



A Children's Christmas Service

December 15, 2024
Abiding Word Evangelical Lutheran Church
8470 Landen Drive Maineville, Ohio

Opening (Processional) Hymn:

353 Joy to the World



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -
2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let men their
3 No more let sins, and sor - rows grow nor thorns in -
4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the



ceive her King; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him
songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings
na - tions prove the glo - ries of his right - eous -



room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture
plains re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing
flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is
ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his



sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
found, far as, far as the curse is found.
love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748
Tune: George Frideric Handel, 1685-1759, adapt.
Text and tune: Public domain

Stand

Leader: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Congregation and children: Amen.

Opening Dialogue (*selected verses from Psalm 65*):

Leader: Praise awaits you, our God, in Zion;

Congregation: to you our vows will be fulfilled.

Leader: You who answer prayer,

Congregation: to you all people will come.

Leader: When we were overwhelmed by sins,

Congregation: you forgave our transgressions.

Leader: Blessed are those you choose and bring near to live in your courts!

Congregation: We are filled with the good things of your house, of your holy temple.

Leader: The whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders;

Congregation: where morning dawns, where evening fades, you call forth songs of joy.

Leader: O Jesus Christ, your manger is our paradise at which we now recline.

There, O Lord, we find the Word made flesh for us; there, O Lord, your grace brightly shines. Move us by your Spirit to depend on you alone; enable us to be of good cheer; keep us steadfast in the midst of sorrow; fix our hearts on you, our greatest treasure. For in you and through faith in you we possess a lasting crown and look forward to honor beyond measure in the eternal glories of heaven. We ask these things in your name, our Savior and Lord (*based on "O Jesus Christ, Your Manger Is"*).

Congregation: Amen.

Be seated

1. THE DAWN OF TIME

Narration: Cate

“In the beginning . . .” These familiar words from Genesis launch the account of God creating the universe. The eternal God, who knows no beginning and no end, created time.

Recitation: Eleanor - Podium

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day (Genesis 1:1,3-5).

Narration: Cate

From there we hear about the creation of water and sky, land and vegetation, stars and planets, and all animals in the sky and in the waters and on the land. And then God created humans.

Recitation: Eleanor - Podium

Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them (Genesis 1:26-27).

Narration: Cate

After creating the first man and woman, God established marriage and gave humans their purpose. He blessed these people, named Adam and Eve, and said to them:

Recitation: Eleanor - Podium

“Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.” Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so (Genesis 1:28-30).

Narration: Cate

God also made a way for humans to show their love for him—he gave them a command that they could follow.

Recitation: Eleanor - Podium

The Lord God commanded . . . “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die” (Genesis 2:16-17).

Narration: Cate

The record of the dawning of time concludes with these joy-filled observations:

Recitation: Eleanor - Podium

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good (Genesis 1:31).

Congregation:

Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame (Genesis 2:25).

Hymn:

504 We Sing the Almighty Power of God



1 We sing th'al - might - y pow'r of God that
2 We sing the good - ness of the Lord that
3 There's not a plant or flow'r be - low but



made the moun - tains rise, that spread the flow - ing
filled the earth with food; he formed the crea - tures
makes your glo - ries known, and clouds a - rise and



seas a - broad and built the loft - y skies.
with his Word and then pro - nounced them good.
tem - pests blow by or - der from your throne;



We sing the wis - dom that or - dained the
Lord, how your won - ders are dis - played wher -
while all that bor - rows life from you is



sun to rule the day; the moon shines full at
e'er we turn our eyes, if we sur - vey the
ev - er in your care, and ev - 'ry - where that



his com - mand, and all the stars o - bey.
ground we tread or gaze up - on the skies.
we can be, you, God, are pres - ent there.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1749, alt.
Tune: English, adap. and harm. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1872-1958, alt.
Text and tune: Public domain

2. THE DAWN OF HOPE

Narration: Emma

It was not long before the perfection and joy in all of God's creation were shattered, and God's perfect relationship with humans was severed. It began in heaven. In the last book of the Bible, we are told that shortly after God created all that there is, a rebellion took place, led by an angel of light who became an agent of darkness.

