Love Came Down at Christmas

Christmas Eve Family Service
December 24, 2012, 5pm

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church ♦ Oak Park, Illinois
Thank you to the many Christmas Eve Family Service participants for their service:

➢ Prelude musicians
  Scott Andersen, piano  
  Evan Campbell, violin  
  Alison Mieczkowski, piano  
  Henry Albrecht, recorder  
  Grace Ledogar, piano  
  Spencer Abbott, trumpet  
  Christopher & Jonathan Hugh, guitar & ukulele  
  Ella Roadruck & Briana Killingsworth, vocal

  Christmas Time is Here  Joy to the World
  Deck the Halls  We Three Kings
  Joy to the World  Silent Night

➢ Postlude musician
  Grae Abbott, piano
  We Wish You a Merry Christmas

➢ Readers — Grae Abbott, Devin Cuneen, Seth Feare, Christopher Hugh, Brandon Killingsworth, Ariel McClain-Chenault, Amelia Sheridan, Cole Sheridan, Jordyn Washington

➢ Speakers — Henry Albrecht, Evan Campbell, Nora Derks, Nate Doolin, Jonathan Hugh, Owen Klein, Alison Mieczkowski, Elise Pope, Caitlin Rank

➢ Music leader — LeRoy Budnick

➢ Each Sunday school class and their teachers for their part in the service

➢ All the parents for their participation, flexibility and support

➢ Cindy Andersen, Mark & Julie Ledogar, Brenda Massaroni, Patty Jurczak, Deaconess Debbie Rank and Becca Wagner for their behind-the-scenes assistance

➢ Special thanks to Dan Feiertag for leading and directing the play; and his assistants Susan Abbott and Rick Andersen

The message for this service is a skit entitled, In the Same Country, by Trevor Fletcher. © Trevor Fletcher, all rights reserved.

Join us for
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, 11:00pm
Christmas Day Worship, 10:30am
Children’s Sunday School classes resume Sunday, January 6
Happy New Year!
Christmas Eve Family Service

Prelude Music

Welcome & Prayer

Deaconess Debbie Rank

Processional hymn: “He Came Down”

Children line up in narthex

He came down that we may have hope;
He came down that we may have hope;
He came down that we may have hope;
Hallelujah forever more.

He came down that we may have joy …
Hallelujah forever more.

He came down that we may have peace ..
Hallelujah forever more.

He came down that we may have love …
Hallelujah forever more.

Part 1: Hope Comes Down

Speaker 1: Sin darkened each heart; love seemed so far away,
But God led his people to trust and to pray.

Speaker 2: “Lord, hear us, we ask—help our faith to increase.
Forgive us our sins; send us hope, joy and peace.”

ALL: As prayers went up, God sent hope down.
Yes, hope came down at Christmas.

“Hope” banner is placed amidst congregation.

Reader 1: (Psalm 103:7) O Israel, put your hope in the LORD,

Reader 2: (Psalm 130:7) For with the LORD is unfailing love and with him is full redemption.

Reader 3: (Psalm 130:8) God will redeem Israel from all their sins.
Reader 1: (Isaiah 7:14)  The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call Him Immanuel.

Reader 2: (Micah 5:4)  He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.

Reader 3: (Lamentations 3:25)  The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him.

Reader 1: (Lamentations 3:26)  It is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.

Hymn: “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.

Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you O Israel

O come, O Wisdom from on high,
Embracing all things far and nigh:
In strength and beauty come and stay;
Teach us your will and guide our way. Refrain

O come, O King of nations, come,
O Cornerstone that binds in one:
Refresh the hearts that long for you;
Restore the broken, make us new. Refrain

Part 2: Joy Comes Down

Speaker 4:  God answered their prayers in just the right place. God sent his response in a sweet baby’s face.

Speaker 5:  God’s Son, the world’s Savior, came down to the earth. And slept in a manger the night of his birth.

ALL:  As prayers went up, God sent joy down. Yes, joy came down at Christmas.

“Joy” banner is placed amidst congregation.
Reader 1: In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree, ordering that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world.

