

Here in the Dark

Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church – WELS
Candlelight Worship – December 24, 2008

Opening Hymn: “*O Little Town of Bethlehem*”

Hymn 65

Stand

Christmas Responses

M: The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us.

C: Oh, come, let us worship him.

M: The people living in darkness have seen a great light.

C: The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

M: On those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.

C: We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

M: For to us a child is born, to us a son is given.

C: In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

M: Christ is born! Salvation has appeared!

C: Glory to God in the highest! Alleluia!

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 his 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. Amen.

C: (spoken) Amen.

Be seated

Solo

O Holy Night Bonnie Evenson

First Lesson

Isaiah 9:2-7

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 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.

Psalm of the Day:

Psalm 96 (p. 102)

Second Lesson

Titus 2:11-14

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.

Verse of the Day

M: Alleluia. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. Alleluia!

C: (sung) **Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!**

Stand

Gospel:

Luke 2:1-20

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.

C: (sung) **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 Christchild lying there.**

**Welcome to earth, O noble Guest,
Through whom the sinful world is blest!
You came to share my misery,
That you might share your joy with me.**

Be seated

Hymn: "What Child is This"

Hymn 67

Sermon:

Look at What Has Appeared

Titus 2:11-14

Saving grace for all
Grace that changes believers

Hymn: "Away in a Manger"

Hymn 68

Offering

Musical Offering

Stand

Prayer

Lord's Prayer

Be seated

Distribution of the Candles

The pastor lights a candle from the altar candles; the ushers light their candles from the pastor's candle. The ushers then light the candle of the person nearest to the aisle.

Lighted candles should not be tipped to light another. Tip the unlighted candle to light it from a lighted candle. This will avoid dripping wax on yourself, the pew, or the floor.

Hymn:

“Here in the Dark”

- 1. Into darkness, into shadows, into gloom so dark and deep,
Came the Son of God the Father; as a babe we watch him sleep.
Baby Jesus, Son of heaven, shine your love so true!
Here in the dark the only light is you.**
- 2. Into darkness, into shadows, to the world the Savior came.
Hearts were waiting on the promise life would never be the same.
Light would shine in hearts so blinded; love would come to be.
Here in the dark the Baby Jesus see.**
- 3. Brightened darkness, fleeing shadows greet the dawning of the day!
Watch in wonder, watch in silence; Jesus came to be the way.
Hear the promise of the ages; go to see the stall!
Here in the dark he came to save us all.**

M: Arise, shine, for your light has come and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

C: See darkness covers the earth, and thick darkness is over the peoples.

M: But the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you.

C: Nations will come to the light, and kings to the brightness of the dawn.

M: Go in peace and share the good news – A Savior is born. He is Christ the Lord.

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn: “Silent Night”

Hymn 60

- 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 Savior, is born!
Christ, the Savior, 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.**

The candles are extinguished. Silence for meditation.

Postlude