Recitation: Cathrine

War broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him (Revelation 12:7-9).

Narration: Emma

Back in the first book of the Bible, we hear what this devil, Satan, did next. He seeded doubts and spread lies. He did only what his fallen nature could do: deceive, harm, and relentlessly pursue the spiritual death of God's beloved children.

Recitation: Amelia

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'" "You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:1-5).

Narration: Emma

And then it happened. Love for following God's command not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was replaced by rebellion against his command. Eve ate. Adam accepted her offer of the fruit and also ate. Sin and all its evil effects had entered the world. Adam and Eve realized they were naked and they felt shame. They heard God walking in the garden and hid in fear. They avoided any blame for their wrongdoing at all cost.

Hymn:

574 The Tree of Life



1 The tree of life with ev - 'ry good in E - den's
2 The still - ness of that sa - cred grove was bro - ken

ho - ly or - chard stood, and of its fruit so pure and
as the ser - pent strove with tempt - ing voice Eve to be -

sweet God let the man and wom - an eat. Yet in this
guile and Ad - am too by sin de - file. O day of

gar - den al - so grew an - oth - er tree, of
sad - ness when the breath of fear and dark - ness,

which they knew; its love - ly limbs with fruit a -
doubt and death, its aw - ful poi - son first dis -

dorned a - gainst whose eat - ing God had warned.
played with - in the world so new - ly made.

Narration: Cate

Adam and Eve's rebellion had immediate and severe consequences:

All Women and Girls:

To [Eve, God] said "I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you" (Genesis 3:16).

All Men and Boys:

To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,' Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return" (Genesis 3:17-19).

Narration: Cate

A great darkness had come over and into creation—not in physical light but in life now and forever. Pain, curses, adversities, tiring and aggravated daily effort, broken relationships, and worst of all—physical death and eternal separation from God for eternity. The prophet Isaiah sums up this darkness that by nature is at the center of every human soul and into which all are born:

Recitation: Cathrine

Distressed and hungry, they will roam through the land; when they are famished, they will become enraged and, looking upward, will curse their king and their God. Then they will look toward the earth and see only distress and darkness and fearful gloom, and they will be thrust into utter darkness (Isaiah 8:21-22).

Narration: Cate

Can there be any hope after this great and eternal fall? After meriting nothing but distress, death, and eternal darkness? Yes! Returning to Genesis, we immediately read this promise from God, graciously given to Adam and Eve after their fateful choice:

Recitation: Jude

The Lord God said to the serpent, . . . “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel” (Genesis 3:14-15).

Narration: Cate

There it is . . . the dawn of hope! The first promise of a Savior who would crush the devil and redeem humanity from his evil grasp. The prophet Isaiah repeats this promise with greater detail:

Congregation:

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned (Isaiah 9:2).

Recitation: Titus

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 greatness 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 (Isaiah 9:6-7).

All:

The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this (Isaiah 9:7).

Hymn:

360 Behold, a Branch Is Growing



1 Be - hold, a branch is grow - ing of love - liest form and
2 I - sa - iah had fore - told it in words of prom - ise
3 This flow'r, whose fra - grance ten - der with sweet - ness fills the
4 O Sav - ior, child of Mar - y, who felt our hu - man



grace! As proph - ets sang, fore - know - ing, it springs from Jes - se's
sure, and Mar - y's arms en - fold it, a vir - gin meek and
air, dis - pels with glo - rious splen - dor the dark - ness ev - 'ry -
woes, O Sav - ior, King of glo - ry, who con - quered all our



race and now be - gins to flow'r in midst of
pure. Through God's e - ter - nal will this child to
where. True man, and yet true God, from sin and
foes, bring us at last, we pray, to the bright



cold - est win - ter, at deep - est mid - night hour.
her is giv - en at mid - night calm and still.
death he saves us and light - ens ev - 'ry load.
courts of heav - en and to the end - less day.

