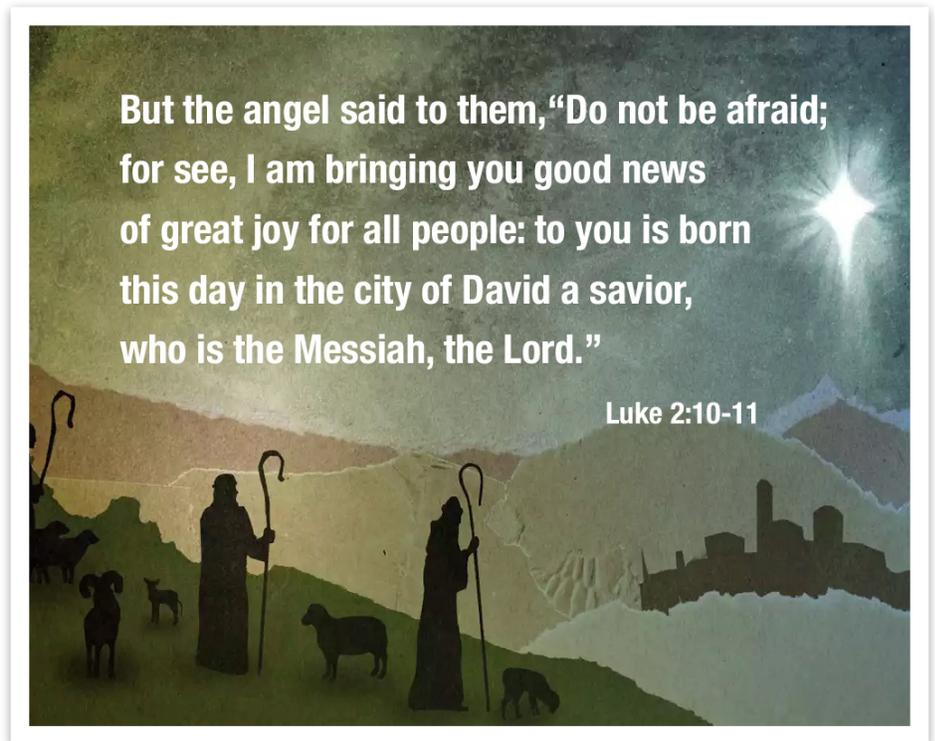


Silver Link Worship
December 2021
Hymns: The Stories of
our Faith

Opening Prayer

O God our Father, you have brought us again to the glad season when we celebrate the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Grant that his Spirit may be born anew in our

hearts this day and that we may joyfully welcome him to reign over us. Open our ears that we may hear again the angelic chorus of old. Open our lips that we, too, may sing with uplifted hearts. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, goodwill toward all; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (United Methodist Book of Worship, pg. 276)



Lessons and Carols

Our worship time today will be filled with what is traditionally called a Lessons and Carols service. It is a time to hear the Christmas story told through both word and song. Today, we'll read the story of the Birth of our Savior as told by Luke. Following these Scripture readings, we'll hear the same part of the story told through song.

Let us be in a time of praise as we read again these Holy Scriptures and sing carols celebrating the birth of our Savior.

First Lesson – Luke 1:26-35, 38 (NRSV)

In our first lesson from Luke, we hear how the angel Gabriel announced to the virgin Mary that she would give birth to God's promised Son whose kingdom shall never end.

“In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. And he came to her and said, ‘Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.’ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.’ Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I am a virgin?’ The angel said to her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.’

Then Mary said, ‘Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.’ Then the angel departed from her.”

Carol – To a Maid Engaged to Joseph (UMH 215 vs 1)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IEzm3TeFMmg>

1. To a maid engaged to Joseph, the angel Gabriel came. “Fear not,” the angel told her, “I come to bring good news, good news I come to tell you, good news, I say, good news.”

Second Lesson – Luke 2: 1-7 (NRSV)

In our second lesson from Luke, we hear how Jesus was born against a backdrop of emperors and taxes.

"In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn."

Carol – Away in a Manger (UMH 217 vs 1)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fQqvgslONOE>

1. Away in a manger, no crib for a bed, the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head. The stars in the sky looked down where he lay, the little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

Carol – O Little Town of Bethlehem (UMH 230 vs 1)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H-Smtw4CHNI>

1. O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie; above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by. Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light; the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

Third Lesson – Luke 2: 8-14 (NRSV)

In our third lesson from Luke, we hear an Angel of the Lord bringing great news of our Savior’s birth to the shepherds.

