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*Please stand if comfortably able.
Respond with words in bold print.

PLEASE SILENCE ALL CELL PHONES

WELCOME:

THE BELL CALLS US TO WORSHIP:

PRELUDE: “Carol Prelude” Gail Leven Pollock
Piano - Nancy/ Organ - Sharon

THE ADVENT CANDLE OF LOVE:

***RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP:**

One: The splendor of God has been revealed among us.
A child has come to change all our ways.

MANY: We who have walked in the shadows have seen the light. We have given up the unnecessary burdens we carry.

One: Authority has been assigned to the Wonderful Counselor. Peace and Justice will prevail through eternity.

MANY: We will leave judgment to God, whose equity we trust. We are free to rejoice in the beauty God reveals.

One: Worship the One who breaks yokes and frees us.
Great s our God, and greatly to be praised.

ALL: Let the heavens be glad, and let earth rejoice. We are ready to declare God's marvelous works.

***INVOCATION:**

You keep surprising us, gracious God. Just when we get settled into our routines, you offer us a transforming birth. While we focus on greatness, you appear in humble circumstances among ordinary people, in out-of-the-way places. Amid the noise of our busyness, the angel song suddenly penetrates our dulled awareness, and we must listen again. O God, keep us from fear or cynicism, lest we miss this opportunity to hear good news, that is meant for us, and for all this hostile unbelieving world in which we live. Amen.

***HYMN: "O Come All Ye Faithful"**

**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!**

**O sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation!
Sing all ye citizens of heaven above!
Now to our God be Glory in the highest!
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,**

O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

**Amen, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning,
O Jesus, forever be thy Name adored;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing!
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!**

***CALL TO CONFESSION:**

The coming of Christmas challenges all our pretensions. We who have sought to organize and manage the world through our finite understandings are confronted with the wonder of Bethlehem. A baby carries God's revelation, and we are convicted of our neglect. Let us seek to reclaim God's mercy revelation.

***UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION:**

Awesome God, we confess our fear to let down our guard, to feel the wonder, to believe the good news. Why would you choose to place Trusting Innocence I the hands of sinners like us? We are afraid to bow down, lest we be accused of sentimental weakness. We hesitate to embrace the joy, let it turn to disappointment in the cruel realities of this world. Forgive us, God and awaken the child within us, we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.

***ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS:**

The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all training us for lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly. Jesus Christ has come to us as God's gift. In Christ, we are redeemed from iniquity and purified to live as God's own people. Glorify and praise God through your zeal for good deeds. Accept and live within the peace God provides.

***GLORIA: #759**

**Glory to the Creator, the Christ, the Holy Spirit,
Three-in-One; As it was in the beginning, is now,
and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.**

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Isaiah 9:2-7

²The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.

On those living in a pitch-dark land, light has dawned.

³You have made the nation great; you have increased its joy. They rejoiced before you as with joy at the harvest, as those who divide plunder rejoice.

⁴As on the day of Midian, you've shattered the yoke that burdened them, the staff on their shoulders, and the rod of their oppressor.

⁵Because every boot of the thundering warriors, and every garment rolled in blood will be burned, fuel for the fire.

⁶A child is born to us, a son is given to us, and authority will be on his shoulders.

He will be named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷There will be vast authority and endless peace for David's throne and for his kingdom, establishing and sustaining it with justice and righteousness now and forever. The zeal of the LORD of heavenly forces will do this.

***GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 2:1-20**

Jesus' birth

2 In those days Caesar Augustus declared that everyone throughout the empire should be enrolled in the tax lists. ²This first enrollment occurred when Quirinius governed Syria. ³Everyone went to their own cities to be enrolled. ⁴Since Joseph belonged to David's house and family line, he went up from the city of Nazareth in Galilee to David's city, called Bethlehem, in Judea. ⁵He went to be enrolled together with Mary, who was promised to him in marriage and who was pregnant. ⁶While they were there, the time came for Mary to have her baby. ⁷She gave birth to her firstborn child, a son, wrapped him snugly, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the guestroom.

