

4 As judge, on clouds of light,
He soon will come again
And His true members all unite
With Him in heav'n to reign.

5 Before the dawning day
Let sin's dark deeds be gone,
The sinful self be put away,
The new self now put on.

6 All glory to the Son,
Who comes to set us free,
With Father, Spirit, ever one
Through all eternity.

Text: Charles Coffin, 1676-1749; tr. John
Chandler, 1806-76, alt.
Text: Public domain

345 Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding

1 Hark! A thrilling voice is
sounding!
"Christ is near," we hear it
say.
"Cast away the works of
darkness,
All you children of the day!"

2 Startled at the solemn warning,
Let the earthbound soul arise;
Christ, its sun, all sloth
dispelling,
Shines upon the morning skies.



3 See, the Lamb, so long expected,
Comes with pardon down from
heav'n.
Let us haste, with tears of
sorrow,
One and all, to be forgiv'n;

4 So, when next He comes in glory
And the world is wrapped in fear,
He will shield us with His mercy
And with words of love draw
near.

5 Honour, glory, might, dominion
To the Father and the Son
With the ever-living Spirit
While eternal ages run!

Text: Latin, c. 5th–10th cent.; tr. Edward Caswall, 1814–78, alt.
Text: Public domain

357 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

(Ladies) 1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.

(All) *Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!*

2 O come, Thou Wisdom from on high,
Who ord'rest all things mightily;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And teach us in her ways to go.

3 O come, O come, Thou Lord of might,
Who to Thy tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient times didst give the Law
In cloud and majesty and awe.

4 O come, Thou Branch of Jesse's tree,
Free them from Satan's tyranny
That trust Thy mighty pow'r to save,
And give them vict'ry o'er the grave.

- (Men) 5 O come, Thou Key of David, come,
And open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.
- 6 O come, Thou Dayspring from on high,
And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
- 7 O come, Desire of nations, bind
In one the hearts of all mankind;
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease,
And be Thyself our King of Peace.

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!*

Text: Latin, c. 12th cent.; Psalterium Cantionum Catholicarum, 1710, Köln; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-66, alt.

Text: Public domain

Reading: It is by the preaching of the Gospel that those who are held in the bondage of sin and death are set free (Is. 40:2; 61:1-2; Luke 4:18; Ps. 147:3; Ezek. 34:16; Zeph. 3:15). For Christ the Lord bears all the burden and the weight, and He suffers all the brokenness and death of sin in order to release the prisoners of Satan and grant them the peace of heaven (Is. 52:2; Matt. 12:25-29; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 10:16-20; 13:10-17).

Our next two hymns echo the hosannahs of praise rising from God's people to the Prince of Peace (Is. 9:6). They are part of both Advent and Holy Week, as the Church remembers her King coming to save His people through His death on the cross. The same joyful hosannah is also included in the *Sanctus* of each Divine Service. The Lord is honoured for the peace He grants His people on earth in the *Gloria in Excelsis*, as the entire Church joins with angels and archangels in heaven to jubilantly proclaim Christ's holy name (Luke 2:13; 19:37-40; Phil. 2:5-11; Rev. 5:11-14). Truly, this song resounds—on earth as it is in heaven—wherever the Gospel is proclaimed.

349 Hark the Glad Sound

- 1 Hark the glad sound! The
Saviour comes,
The Saviour promised long;
Let ev'ry heart prepare a throne
And ev'ry voice a song.
- 2 He comes the pris'ners to
release,
In Satan's bondage held.
The gates of brass before Him
burst,
The iron fetters yield.

- 3 He comes the broken heart to
bind,
The bleeding soul to cure,
And with the treasures of His
grace
To_ enrich the humble poor.
- 4 Our glad hosannas, Prince of
Peace,
Thy welcome shall proclaim,
And heav'n's eternal arches
ring
With Thy beloved name.

Text: Philip Doddridge, 1702–51
Text: Public domain

354 Arise, O Christian People

- 1 Arise, O Christian people!
Prepare yourselves today;
Prepare to greet the Saviour,
Who takes your sins away.
To us by grace alone
The truth and light were given;
The promised Lord from heaven
To all the world is shown.
- 2 Prepare the way before Him;
Prepare for Him the best.
Cast out what would offend Him,
This great, this heav'nly guest.
Make straight, make plain the
way:
The lowly valleys raising,
The heights of pride abasing,
His path all even lay.