Text: German, 16th cent.; (sts. 1-3) tr. Harriet R. K. Spaeth, 1845-1921; (st. 4) John C. Mattes, 1876-1948, alt.
Tune: Alte Catholische Geistliche Kirchengeseng, Köln, 1599
Text and tune: Public domain

3. THE DAWN OF JOY

Narration: Emma

A promise made is only good if it is kept. God repeated the promise of a Savior for hundreds of years, offering more details about the circumstances of the Savior's appearing and keeping it central in the minds and hearts of his people as they endured the many ups and downs of their sin-filled existence. But would it ever happen? Would the Savior ever appear? Generation after generation died still waiting. Would God ever fulfill that promise? Would he keep it? The gospel writers report the details. When the time was right, God sent his messenger to a young virgin named Mary.

Recitation: Joe

God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

Recitation: Titus

The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end" (Luke 1:26-28,31-33).

Recitation: Amelia

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" (Luke 1:34).

Recitation: Titus

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35).

Narration: Emma

A pregnant virgin? Yes, just as Isaiah foretold. But that would cause quite a stir in the community—an unmarried woman found to be pregnant! Matthew records the commotion and God’s faithfulness to his salvation promise and plan.

All Women and Girls:

Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly (Matthew 1:18-19).

All Men and Boys:

But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him (Matthew 1:20-21,24).

Narration: Emma

Trusting in God’s promises, Mary and Joseph moved forward to the blessed day of the Savior’s birth. Luke records the final details of that first Christmas.

All Men and Boys:

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 their own town to register (Luke 2:1-3).

Recitation: Amelia

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 (Luke 2:4-5).

All Women and Girls:

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 guest room available for them (Luke 2:6-7).

Hymn:

363 Now Sing We, Now Rejoice



1 Now sing we, now re - joice, now raise to heav'n our voice;
2 Come from on high to me; I can - not rise to thee.
3 Now through his Son doth shine the Fa - ther's grace di - vine.
4 Oh, where shall joy be found? Where but on heav'n - ly ground,



he from whom joy stream - eth poor in a man - ger lies;
Cheer my wea - ried spir - it, O pure and ho - ly Child;
Death was reign - ing o'er us through sin and van - i - ty
where the an - gels sing - ing with all his saints u - nite,



not so bright - ly beam - eth the sun in yon - der skies.
thro' thy grace and mer - it, blest Je - sus, Lord most mild,
till he o - pened for us a bright e - ter - ni - ty.
sweet - est prais - es bring - ing in heav'n - ly joy and light.



Thou my Sav - ior art! Thou my Sav - ior art!
draw me un - to thee! Draw me un - to thee!
May we praise him there! May we praise him there!
Oh, that we were there! Oh, that we were there!

Narration: Eleanor

When Jesus—the world’s long-promised and only Savior—was born, God ensured that the news began spreading immediately. Luke continues his report:

Recitation: Joe

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.

Recitation: Jude

But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger” (Luke 2:8-12).

Narration: Eleanor

“To you.” Those words know no bounds of time or culture, of status or reputation, of sin or shame or guilt. This event wasn’t just for the shepherds—it’s for all of us too! Jesus was born to be your Savior and mine . . . the dawn of joy for all the world! Such joyous news calls for glorious praise. And the shepherds saw and heard just that.

Recitation: Matt

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

Recitation: Joe, Jude, Matt

“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests” (Luke 2:13-14).

Hymn by children: “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” (CW 350) sts. 1,2

*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 th’angelic host proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!” (Refrain)*

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

*2 Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come, offspring of a virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, hail th’_incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with man to dwell, Jesus, our Immanuel! (Refrain)*

4. THE DAWN OF “CHRISTIANS”

Narration: Amelia

The good news of the long-awaited birth of the Savior had a remarkable effect on these shepherds. Luke tells us:

Recitation: Matt

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another,

All:

“Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about” (Luke 2:15).