Reader 7: Everyone had to travel to his own town to be counted in the census. So Joseph left the town of Nazareth in Galilee and went to Judea, to Bethlehem, the town of David, his ancestor.

Reader 2: He and Mary went there to register. They were engaged to be married. Mary was expecting a baby—and she was due to give birth any minute!

Reader 7: While they were in Bethlehem, the time came. Mary gave birth to a son, her first born. She wrapped him up in strips of cloth, following the custom of that time. She laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

**Finger Play** (by 2-3 year olds)

Here is baby Jesus
Lying in the hay.
He brings joy into my heart
On this Christmas Day!

Hymn: “Away in a Manger”
(*Children and congregation sing verse 1, congregation sings verse 3*)

Away in a manger, no crib for a 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.

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

Speaker 5: Good news of great joy came from heaven that night. As angels told shepherds, who shook with great fright:

Speaker 6: “Rejoice! For behold the world’s Savior is here!
He lies in a manger. Come see! Do not fear!”

Reader 4: Shepherds were living out in the fields near Bethlehem, keeping watch over their flocks each night.

Reader 5: Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared to them. God’s glory shone all around them. They were absolutely terrified!

Reader 6: But the angel said, “Don’t be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy. This message is for everyone! For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. Here’s a sign to help you find him: The baby will be wrapped up in strips of cloth and lying in a manger.”

Reader 4: Just then, thousands of God’s angels appeared, all of them praising God and saying,

Reader 5: “Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth to those who know his favor.”

Hymn: “Angels We Have Heard on High”
(Children sing first verse by themselves, 2nd verse with the congregation.)       Candles by Pre-K and Kindergarten

Angels we have heard on high
Sweetly singing o’er the plains
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains.

Refrain: Glo—ria, In excelsis Deo
Glo—ria, 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. (Refrain)

Finger Play (by PreK/K)
Joy came down at Christmas
God sent to us his Son,
Cradled in a manger,
Born for everyone!
Then the angels left, going back to heaven. The shepherds looked at each other in excitement. They said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem! Let’s see what God has done!”

The shepherds went quickly to worship him there, then left to tell others—they just had to share!

So they hurried into the town. There, they found Mary and Joseph. And they found Baby Jesus too. He was lying in the manger. The shepherds went back to their flocks, and on the way, they told everyone they saw about the angels—and about the baby! Everyone who heard it was amazed!

But Mary remembered everything, thinking about it again and again.

The shepherds praised God for everything they had seen and heard, because everything happened just as the angels told them it would.

Hymn: “The First Noel”

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.

They look-ed 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)
Hymn: “Once in Royal David’s City”

Once in royal Davids city,                For He is our childhood's pattern; 
    Stood a lowly cattle shed,            Day by day, like us, He grew;    
    Where a mother laid her Baby,        He was little, weak, and helpless, 
    In a manger for His bed:              Tears and smiles, like us He knew; 
    Mary was that mother mild,            And He cares when we are sad,     
    Jesus Christ, her little Child.       And he shares when we are glad. 

He came down to earth from heaven,        And our eyes at last shall see Him, 
    Who is God and Lord of all,          Through His own redeeming love;  
    And His shelter was a stable,        For that Child so dear and gentle, 
    And His cradle was a stall:          Is our Lord in heaven above:     
    With the poor, and mean, and lowly,  And He leads His children on,    
    Lived on earth our Saviour holy.      To the place where He is gone.

Part 3: Peace Comes Down

Speaker 8: The Wise Men came later to worship their King. They traveled quite far and had gifts to bring.

First and Second Grades gather in narthex

Speaker 9: This baby so little gave the Magi gifts too, Gifts not just for them—for me and for you!

Speaker 10: One day this dear Jesus would die for our sin He’d rise up from the dead, give us peace deep within.

ALL: As prayers went up, God sent peace down. Yes, peace came down at Christmas.

“Peace” banner is moved amidst congregation.

Reader 4: Sometime later, Magi followed a bright star from out of the East. It went ahead of them and stopped over the house where Mary, Joseph and Baby Jesus were living. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed.