- 3 The humble heart and lowly
God raises up on high;
Beneath His feet in terror
The haughty soul shall lie.
The heart sincere and right,
That heeds God's invitation
And makes true preparation—
It is the Lord's delight.
- 4 Prepare my heart, Lord Jesus;
Turn not from me aside,
And help me to receive You
This blessed Adventide.
From stall and manger low
Come now to dwell within me;
I'll sing Your praises gladly
And forth Your glory show.

Text: Valentin Thilo, 1607–62; tr.
Arthur T. Russell, 1806–74, alt.
Text: Public domain

Reading: Our following hymn, “*From Heaven Above to Earth I Come*” was written by Martin Luther for use in a family setting. The hymn begins with the angel’s words in stanzas 1-4. We listen to the “*glad tidings of great joy*” brought by the angel to the shepherds in the fields near Bethlehem (Luke 2:10). But do you notice that Luther makes nothing of the first words of the angel: “*Fear not.*” There is no fear in this hymn, only the joy that results from the good news. Stanza 5-8 is our response to the truth of the angel’s words, including an invitation to others to see the Christ Child, before returning to sing praise with the angels for the birth of our Saviour.

358 From Heaven Above to Earth I Come

1 “From heav’n above to earth I come
To bear good news to ev’ry home;
Glad tidings of great joy I bring,
Whereof I now will say and sing:

(Ladies) 2 “To you this night is born a child
Of Mary, chosen virgin mild;
This little child of lowly birth
Shall be the joy of all the earth.

3 “This is the Christ, our God Most High,
Who hears your sad and bitter cry;
He will Himself your Saviour be
From all your sins to set you free.

4 “These are the signs that you shall mark:
The swaddling clothes and manger dark.
There you will find the infant laid
By whom the heav’ns and earth were made.”

(Men) 5 How glad we’ll be to find it so!
Then with the shepherds let us go
To see what God for us has done
In sending us His own dear Son.



- 6 Come here, my friends, lift up your eyes,
 And see what in the manger lies.
 Who is this child, so young and fair?
 It is the Christ Child lying there.
- 7 My heart for very joy must leap;
 My lips no more can silence keep.
 I, too, must sing with joyful tongue
 That sweetest ancient cradlesong:
- 8 Glory to God in highest heav'n,
 Who unto us His Son has giv'n!
 While angels sing with pious mirth
 A glad new year to all the earth.

Text: Martin Luther, 1483–1546; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–78, alt.
Text: Public domain

Reading: In fulfilment of Micah 5:2, Jesus is born in the town of Bethlehem. The “everlasting light” that our next carol *O Little Town of Bethlehem* mentions brings to mind the prophecies of Isaiah that God would, through the birth of the Messiah, bring light into places of darkness (Is. 9:2-3; 60:1-2).

Our Lord came to make His home among the children of men to dwell with them and bring them salvation (Luke 1:76-77). That indwelling continues as He remains in our hearts. The Apostle Paul prays for the Christians at Ephesus that “*Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith*” (Eph. 3:17). The coming of Jesus into the world at Bethlehem began a special association of God in Christ with our world that has continued on from that initial moment in the “little town” (John 3:16).

361 O Little Town of Bethlehem

- 1 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.

- 2 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!
- 3 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.
- 4 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;
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Immanuel!

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835-93

Text: Public domain



Reading: The words and concepts of our next two carols are quite simple, mirroring biblical truths one would want children to know and express: there is Jesus at His birth, sleeping in His manger bed (Luke 2:7); I love the little Lord Jesus; Jesus is now in heaven, but He is looking down on me and is very near to me when I, too, am lying in bed sleeping (Matt. 28:20b); Jesus will stay close to me all my life, and when I die, Jesus will take me and all the dear children in His tender care to be with Him in heaven (Mark 10:14-16). Afterall, “*Christ the child was born for you!*”

365 Away in a Manger

- (Children) 1 Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.
- (Cong) 2 The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.
I love Thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.
- 3 Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
And take us to heaven to live with Thee there.

Text (sts. 1-2): Little Children’s Book, 1885, Philadelphia; (st. 3): Vineyard Songs, 1892, Louisville, alt.

Text: Public domain



393 Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

1 Infant holy,
Infant lowly,
For His bed a cattle stall;
Oxen lowing,
Little knowing
Christ the child is Lord of all.
Swiftly winging,
Angels singing,
Bells are ringing,
Tidings bringing:
Christ the child is Lord of all!
Christ the child is Lord of all!

