



# Christmas Eve

CANDLELIGHT COMMUNION

## Christmas Eve

### **John 1:1-14 (NRSV)**

In the beginning was the one  
who is called the Word.  
The Word was with God  
and was truly God.  
From the very beginning  
the Word was with God.

And with this Word,  
God created all things.  
Nothing was made  
without the Word.  
Everything that was created  
received its life from him,  
and his life gave light  
to everyone.  
The light keeps shining  
in the dark,  
and darkness has never  
put it out.  
God sent a man named John,  
who came to tell  
about the light  
and to lead all people  
to have faith.

John wasn't that light.  
He came only to tell  
about the light.

The true light that shines  
on everyone  
was coming into the world.  
The Word was in the world,  
but no one knew him,  
though God had made the world  
with his Word.  
He came into his own world,  
but his own nation  
did not welcome him.  
Yet some people accepted him  
and put their faith in him.  
So he gave them the right  
to be the children of God.  
They were not God's children  
by nature  
or because  
of any human desires.  
God himself was the one  
who made them his children.

The Word became  
a human being  
and lived here with us.  
We saw his true glory,  
the glory of the only Son  
of the Father.  
From him all the kindness  
and all the truth of God  
have come down to us.

**Introit** "There Was a Child in Galilee" Maryn and Arlene

**Call to Worship**

Joy comes to the world tonight!

**God sets aside glory**

**to become as hopeful and helpless as we.**

God comes to the world!

**In Jesus who embraces the poor as family,  
who brings justice for those who are oppressed.**

Peace comes to the world!

**In the Spirit who reconciles the divided,  
who builds bridges and tears down walls.**

**Carol** "Silent Night"

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.**

Silent night! Holy night!

Shepherds quake at the sight:  
glories stream from heaven afar,  
heavenly hosts sing Hallelujah,  
**Christ the Saviour is born,  
Christ the Saviour is born.**

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.**

**Evening Prayer**

Here, the faithful come that we may adore you.

**Here, we come to find you and your family.**

Here, we look with wide-eyed wonder.

**Here, we listen for comforting words.**

Here, we join with those who watch.

**Here, we join the animals gazing at new life.**

Here, we welcome all who have burdens in this season.

**Here, we sing our carols of joy and grace.**

Here, we gather on this holy night, even as we pray as we are taught:

**The Lord's Prayer**

**Carol**    What Child is This?

What child is this, who laid to rest,  
    on Mary's lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet  
    while shepherds watch are keeping?

**Refrain -**

*This, this is Christ the King,  
    whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
haste, haste to bring him laud,  
    the babe, the son of Mary!*

Why lies he in such mean estate  
    where ox and ass are feeding?  
Good Christians, fear; for sinners here  
    the silent Word is pleading.

**Refrain -**

*This, this is Christ the King,  
    whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
haste, haste to bring him laud,  
    the babe, the son of Mary!*

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh,  
    come, one and all, to own him.  
The King of kings salvation brings;  
    let loving hearts enthrone him.

**Refrain -**

*This, this is Christ the King,  
    whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
haste, haste to bring him laud,  
    the babe, the son of Mary!*

**Call to Reconciliation**

Be near us tonight. Be near us, as we bring our lives, words, choices to you. Be near us, and touch us with mercy and new life, even as we rejoice in the Child whose birth we celebrate in these silent moments.

## **Unison Prayer for Forgiveness**

**We sing of the one in a manger and consider the cries of little ones who are forgotten. We imagine the holy family like us and remember that they are the relatives of the poor.**

**Come to us to give us new life and hope. May we join the angels in singing songs of joy, as we bring healing to the broken. May we see each person as precious in Your eyes, as the One whose lowly birth we celebrate this night.**

## **Assurance of Pardon**

Here in the silence of these moments, in the light of candles as well as grace, in the warmth of hope as well as those around us, we are offered good news. This is the night God came to us, to remind us that we are never alone, we are loved and welcomed and affirmed by our God.