Announcement to shepherds

⁸ Nearby shepherds were living in the fields, guarding their sheep at night. ⁹ The Lord's angel stood before them, the Lord's glory shone around them, and they were terrified.

¹⁰ The angel said, "Don't be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people. ¹¹ Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord. ¹² This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger." ¹³ Suddenly a great assembly of the heavenly forces was with the angel praising God. They said, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors."

¹⁵ When the angels returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go right now to Bethlehem and see what's happened. Let's confirm what the Lord has revealed to us." ¹⁶ They went quickly and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they saw this, they reported what they had been told about this child. ¹⁸ Everyone who heard it was amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ Mary committed these things to memory and considered them carefully. ²⁰ The shepherds returned home, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. Everything happened just as they had been told.

These are the ancient words revealed to us anew.
Thanks be to God.

***HYMN: "Angels We Have Heard On High"**

**Angels we have heard on high
sweetly singing o'er the plains
and the mountains in reply
echo back their joyous strains.
Glo – ri-a in excelsis Deo!
Glo - ri -a in excelsis Deo!**

**Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
Say, what may the tidings be
Which inspire your heavenly song?
Glo – ri-a in excelsis Deo!
Glo - ri -a in excelsis Deo!**

**Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.
Glo – ri-a in excelsis Deo!
Glo - ri -a in excelsis Deo!**

CHRISTMAS CANTATA by Joseph Martin

Narrations by Pamela Martin

**“The Winter Rose”
“Every Valley”
“Carol of Remembrance”
“In the Judean Hills” (narration only)
“The Winter Rose”
“Lo, How a Rose”**

**Congregation is invited to sing
the first verse with the choir.**

**Lo, how a rose e'er blooming
from tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming
as saints of old hath sung.
It came a flower bright,
Amid the cold of winter,
when half-spent was the night.**

Narrator: Lew Thomasino

Soloists: Shara Toennies, Anne Brown

**Choir members: (those above), and Jackie Canterbury,
Vicki Hartmann, Shannon Banjavcic, Kim Campbell-
Miller, Oxby Thomasino, Adam Reynolds, Scott
Banjavcic**

OFFERTORY INVITATION: We, who have known God's
gracious hospitality, are invited to share together in
ministry. Our offerings of gratitude remind us of God's

claim on us and on all we possess. Let us make a
generous response, in thanksgiving for all we have
received.

OFFERTORY: “Two German Carols” Roger C. Wilson

***DOXOLOGY:**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, you heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Amen.**

***THE LORD'S PRAYER:**

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be your 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 debts as we forgive our debtors. And
lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory
forever. Amen.**

HOLY COMMUNION

Tonight, heaven and earth meet. Tonight, a backyard
shed is holy ground. Tonight, strangers gather as family.

And so we come here, to the feast table of God, as Christ's invited friends, chosen and beloved.

If you have been here often, if the memory of this table stretches back through all your Christmases, you are welcome. If you have been here rarely, if reverence for bread and juice is strange to you, you are welcome. If you have much faith, or little, or wouldn't know where to begin even if you wanted to believe, you are welcome here. For Christ does not hold himself back from us, but boldly enters every heart. Christ welcomes you to this table. That is all you need to know.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

We remember how Christ came- from the vast expanses of heaven to a world that barely made room for him fragile and vulnerable and tiny- we shudder to think of a child in a backyard shed in the cold of night with only the protection that the fierce love of his parents could give him.

We remember how shepherds and kings knelt before him, before he could form words of blessing or raise his

hand to heal how they adored him not for what he'd done but who he was God among us a miracle to hold in your hands.

We remember too, Christ of the upper room, gathered with his friends who seized a loaf of bread and a cup of wine as commonplace as anything and declared they too were a miracle, a miracle to hold in your hands because they would be his signs for all eternity bread for new life, new life rising out of the old and wine for forgiveness, forgiveness unearned but complete.

