

CHRISTMAS EVE

Our Dear CHRIST Enters In

Great
Joy



- **Psalm 96:1-6, 11-13** is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

P Oh sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth!

C Sing to the LORD, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day.

P Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!

C For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; he is to be feared above all gods.

P For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the LORD made the heavens.

C Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

P Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it;

C let the field exult, and everything in it!

P Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy

C before the LORD, for he comes, for he comes to judge the earth.

P He will judge the world in righteousness,

C and the peoples in his faithfulness.

- The **New Testament Reading**, Philemon 6-7, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

P And I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ. For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you.

- The **Gospel Reading**, Luke 2:1-20, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

P In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch

over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths 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, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!” When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

- The **Sermon Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Irby 87 87 77, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

Once in royal David’s city stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby in a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ her little Child.

He came down to earth from heaven who is God and Lord of all,
And his shelter was a stable, and his cradle was a stall:
With the poor, and meek, and lowly, lived on earth our Savior holy.

And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own redeeming love;
For that Child so dear and gentle is our Lord in heav’n above,
And he leads his children on to the place where he is gone.

Not in that poor lowly stable, with the oxen standing by,
Shall we see him, but in heaven, set at God’s right hand on high;
Then like stars his children, crowned, all in white, his praise will sound!

- The **Sermon** is delivered by the pastor:

P Some of you have come to be home tonight: You traveled from college, work, another town, a different state or maybe even a distant country to be home for the holidays. And you know what? Jesus did that too. In a very real way, that’s what the very first Christmas is all about. Jesus left his home above and made his dwelling among us. He came to the manger in the little town of Bethlehem to be born. He came to Mary, his mother, and Joseph, standing by. He came

to shepherds abiding in the fields. He came to angels to come from heaven to see him. And he came so that we can spend eternity at a new address. Where is this new home? Jesus would say to his disciples during his ministry that it's the Father's house. And this house that Jesus would begin to describe to his disciples in John 14 is nothing short of spectacular and glorious.

The sight of the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay says to us, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me" (John 14:1). So we welcome him this night with great comfort and great joy.

Several years ago, a man by the name of George Tulloch set out on a quest to raise a 16' x 24' section of the Titanic that had broken off from its hull as it sank 2.5 miles to the Atlantic floor. This particular piece weighed 20 tons and was buried in ocean muck.

Special submarines were able to go down to that 16' x 24' section of the hull and attach six large balloons to it. The balloons were filled with diesel fuel. Then six large pulleys on Tulloch's ship above began to slowly wench that 20-ton piece from its ocean bed.

However, on its 2.5-mile journey toward the surface, the wind and waves began to pick up. Tulloch's vessel was ordered not to try to tow the rising piece towards the shore. Sure enough, under the added pressure from the wind and waves, all six ropes on the pulleys began to fray. When that 20-ton piece came within just 70-yards of the surface, the ropes broke, and that large piece sank back to the ocean floor.

You can imagine the heavy hearts on Tulloch's ship that day.

We come to this Christmas Eve with heavy hearts, anxious feelings and worried minds. Jesus knows that we are hurting, and during his ministry as an adult, he knew when his disciples were hurting. "Let not your hearts be troubled," he said to them. Why would Jesus' disciples have such heavy hearts? Jesus spoke these words in the Upper Room on the night before he went to the cross. The disciples were afraid for the life of their Master and their own lives as well.

We see now why the disciples had such troubled hearts that night. Jesus had completely shaken up their world. And the truth is, we can relate: Wars rage, and there is unrest around the world. There are natural disasters. There are family and friends who are living without Jesus. There are broken homes and marriages and loved ones who are no longer with us this Christmas. We, too, know what it's like to have deeply troubled hearts—even now on Christmas Eve.

But did you catch Jesus' antidote to any troubled heart? He says, "Believe in God; believe also in me." The antidote to any troubled heart is faith. In the midst of life's hardships, faith looks beyond earthly circumstances to Christ, to his manger bed on Christmas, to his cross on Good Friday and to his empty tomb on Easter morning. Not only do hurting hearts and homes find refuge in his perfect redemption, but Jesus points our faith past the trials and tears of this temporary abode to a new and abiding reality above: the Father's house

Tune..... Away in a Manger 11 11 11 11

1

1

This system contains the first five measures of the piece. The treble clef staff begins with a whole rest, followed by chords of G4-B4, A4-C5, and G4-B4. The bass clef staff begins with a whole rest, followed by a half note G2, a quarter note A2, and a half note G2. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4.

6

6

This system contains measures 6 through 10. The treble clef staff features eighth notes G4, A4, B4, and chords of G4-B4, A4-C5, and G4-B4. The bass clef staff continues with a half note F#2, a quarter note G2, and a half note F#2. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4.

11

11

This system contains measures 11 through 15. The treble clef staff features eighth notes G4, A4, B4, and chords of G4-B4, A4-C5, and G4-B4. The bass clef staff continues with a half note E2, a quarter note F#2, and a half note E2. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4.

- The **Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Away in a Manger 11 11 11 11, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

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.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

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 take us to heaven to live with thee there.