**Let us adore the one whose love came; whose grace and justice walked among us; whose peace and hope are the gifts.**

**Amen.**

## **Carol     The First Noel**

The first Nowell the angel did say  
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay,  
in fields where they lay a-keeping their sheep  
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

### ***Refrain -***

***Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,  
born is the King of Israel.***

They looked up and saw a star,  
shining in the east beyond them far;  
and to the earth it gave great light,  
and so it continued both day and night.

### ***Refrain -***

***Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,  
born is the King of Israel.***

And by the light of that same star  
three wise men came from country far;  
to seek for a king was their intent,  
and to follow the star wherever it went.

***Refrain -***

***Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,  
born is the King of Israel.***

This star drew nigh to the northwest,  
o'er Bethlehem it took its rest,  
and there it did both stop and stay  
right over the place where Jesus lay.

***Refrain -***

***Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,  
born is the King of Israel.***

Then entered in those wise men three  
full reverently upon their knee,  
and offered there in his presence,  
their gold and myrrh and frankincense.

***Refrain -***

***Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,  
born is the King of Israel.***

Then let us all with one accord  
sing praises to our heavenly Lord,  
that hath made heaven and earth of nought,  
and with his blood our life hath bought.

***Refrain -***

***Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,  
born is the King of Israel.***

**Great Prayer of Thanksgiving**

May the God of silent nights be with you.

**May the God of holy nights be with you.**

Come, let us adore our God as we lift our hearts.

**We pray that God will fill them with joy and wonder.**

Let us echo the songs we have heard from angels on high.

**We will sing glad songs of joy and compassion.**

In the bleak midwinter of chaos,  
where empty winds moaned  
creation tumbled forth:

birds that fly south  
and bears which hibernate;  
And snow that drifts;  
stars which guided wise ones to a stable  
and point sailors safely home.  
All that was good and beautiful was shaped  
for those created in your image,  
but we had no room for your grace.  
Through Hannah and Zechariah,  
with the songs of Isaiah and Mary,  
you told of what you were going to do  
but we preferred the gifts of temptation.  
So, you became one of us, taking on  
our birth, our life, our death.

As we join in the joy that has come to the world,  
as we look for your light in the shadows of this night,  
we sing our praises to you:

**We join the angelic chorus  
and all creation in praising you, God of silent nights.  
Glory in the highest!**

**Blessed is the One born this night.  
Glory in the highest!**

It was in David's hometown  
that holiness became humility,  
your power turned into weakness,  
your glory transformed in humanity  
as a baby drew its first breath.  
Placed in a feeding trough,  
Jesus came to feed us.  
With animals as his midwives,  
Jesus came to offer  
new hope and wonder;  
born into poverty,  
Jesus came to share  
the abundance of God's love;  
dying our death,  
Jesus came to set death's power aside,  
to break death's cold grip  
with the warmth of the resurrection.

As we celebrate his birth on this night,  
as we seek to follow him every day,  
we proclaim that mystery known as faith:

**Born, Jesus knew the hunger of babies.**  
**Living, Jesus knew the hurt of rejection.**  
**Dying, Jesus knew the moment of separation from life.**  
**Raised, Jesus knew God's love.**  
**Returning, Jesus will journey with us into new life.**

And though the days are hastening on,  
you continue to pour your Spirit  
on the holy meal of this night  
and on all your children gathered in this moment.

Here, the broken bread gives us the strength  
to share hope with those in despair,  
to challenge the injustice all around us,  
to rebuild neighborhoods others rush past.

Here, the cup is poured into our souls so we may  
offer a welcome to all who are forgotten,  
embrace those who grieve amidst so much joy,  
reconcile with those from whom we are estranged.

And when that birth of new life comes,  
as all time and history comes to an end,  
we will join our sisters and brothers  
of every time, and of every place,  
in praising you forever and ever,  
God in Community, Holy in One. Amen.

### **Sending**

Let us go to share God's joy with all the world.

**We will bring wonder and grace to those around us.**

Let us go to be the hope of Jesus for others.

**We will seek justice where there is none.**

Let us go to offer the Spirit's peace.

**We will welcome all who are rejected by the world.**

**Postlude** "Nothing But A Child" Maryn and Arlene