2 Flocks were sleeping,
Shepherds keeping
Vigil till the morning new
Saw the glory,
Heard the story,
Tidings of a Gospel true.
Thus rejoicing,
Free from sorrow,
Praises voicing,
Greet the morrow:
Christ the child was born for you!
Christ the child was born for you!

Text: tr. Edith M. G. Reed, 1885–1933,
alt.; Polish
Text: Public domain

Luke 2:7-20: And 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.

⁸ And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a Baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” ¹³ And 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!”

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

368 Angels We Have Heard on High

- 1 Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply,
Echoing their joyous strains. Refrain

Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

- 2 Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heav'nly song? Refrain

- 3 Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn King. Refrain

Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Text: tr. The Crown of Jesus, 1862, Part 2, London, alt.; French
Text: Public domain

380 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

- 1 Hark! The herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!”
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With the_angelic host proclaim,
“Christ is born in Bethlehem!”

Hark! The herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King!”

- 2 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 the incarnate Deity!
 Pleased as Man with man to dwell,
 Jesus, our Immanuel!
- 3 Hail, the heav'n-born 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 man no more may die,
 Born to raise the sons of earth,
 Born to give them second birth.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707–88, alt.
 Text: Public domain

Reading: Our next two carols are favourites for many. And why not? They are based on the joyous setting of the nativity of our Lord from Luke 2. In the first stanza of *O Come, All Ye Faithful*, Jesus is called “the king of angels.” This is a reference to the Old Testament term “The Angel of the Lord,” which is interpreted as a reference to the preincarnate Son of God.

The words of *Silent Night* are solemn as we picture the infant child Jesus, born of a virgin mother, who is not only a human but also the very Son of God, Christ, the Saviour and Lord of the world.

379 O Come, All Ye Faithful

- 1 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!*



2 Highest, most holy,
Light of Light eternal,
Born of a virgin, a mortal He comes;
Son of the Father
Now in flesh appearing!

3 Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven 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!*

4 Yea, Lord, we greet Thee,
Born on Christmas morning;
Jesus, to Thee be glory giv'n!
Word of the Father
Now in flesh appearing!

Text: tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802–80, alt.; John F. Wade, c. 1711–1786
Text: Public domain

363 Silent Night, Holy Night

1 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.

2 Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight;
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heav'nly hosts sing, Alleluia!
Christ, the Saviour, is born!
Christ, the Saviour, is born!

3 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.

Text: Franz Joseph Mohr, 1792–1848; tr. John F. Young, 1820–85
Text: Public domain

Reading: The incarnation is no myth. It's history; as solid as the dirt of Judea, as real as the tears of joy on Mary's face, as tangible as the warm breath of the infant Messiah.

We celebrate Christmas not because we are nostalgic for childhood or eager for seasonal cheer (though those may be sweet side gifts). We celebrate because in Jesus, God has kept His promises. He hasn't left us in the dark, nor abandoned us to our sin. He has come to be Immanuel—God with us (Matt. 1:23).

So let's hang our lights, sing our carols, and set our tables with gladness. Let us give generously and love boldly. And in it all, let us keep our eyes fixed on the Child who is also King, the Lamb who was slain, the Word made flesh.

Stand

The Prayer

O Lord God, our heavenly Father, we thank You for the great mercy You have shown to our fallen race. Though we deserve nothing but Your anger and Your just punishment for our sins, You have shown us mercy and sent Your only Son to be our Saviour. Though we deserve to spend eternity in the darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, You have given us great joy and a reason for singing.

May the music of this Christmas season awaken us once again to the wonders of Your love. May the songs of men and angels echo in our lives so that we may prove to be faithful Christians, who have been given a new birth through the birth of Your Son. Let the glorious strains of Christmas music be ours on earth until we finally hear, as the shepherds did, the heavenly host saying, "Glory to God in the highest!"

Hear us, O Lord, as we join in the prayer our Redeemer has taught us to pray:

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Benediction

P The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favour and give you peace. **C Amen.**

387 Joy to the World

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is
come!

Let earth receive her King;
Let ev'ry heart prepare Him
room

And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n, and heav'n and
nature sing.

2 Joy to the earth, the Saviour
reigns!

Let men their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks,
hills, and plains

Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

3 No more let sins and sorrows
grow

Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings
flow

Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as the curse is found.

4 He rules the world with truth and
grace

And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders of His
love.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748
Text: Public domain

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