We remember with pain Christ's body broken, and with wild joy his rising again, and with faithful hope await his return.

Light of the world, we give thanks that you came among us, with healing in your touch, compassion in your voice and grace in your power.

Darkness may seem so strong, but the slightest light disrupts it. Descend upon our world again, we pray, vanquish the powers of evil, sorrow, and despair shine for those who grieve tonight who are lost or lonely, ill or empty who dread the night and fear the morning.

Shine in us, that we might shine for them that all shadows would clear away and we would meet each other in heaven's light, and call each other beloved as you do us.

Holy Spirit, presence of Christ in and among us,
we praise you with our own Alleluias
Rest yourself in these gifts of bread and cup
that they may be sure signs of God's love for us,
forgiveness and life abundant.

Unite us with all the saints in every time and place,
all those who loved you and all those you loved
Remind us that at this table are those we miss so dearly
tonight those who are missing from our holiday tables
but ever present at your heavenly banquet.

And most of all, unite us with Christ, the child of
Bethlehem, that we might love as he loved
so greatly that it changed the whole world.

Alleluia, we sing tonight. Alleluia, Lord most high!

The Words of Institution

Tonight we celebrate Christ, the Bread of Heaven, who,
on the night before he was arrested for daring to love
more boldly than others thought proper, took bread,
and after giving thanks to God, broke it, and gave it to
his disciples, saying: Take, eat. This is my body, given for
you. Do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way he took the cup, saying: This cup is the
new covenant sealed in my blood, shed for you for the

forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this in
remembrance of me.

And so, whenever we eat this bread and drink of this
cup, we too proclaim the boldness of God's love, that
will always come to us again.

THE FEAST IS READY. ALL ARE WELCOME.

***UNISON PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING:**

**Bread of heaven, let us not be unchanged by tonight.
Let us not pass by the table in silence; let us not leave
the table empty. Dwell in our hearts, and shine in our
lives, that we might know your deep, deep peace, and
share it with the world. Fill us with your love, that we
might walk hand in hand with you all our days. We pray
in the holy name of the Christ-child, born for us this
night. Amen.**

***LIGHTING OF CANDLES: "Silent Night"**

**As the sanctuary lights are lowered, we will all sing the
first three verse.**

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht!

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 alleluia;
Christ the Savior is born,
Christ the Savior 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.**

***COMMISSION AND BLESSING:**

ONE: Carry a song on your lips and joy in your hearts.
Let all the world observe the good news you convey.

**MANY: Glory to God, glory to God in the highest!
May God's peace reign among all people!**

ONE: As shepherds praised God for all they saw and heard, we are commissioned to share Christmas joy.

**MANY: A baby has become our Wonderful Counselor.
A child is pointing us to the way of peace.**

ONE: The grace of God is your salvation, now and always. Jesus Christ is the blessed hope who embraces us.

**ALL: We join in glorifying and praising God.
We welcome the Christ into our hearts and homes.
Amen. Amen.**

***RECESSIONAL HYMN: "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"**

**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!"
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King."**

**Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold him come,
Off-spring of the Virgin's womb:
Veiled in flesh the God-head see;**

**Hail th'incarnate Deity,
Pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King."**

**Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that we no more may die,
Born to raise us from the earth,
Born to give us second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King."**

**THE BELL RINGS OUT AS WE GO OUT INTO THE WORLD
TO SHARE THE GOOD NEWS.**

POSTLUDE: "The Joy of Christmas" Lani Smith

PRAYER LIST: Becky Ballard, Urban and Mary Lou Baum, Ronald Bopp, Jackie Canterbury, Carson Edwards, Amy Iverson, Marilyn Paul, Syd Safriet, David Seneczyn, Amy Smith, Yvonne Weber, Rosemary Williams, Josh Mueller.