“In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.’ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

‘Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!’”

Carol – Hark! The Herald Angels Sing (UMH 240 vs 1)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SFjMPaOBzXc>

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

Fourth Lesson: Luke 2: 15-20 (NRSV)

In our fourth lesson from Luke, the shepherds go to see the Savior of the world lying in a manger.

“When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.’ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.”

Carol – The First Noel (UMH vs 245 1)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gKKKHmXGyTI>

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

Refrain: Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.

Carol – O Come, All Ye Faithful (UMH vs 234 1)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPC0IvlyCgU>

1. 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;

Refrain: O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Devotional¹

¹Research for devotional came from this website, <https://www.beliefnet.com/entertainment/movies/the-nativity-story/the-amazing-story-of-a-holy-night.aspx> who used this book, Ace Collins. *Stories Behind the Best-Loved Songs of Christmas*, Zondervan, 2004.

Our song of focus for December is “O Holy Night.” The back story of this song is quite an interesting one. The words were written by Poet and Wine merchant, Placide Cappeau. Cappeau had little interest in religion, but the local Priest asked him to write a poem for Christmas mass and Cappeau took the job seriously. With the gospel of Luke as his guide, Cappeau imagined what it would have been like to witness the birth of Christ. The poem he wrote was titled “Cantique de Noel.”

Cappeau was quite pleased with his poem and decided it needed to be a song. He reached out to his friend and famous classical musician, Adolphe Charles Adams, who composed the music to go along with Cappeau’s words. “Cantique de Noel” quickly became a favorite song in many Catholic Christmas services and households in France. However, the song was later denounced by the Catholic Church in France as they learned that Cappeau had left the church and as they learned that Adams was Jewish.

A decade later American writer and abolitionist, John Sullivan Dwight, translated the song into English and published “O Holy Night” in his magazine. It became a hit in America. In fact, in 1906, Reginald Fessenden, who was the first human voice to be broadcast over the airwaves, read the Christmas Story over the air followed by playing “O Holy Night” on his violin. It was the first song ever played over the air.

The history of “O Holy Night” I found most inspiring occurred on a battlefield during the Franco-Prussian War on Christmas Eve of 1871. The song continued to be banned by the church in France, but that did not stop it from being sung outside of the church as is shared in this Christmas memory, “In the midst of fierce fighting between the armies of Germany and France, during the Franco-Prussian War, a French soldier suddenly jumped out of his muddy trench.

Both sides stared at the seemingly crazed man who lifted his eyes to the heavens and began singing “Cantique de Noel.” Then a German

soldier stepped into the open and answered the Frenchman's song with Martin Luther's "From Heaven Above to Earth I Come."²

It is believed that the fighting stopped for the next twenty-four hours while the soldiers on both sides observed a temporary peace in honor of Christmas day.

The soldiers seemed to have found inner peace as they praised God through singing. Our Senior Pastor at Church of the Resurrection, Adam Hamilton, shares more on peace found through praising God: "In the shepherd's fields, the heavenly chorus sang, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors.' The order of these two ideas may be important. First comes praise, and then comes peace . . . I find in my own life, as I praise God, I begin to experience God's peace. When I'm frightened or anxious or feeling down, I sing hymns and choruses."³

Let us be filled anew with the peace of God as we sing together this beloved song:

Song – O Holy Night

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3w_FWCPewUg

1. O holy night, the stars are brightly shining, It is the night of the dear Saviour's birth; Long lay the world in sin and error pining, 'Till he appeared and the soul felt its worth. A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices, For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn;

Chorus: Fall on your knees, Oh hear the angel voices! O night divine!
O night when Christ was born. O night, O holy night, O night divine.

Christmas Prayer

² Ibid.

³ Adam Hamilton. *The Journey: A season of Reflections*, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 2011. Page 128.

Gracious God, thank You for Christmas. Thank You for coming to us in Jesus Christ and for the salvation and inner peace that is found through Christ our Savior. Thank You for Your love, mercy, and grace. Help us to shine Christ's light in the world, that all persons may know of Your amazing love and forgiveness. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Closing Hymn –Joy to the World (UMH 246 vs 1 and 4)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6oOwa0CWVVQ>

1. Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King; let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven, and nature sing.

4. He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove the glories of his righteousness, and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love.

Go forth in peace and joy!

