

## Christmas Eve Service December 24, 2025



**“The Angel Appearing to the Shepherds”**

**Artist Thomas Cole (American, 1801-1848)**

Painting date 1833-1834, on view at Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, Virginia

**I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people;  
for to you is born this day a Saviour, Christ the Lord. *Luke 2:10–11***

### CP 120 O Little Town of Bethlehem

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.

2 For Christ is born of Mary;  
and, gathered all above,  
while mortals sleep, the angels keep  
their watch of wondering love.  
O morning stars, together  
proclaim the holy birth,  
and praises sing to God the King,  
and peace to all on earth.

3 How silently, how silently,  
the wondrous Gift is given  
as love imparts to human hearts  
the blessings of God's heaven!  
No ear may hear his coming  
but in this world of sin,  
where meek souls will receive him, still  
the dear Christ enters in.

4 O holy child of Bethlehem,  
descend to us, we pray;  
cast out our sin and enter in;  
be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels  
the great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide with us,  
our Lord Emmanuel.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
And the love of God,  
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
Be with you all.

**And also with you.**

May his grace and peace be with you.  
**May he fill our hearts with joy.**

Almighty God,  
**To you all hearts are open,  
 All desires known,  
 And from you no secrets are hidden.  
 Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
 By the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
 That we may perfectly love you,  
 And worthily magnify your holy name;  
 Through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

### Psalm 97

*Refrain: May we live in the light of your righteousness.*

97:1 The LORD is king! Let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad!  
 97:2 Clouds and thick darkness are all around him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.  
 97:3 Fire goes before him and consumes his adversaries on every side.  
 97:4 His lightnings light up the world; the earth sees and trembles.  
 97:5 The mountains melt like wax before the LORD, before the Lord of all the earth.  
 97:6 The heavens proclaim his righteousness, and all the peoples behold his glory.  
 97:7 All servants of images are put to shame, those who make their boast in worthless idols; all gods bow down before him.  
 97:8 Zion hears and is glad, and the towns of Judah rejoice because of your judgments, O God.  
 97:9 For you, O LORD, are most high over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods.  
 97:10 You who love the LORD, hate evil; he guards the lives of his faithful; he rescues them from the hand of the wicked.  
 97:11 Light dawns for the righteous and joy for the upright in heart.  
 97:12 Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous, and give thanks to his holy name!

### A Reading from Isaiah 62:6-12

62:6 Upon your walls, O Jerusalem, I have posted sentinels; all day and all night they shall never be silent. You who remind the LORD, take no rest,  
 62:7 and give him no rest until he establishes Jerusalem and makes it renowned throughout the earth.  
 62:8 The LORD has sworn by his right hand and by his mighty arm: I will not again give your grain to be food for your enemies, and foreigners shall not drink the wine for which you have labored,  
 62:9 but those who harvest it shall eat it and praise the LORD, and those who gather it shall drink it in my holy courts.  
 62:10 Go through, go through the gates; prepare the way for the people; build up, build up the highway; clear it of stones; lift up an ensign over the peoples.  
 62:11 The LORD has proclaimed to the end of the earth: Say to daughter Zion, "Look, your savior comes; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him."  
 62:12 They shall be called, "The Holy People, The Redeemed of the LORD," and you shall be called, "Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken."

**The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.**

CP 126 Away in a Manger

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

3 Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay  
close by me forever and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,  
and fit us for heaven to live with you there.

2 The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,  
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.  
I love you, Lord Jesus -- look down from on  
high  
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.

A Reading from Titus 3:4-7

3:4 But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared,  
3:5 he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to  
his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.  
3:6 This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,  
3:7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of  
eternal life.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

CP 136 While Shepherds Watched

1 While shepherds watched their flocks by  
night,  
all seated on the ground,  
the angel of the Lord came down  
and glory shone around.

4 "the heavenly babe you there shall find  
to human view displayed,  
all meanly wrapped in swathing bands,  
and in a manger laid."

2 "Fear not," said he, for mighty dread  
had seized their troubled mind;  
"Glad tidings of great joy I bring  
to you and humankind.

5 Thus spake the seraph; and forthwith  
appeared a shining throng  
of angels praising God, who thus  
addressed their joyful song:

3 "To you, in David's town, this day  
is born of David's line  
a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord;  
and this shall be the sign:

6 "All glory be to God on high  
and on earth be peace;  
good will henceforth from heaven to me  
begin and never cease."

The Gospel

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

**Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Luke 2:(1-7), 8-20

2:1 In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.

2:2 This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.

2:3 All went to their own towns to be registered.

2:4 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.

2:5 He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.

2:6 While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child.

2:7 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 in the guest room.

2:8 Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.

