

An Ancient-Future Faith Community
A Service of Lessons and Carols
Christmas Eve (December 24, 2017)

CALL TO WORSHIP

Wexford Carol

Traditional carol, 12th century English.

WELCOME

A word about this morning's service

INVOCATION

Good and gracious God,

**On this holy Eve you gave us your Son,
the Lord of the universe, wrapped in swaddling clothes,
the Savior of all, lying in a manger.**

On this holy Eve

draw us into the mystery of your love.
Join our voices with the heavenly host,
that we may sing your glory on high.

**Give us a place among the shepherds,
that we may find the One for whom we have waited,
Jesus Christ, your Word made flesh,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit
in the splendor of eternal light.
God forever and ever. Amen.**

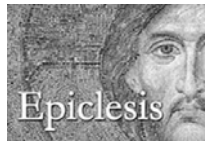
LIGHTING OF THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE: PEACE

Prepare the way of the Lord.

We light this candle as a symbol of peace.

**May the visitation of your Holy Spirit, O God, purify us
that we may be ready for the coming of Jesus,
our hope and joy.
O come, O come, Emmanuel!**

Prepare, then, the way of the Lord.



FIRST LESSON Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

Christ's birth and kingdom are foretold by the prophet Isaiah.

Why did Christ say, "My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you"? Because the peace which comes from a human being is easily destroyed and subject to many changes. But Christ's peace is strong, unshaken, firm, fixed, steadfast, immune to death, and unending.

– Chrysostom

Carol: *Good Christians All, Rejoice*

SECOND LESSON Micah 5:2-5a

The prophet Micah foretells the glory of Bethlehem.

God has one only son, one naturally begotten, who did not begin to be when he was born in Bethlehem but is before all ages.... Therefore do not fix your attention on him as coming from Bethlehem simply, but worship him as begotten eternally of the father..

– Cyril of Jerusalem

Carol: *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

THIRD LESSON Matthew 1:18-22

Saint Matthew tells of the birth of Jesus

Notice here, too, the order of a mystery: The devil first spoke to Eve the virgin of long ago, and then to a man, that he might administer to them the word of death; in the latter case a holy angel first spoke to Mary, and then to Joseph, that he might reveal to them the word of life...

– Chromatius

Song: *I Wonder As I Wander*

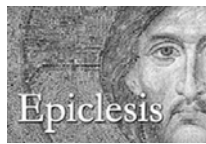
FOURTH LESSON Luke 2:8-20

The shepherds journey to the manger to worship.

See how divine care adds faith. An angel tells Mary, an angel tells Joseph, an angel tells the shepherds. It does not suffice that a messenger is sent once. For every word stands with two or three witnesses.

– Ambrose

Carol: *The First Noel*



FIFTH LESSON Titus 3:4-7

Saint Paul declares the work and purpose of Christ the Savior.

Will we not be struck with amazement at our Savior's mighty power and love for mankind, who patiently endured to suffer our infirmities with us and condescended to our weaknesses?... The infinite God, remaining changeless, assumed flesh and fought with death, freeing us from suffering by his own suffering!

– Basil the Great

Carol: *God Rest Ye, Merry Gentlemen*

SIXTH LESSON John 1:1-14

Saint John unfolds the great mystery of the incarnation

The Son, being God, is nothing else than God. For when I hear the words, "and the Word was God," they do not merely tell me that the Son was called God; they reveal to my understanding that he is God.

– Hilary of Poitiers

A TIME OF OFFERING

Carol: *What Child Is This?*

THE LORD'S TABLE

Remembering the Body of Christ

Carol: *O Come, All Ye Faithful*

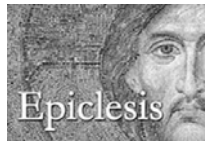
SEVENTH LESSON Psalm 96

Heaven and earth rejoice!

When the whole earth sings a new song, it is the house of God. It is built by singing, its foundations are believing, it is erected by hoping, it is completed by loving. So it is being built now, but it is dedicated at the end of the world. Let the living stones, then, come flocking together to the new song, come flocking altogether and be fitted together into the fabric of God's temple. Let them recognize their Savior and perceive him as their occupant.

– Augustine

Carol: *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*



SENDING FORTH

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
We light this candle because Jesus, the true Light of the world,
was born on this day,
and He gives light to all things.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!

Jesus Christ is the Light of the world –
A light no darkness can extinguish.

Prayer

Song: *Christ, Be Our Light*

Benediction:

Go in peace, go in joy
to serve the Lord in all that you do.

We are sent in the name of Christ, the Light of the world.

The peace of God which passes all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God
and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord;
And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son,
and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always.

Amen. Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE: *Joy to the World*

Epiclesis: An Ancient-Future Faith Community
www.Epiclesis.org | Info line: (916)572-9113
Sunday mornings at The Carmichael Chapel, 4600 Winding Way
(Corner of Winding Way and Pasadena), Sacramento, CA 95841.
Informal gathering: 10:00 AM; Worship at 10:30 AM.
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