Reader 5: Coming into the house, they saw Jesus with his mother, Mary. They bowed down to worship him.

Reader 6: They opened the treasures they had brought with them. They presented gifts to Jesus—gold, incense and myrrh.
Hymn: “We Three Kings”  
*(Children sing first verse by themselves, additional verses with the congregation.)*

We three kings of Orient are  
bringing gifts we traverse afar.  
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,  
following yonder star.

*Refrain:* Star of Wonder, Star of night,  
star with royal beauty bright,  
westward leading, still proceeding,  
guide us to thy perfect light.

Born a King on Bethlehem’s plain,  
Gold I bring to crown Him again.  
King forever, ceasing never  
over us all to reign.  
*(Refrain)*

Frankincense to offer have I,  
incense owns a Deity nigh.  
Prayer and praising, all men raising,  
worship Him, God on high.  
*(Refrain)*

Prayers of the People

*Leader:* God of Love (Peace, Hope, Joy),  
*Response:* Hear our prayer.

**Part 4: Love Comes Down**

*Speaker 11:* Forgiveness and hope came with Jesus in love,  
For every good gift is from our God above.

*Speaker 12:* God’s love filled the earth with brightness and light,  
Just like our candles on this holy night.

**ALL:** As prayers went up, God sent love down.  
Yes, love came down at Christmas.

“Love” banner is brought amidst congregation.
Reading from John 1:14

(light is passed from candle to candle during this reading)

Ushers, acolyte begin

candle-lighting

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him and without him not one thing came into being.

What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.

Hymn: “Silent Night”
(Will begin when lights have been dimmed)

Silent night, holy night; Silent night, holy night;
All is calm, all is bright; Son of God, love’s pure light.
Round yon virgin mother and child; Radiant beams from your holy face
Holy infant, so tender and mild. With the dawn of redeeming grace.
Sleep in heavenly peace. Jesus, Lord, at your birth,
Sleep in heavenly peace. Jesus, Lord, at your birth.

Silent night, holy night. Silent night, holy night.
Shepherds quake at the sight. Son of God, love’s pure light.
Glories stream from heaven afar. Radiant beams from your holy face.
Heavenly hosts sing alleluia. With the dawn of redeeming grace.
Christ, the Savior is born, Jesus, Lord, at your birth,
Christ, the Savior is born.
Hymn: “Joy to the World”

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive its king.
Let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven
and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ.
While fields and floods,
rocks, hills and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

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.

Postlude

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Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
Monday, December 24th, 11pm

Christmas Day Worship
Tuesday, December 25th, 10:30am
About Christmas Eve

The time came to deliver her child ... In the dark of a stable, light came streaming forth. For the people who walked in darkness, the light came. For us, the light comes and we can see. The time of delivery is the time of our deliverance, as from a dark dungeon; God’s taking on of human flesh is our emancipation, the sloughing of our shackles, our being created anew. It is the birth of hope where no such luminescence formerly was permitted.

So the stars shine this night, at lease figuratively. And our eyes and hearts are directed toward them. We join Abraham in hearing God’s cosmic invitation to count all the stars and know the scope of God’s love for us. Tonight’s brightness, though—this warmth, this hope—comes not from the distant past of a galaxy, nor from the distant future of a promise. All this light emanates from the one who was promised and now is: Savior, Messiah, Lord!

The time came to deliver her child ... The time is now. Newly delivered children turn their world upon its head now. Because of the first Christmas we don’t have to wait any longer. Heaven is not some faraway place. God is not removed or distant. God is here; Christ is born to us. The terrified shepherds and singing angels give testimony to the same reality: God takes on our flesh this night. Our exuberant songs allow our bodics to take wing even when our minds would slow us down and ask, "How can this be?" The light, unexpectedly, comes to us from a lowly manger. With Mary we ponder what—on earth—it all could mean. With the shepherds we tremble at the awe of God acting in this dramatic fashion, for us. Finally, we too must glorify and praise God, and find how we might pass this light to others in darkness. For the light in this night is Immanuel. God is with us!

From Sundays and Seasons, Augsburg Fortress, 2002