

# In The Stable Service

## Christmas Eve 2000

The LORD your God is with you, He is mighty to save.  
He will take great delight in you, He will quiet you with his love,  
He will rejoice over you with singing. (Zephaniah 3:17)



## Expectation

**In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.** (Hebrews 1:1-3a)

**Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus** (p. 168 all #s are Green Hymnal)

### Lighting the Advent Wreath:

“And the Lord said to the Serpent : “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” . . . Jacob prophesied: “The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs.” . . . Balaam declared “I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel.” . . . Then Hannah prayed and said: “My heart rejoices in the LORD; in the LORD my horn is lifted high. “He will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed.” (Genesis 3:15; 49:10; Numbers 24:17; 1 Samuel 2:1, 10a)

**(Light first candle)**

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this. (Isaiah 7:14; 9:2-7)

**(Light second candle)**

“The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness. . . “this is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the LORD. It is he who will build the temple of the LORD, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. . . . Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey. (Jeremiah 23:5,6; Zechariah 6:12; 9:9)

**(Light Third candle)**

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.” Therefore Israel will be abandoned until the time when she who is in labor gives birth and the rest of his brothers return to join the Israelites. He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth. And he will be their peace. (Micah 5:2-5)

**(Light fourth candle)**

**O come, O come, Immanuel** (p. 169)



## Annunciation

**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.**

**In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. . . The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. . . From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known. (John 1:1-4, 14-18)**

## Song: What Child is This (p. 180)

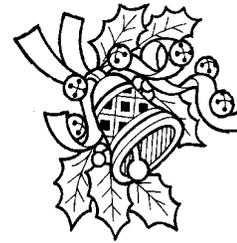
In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God." "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her. (Luke 1:26-38)

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. But after he had considered 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 home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"—which means, "God with us." When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus. (Matthew 1:18-25)

## Joy to the World (p. 171)



# Nativity

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir. (John 3:16, Galatians 4:4-7)

## Oh little Town of Bethlehem (p. 178)

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. (Luke 2:1-5)

## Poem: Love Story (Calvin Miller)

*She waits while over there he knocks. Again refused! Nor is there place throughout the town. Be strong as steel lest Joseph sense the pain you feel. It's yet a while till you lie down to sleep. "There's nowhere else to go tonight," he said. She fought the burning in her eyes rebuked her tears before they fell. Starlight crowned the cold, small town with fiery skies. He took her in his arms and that embrace dissolved the desperation they faced. "I paid the stable rent," he said with shame. "Your son will come tonight," she said. He gave a kiss. Joy hushed the night. Salvation came – an infant whimper from the shepherd's cave.*

## Away in a Manger (p. 185)

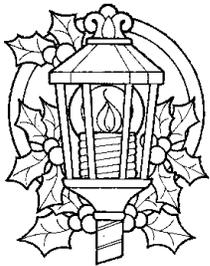
While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. (Luke 2:6-7)

(Light the Christ Candle)

## Homily: Where does Jesus want to be found?

*All praise to thee, eternal Lord, clothed in a garb of flesh and blood;  
choosing a manger for thy throne, while worlds on worlds are thine alone.  
Once did the skies before thee bow; a virgin's arms contain thee now:  
angels who did in thee rejoice now listen for thine infant voice.  
A little child, thou art our guest, that weary ones in thee may rest;  
forlorn and lowly is thy birth, that we may rise to heav'n from earth.  
Thou comest in the darksome night; to make us children of the light.  
To make us in the realms divine, like thine own angels round thee shine.  
All this for us thy love hath done, by this to thee our love is won:  
for this we tune our cheerful lays, and shout our thanks in ceaseless praise.*

## Silent Night (p. 195)



## Adoration

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. (Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7)

## O come all ye Faithful (p. 193)

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:8-12)

This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.” (Luke 2:12-14)

## Angels we have heard on high (p. 192)

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.” So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told. (Luke 2:15-20)

## Prayer of Thanksgiving

**Song: Let your light shine before others so they may know,  
Our God of love ’s in the land, and  
Let your light shine before others so they may know,  
the kingdom of God is at hand!**

(as we sing, pass the flame from candle to candle till all are lit)

May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones. (1 Thessalonians 3:12-13)

**Greet one another in the Joy of His coming!**

## Merry Christmas



# IN THE STABLE Candlelight Service



Christmas Eve, 2000  
Chapel Hill Presbyterian Church