Recitation: Joe

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger (Luke 2:16).

Hymn:

O Come, All Ye Faithful



1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant! O
3 Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,



come ye, O come_ ye to Beth - le - hem!
sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heav'n a - bove!



Come and be - hold him, born the King of an - gels:
Glo - ry to God, all glo - ry in the high - est:



Refrain

O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him,



O come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord!

Text: tr. Frederick Oakley, 1802-1880, alt.; John F. Wade, c. 1711-1786
Tune: John F. Wade, c. 1711-1786, alt.
Text and tune: Public domain

Narration: Cate

And what did the shepherds do after finding Jesus in the manger? Luke tells us that “they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child” and that they returned to their fields and flocks “glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told” (Luke 2:17-18). The birth of Jesus was a turning point in history, from waiting on the fulfillment of a promise to sharing the news of a promise fulfilled. They wouldn’t be called Christians until some decades later, but the birth of Jesus was the dawning of a new name for the people of God, followers of the God-man, Jesus. Luke tells us in his other book in the Bible, Acts:

Recitation: Cathrine - Podium

For a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

Narration: Cate

Like the shepherds that first Christmas night, God’s believers share throughout the world the good news of sins forgiven in Jesus. And the Lord blesses that effort. Luke shares this report about those first-called Christians:

Recitation: Cathrine - Podium

Those who had been scattered by persecution . . . traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, spreading the word only among Jews. Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. The Lord’s hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

Narration: Cate

The good news that began at Christmas culminated in Good Friday and Easter Sunday. Jesus’ death in our place redeemed us from all our sin. His resurrection defeated death forever. This salvation is ours. This free gift is ours to share with everyone.

All:

Joy has dawned for you, for me, for all!

Hymn:

352 Joy Has Dawned



1 Joy has dawned up - on the world, prom - ised from cre - a - tion—
2 Sounds of won - der fill the sky with the songs of an - gels
3 Shep - herds bow be - fore the Lamb, gaz - ing at the glo - ry.
4 Son of Ad - am, Son of heav'n, giv - en as a ran - som;



God's sal - va - tion now un - furled, hope for ev - 'ry na - tion.
as the might - y Prince of life shel - ters in a sta - ble.
Gifts of men from dis - tant lands proph - e - sy the sto - ry:
rec - on - cil - ing God and man, Christ, our might - y cham - pion!



Not with fan - fares from a - bove, not with scenes of glo - ry,
Hands that set each star in place, shaped the earth in dark - ness,
gold— a king is born to - day; in - cense—God is with us;
What a Sav - ior! What a friend! What a glo - rious mys - t'ry!



but a hum - ble gift of love— Je - sus born of Mar - y.
cling now to a moth - er's breast, _ vul - n'ra - ble and help - less.
myrrh— his death will make a way, and by his blood he'll win us.
Once a babe in Beth - le - hem, _ now the Lord of his - t'ry.

Text: Stuart Townend, b. 1963; Keith Getty, b. 1974
Tune: Stuart Townend, b. 1963; Keith Getty, b. 1974
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Stand

Prayer and Blessing

Be seated

Closing Hymn: “On Christmas Night All Christians Sing” (CW 338)

Children Verse 1, Congregation Verses 2-3

***1 On Christmas night all Christians sing
to hear the news the angels bring,
on Christmas night all Christians sing
to hear the news the angels bring,
news of great joy, news of great mirth,
news of our merciful King’s birth.***



2 When sin de - parts be - fore his grace, then life and health come
3 All out of dark - ness we have light, which made the an - gels



in its place, when sin de - parts be - fore his grace, then
sing this night, all out of dark - ness we have light, which



life and health come in its place; an - gels and saints with
made the an - gels sing this night: “Glo - ry to God and



joy may sing, all for to see the new - born King.
peace to men now and for - ev - er - more. A - men.”

Text: English, abr.
Tune: English
Text and tune: Public domain