

Sharing the feast

Servers – Ron & Mary Olson, Roger & Sherry White

Choral response *Sanctus*, Franz Joseph Haydn

The story of the Christmas truce: Silent night, holy night (based on the book by Walter Cronkite and Robert T. Barrett)

Introduction

Soloist *Silent night, holy night* 193, vs. 1 – Connor O'Brian

Story portion

Congregation *Angels we have heard on high* 197, vss. 1, 4

Story portion

Ensemble *O Tannenbaum*

Story Portion

Ensemble one verse each of *Good King Wenceslas* & *Auld Lang Syne*

Soloist *We Three Kings* – Alijah Hill

Story portion

Violinist *Largo* (Handel) – Nikki KandeLind

Story portion

Soloist *O Holy Night* – Sara Michael

Story portion

Recitation of Psalm 23

Story portion

Silent night, holy night 193

Soloist vs. 1 – Connor O'Brian

Ensemble vs. 2

Choir & Congregation vss. 3, 4

Hum two times with candle-light

Benediction

Join us for Wassail in the Community Center

Thank you for joining us here on this Christmas Eve. May these days be full of the blessings of the Holy Spirit in all our lives.

Thank you to all who have given generously of their attention and talents to make this a memorable Christmas Eve service.

Special thanks to:

Vern Rempel, worship planner/leader

Charlie Ferguson, music leadership

Evan Miller, sound system & lights management

Cathryn Bay-Fowler, visual art

Elizabeth Grace, wassail coordinator



Christmas Eve Service 2011

First Mennonite Church, Denver, Colorado

Pre-service music meditation

Cara Ferguson

Elizabeth Birky, with Sara Michael

Sara Michael and sister Shelly and family

Ethan and Isabel Mullet

Sara Winter

Gathering

Chime

Choir *O come, O come, Immanuel*

Call to Worship

Invocation

Choir *Unto Us a Child is Born*

Lighting of Advent and Christmas candles

Carlene & Gary Hill & family

Ensemble *Christ in the stranger's guise*

Congregation *Come, thou long-expected Jesus* 178

Lessons and carols

1.

The Lesson

Isaiah 11:1-4a

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide by what his ears hear;
but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth...

The Carol – Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming 211

Historical and musical notes: reader – Sara Michael

Lo, how a rose e'er blooming is a song of unknown authorship. It may be derived from a German *Marienleid* or *Song of Mary*. This was a type of song popular in the 1400s. Mary herself was sometimes referred to as “the rose without thorns.” The hymn was later rewritten for Protestant use, switching the emphasis from Mary to Jesus.

The birth of Christ is set against the backdrop of Isaiah's prophecy, with strands of folklore inter-woven. The “floweret bright” stands in tension with the “cold of winter”.

It is a delicate piece, wonderful for part-singing, and has the flavor and subtle rhythms of a Renaissance madrigal.

Singing the carol

2.

The Lesson

Micah 5:2

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
who are one of the little clans of Judah,

from you shall come forth for me
one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.

Matthew 1:18-20

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be

afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

The Carol – O little town of Bethlehem 191

Historical and musical notes: reader – Mim Roth

What gives the lines of this hymn their mysterious charge is buried memory. The Reverend Phillips Brooks, best known for his famous sermon on the Civil War dead, wrote his Christmas carol when, after the war, many little towns of the North and South were unnaturally silent, because so many of the young men were gone. Two years earlier, Brooks had visited Bethlehem in the Middle East, and used that setting to express the emotion of the nation after war. The musical setting by Lewis Henry Redner was composed “in great haste” on Christmas Eve, 1868.

Singing the carol

3.

The Lesson

Luke 2:4-7

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.

The Carol – O come, all ye faithful 212

Historical and musical notes: reader – Jenae Yoder Stutzman

Though the origins of this hymn were long a mystery, there is extensive evidence that John Francis Wade wrote both the text and tune of this very familiar carol, around 1743.

Wade was a musician and copyist in the Catholic center of Douay, France, where many English religious and political dissidents found refuge. There he provided calligraphy and music manuscripts for Catholic chapels and families, including *O come, all ye faithful*, sometimes called a “guided tour” of Jesus’ birth.

Singing the carol

(The choir will lead the congregation in this carol.)

The symbolic feast of communion

Offering for Joseph’s Storehouse

Congregation *Joy to the world* 318