2:9 Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

2:10 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:

2:11 to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

2:12 This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger."

2:13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

2:14 "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

2:15 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."

2:16 So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger.

2:17 When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child,

2:18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them,

2:19 and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.

2:20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.

The Gospel of Christ

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Sermon by the Rev. Alison Westervelt

CCLI 32015 O Holy Night

1 O holy night the stars are brightly shining  
 It is the night of the dear Savior'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 1**

**Fall on your knees**  
**O hear the angel voices**  
**O night divine**  
**O night when Christ was born**  
**O night O holy night**  
**O night divine**

2 Led by the light of faith serenely beaming  
 With glowing hearts by His cradle we stand  
 So led by light of a star sweetly gleaming  
 Here came the wise men from Orient land  
 The King of kings lay thus in lowly manger  
 In all our trials born to be our Friend

**Chorus 2**

**He knows our need**  
**To weakness is no stranger**  
**Behold your King**  
**Before Him lowly bend**  
**Behold your King**  
**Before Him lowly bend**

3 Truly He taught us to love one another  
 His law is love and His gospel is peace  
 Chains shall He break for the slave is our brother  
 And in His name all oppression shall cease  
 Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we  
 Let all within us praise His holy name

**Chorus 3**

**Christ is the Lord**  
**O praise His name forever**  
**His power and glory**  
**Evermore proclaim**  
**His power and glory**  
**Evermore proclaim**

Affirmation of Faith (The Apostles' Creed)

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
 creator of heaven and earth.**  
**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.**  
**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit**  
**and born of the Virgin Mary.**  
**He suffered under Pontius Pilate,**  
**was crucified, died, and was buried.**  
**He descended to the dead.**  
**On the third day he rose again.**  
**He ascended into heaven.**  
**and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**  
**He will come again**  
**to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,**  
**the holy catholic Church,**  
**the communion of saints,**  
**the forgiveness of sins,**  
**the resurrection of the body,**  
**and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Prayers of the People compiled by the Rev. Alison Westervelt and led by  
Betty Johnson

Good and gracious God, on this holy night you gave us your Son, the Lord of the universe, wrapped in swaddling clothes, the Saviour of all, lying in a manger. On this holy night 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. On this holy night in which God joins heaven and earth, let us offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all those in need saying, God of Love, hear our prayer.

**Hear our prayer**

Let us pray for the Church around the world as it celebrates the birth of Christ. Bless all those who are entrusted with Christian ministry that your word might be proclaimed with truth and courage across our world. God of Love,

**Hear our prayer**

Let us pray for all leaders of the world. Bestow your wisdom on all who govern, that in honouring the earth and its diverse races, cultures, and religions, we may celebrate the light of this holy night. God of Love,

**Hear our prayer**

Let us pray for all those areas of the world that are overwhelmed with conflict and violence. Grant reconciliation to them that they may live in the peace of this holy night. God of Love,

**Hear our prayer**

Let us pray for all who are cold, hungry, or alone this night. Embrace with your tender care all who wander alone or have no place to lay their head, that they may experience the hope of this holy night. God of Love,

**Hear our prayer**

Let us pray for all who are anxious, depressed, or ill. Draw near to those who find this season a source of pain or grief, and to all who are suffering or sick, especially those we remember in our own hearts that they may feel the comfort of this holy night. God of Love,

**Hear our prayer**

Let us pray for parents, families, and children. Strengthen families in the bonds of love and commitment, that they may delight in the joy of this holy night. God of Love,

**Hear our prayer**

Let us pray for ourselves and for the blessings of Christmas. Open our hearts to your presence, that we may be transformed by the new birth of this holy night. God of Love,

**Hear our prayer**

Let us give thanks for all the faithful departed who have been bearers of the word made flesh. Give us grace to follow your holy ones in lives of faith and commitment, that we may join with the hosts of heaven in singing the praises of this holy night. God of Love,

**Hear our prayer**

All these things and whatever else you see that we need, grant us, O God, for the sake of him who died and rose again, and now lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

Collect

Eternal God,  
this holy night is radiant  
with the brilliance of your one true light.  
As we have known  
the revelation of that light on earth,  
bring us to see the splendour of your heavenly glory;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

**And now, as our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,  
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,  
the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

CP 119 Silent Night

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,  
 heavenly hosts sing alleluia,  
 Christ the Saviour is born!  
 Christ the Saviour 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 Dismissal

**I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people;  
 for to you is born this day a Saviour, Christ the Lord. *Luke 2:10–11***

Let us bless the Lord  
**Thanks be to God.**

May the God of peace enable us to do His will in every kind of goodness  
 working in us what pleases Him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for  
 ever and ever. Amen.

My dear friends, be swift to love, make haste to be kind,  
 and go in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**