



## “The Greatest Story Ever Told”

**Advent Three: Wednesday, December 16, 2020  
6:00 pm**



**HOLDEN EVENING PRAYER ~ Marty Haugen**

### Opening Dialogue

L: Today, three candles light our way; Hope, Peace and Joy.

**All: But there seems to be something missing. Even in the bustle of the season, our energy is lagging and our spirits seem dulled.**

L: This is why we light the Candle of Joy today. The Savior is coming, rejoice! Let your hearts rest in this simple truth; that a Savior is born for you.

**All: This is indeed great news; that a Savior is born for us!**

L: In the coming days, may your lives be grounded in hope, may your minds be surrounded in peace, and may your hearts be bursting in love. But on Christmas Day and every day, may your spirits take flight in joy.

**All: Because a Savior is born for us! Alleluia! May it be so!**

### Service of Light — Procession (*Sung*)

L: Jesus Christ, you are the light of the world;

**All: the light no darkness can overcome;**

L: Stay with us now, for it is evening,

**All: and the day is almost over.**

L: Let your light scatter the darkness,

**All: and shine within your people here.**

### Service of Light — Evening Hymn (*Sung*)

<sup>1</sup> Joyous light of heav'nly glory, Loving glow of God's own face,  
You who sing creation's story, Shine on ev'ry land and race.  
Now as evening falls around us, We shall raise our songs to you,  
God of daybreak, God of shadows, Come and light our hearts anew.

<sup>2</sup> In the stars that grace the darkness, In the blazing sun of dawn,  
In the light of peace and wisdom, We can hear your quiet song.  
Love that fills the night with wonder, Love that warms the weary soul,  
Love that bursts all chains asunder, Set us free and make us whole.

<sup>3</sup> You who made the heaven's splendor, Ev'ry dancing star of night,  
Make us shine with gentle justice, Let us each reflect your light.  
Mighty God of all creation, Gentle Christ who lights our way,  
Loving Spirit of salvation, Lead us on to endless day.

## Service of Light — Evening Thanksgiving *(Sung)*

L: May God be with you all,

**All: and also with you;**

L: Let us sing our thanks to God,

**All: It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

L: Blessed are you, Creator of the universe - from old you have led your people by night and day. May the light of your Christ make our darkness bright, for your Word and your presence are the light of our pathways, and you are the light and life of all creation.

**All: Amen.**

## Psalmody, Readings and Canticles — Psalm 141 *(Sung)*

**All: Let my prayer rise up like incense before you, the lifting up of my hands as an offering to you.**

### Group 1:

○ God, I call to you, come to me now;  
○ hear my voice when I cry to you.

Let my prayer rise up like incense before you,  
The lifting up of my hands as an offering to you.

Keep watch within me, God; deep in my heart  
may the light of your love be burning bright.

Let my prayer rise up like incense before you,  
The lifting up of my hands as an offering to you.

All praise to the God of all – Creator of life;  
All praise be to Christ and the Spirit of love.

Let my prayer rise up like incense before you,  
The lifting up of my hands as an offering to you.

### Group 2 (begins a phrase behind Group 1):

○ God, I call to you, come to me now;  
○ hear my voice when I cry to you.

Let my prayer rise up like incense before you,  
The lifting up of my hands as an offering to you.

Keep watch within me, God; deep in my heart  
may the light of your love be burning bright.

Let my prayer rise up like incense before you,  
The lifting up of my hands as an offering to you.

All praise to the God of all – Creator of life;  
All praise be to Christ and the Spirit of love.

Let my prayer rise up like incense before you,  
The lifting up of my hands as an offering to you.

*(Spoken)*

L: May our prayers come before you, O God, as incense, and may your presence surround and fill us, so that in union with all creation, we might sing your praise and your love in our lives.

**All: Amen.**

## The Lesson:

Matthew 1:18-25

<sup>18</sup>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. <sup>19</sup>Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. <sup>20</sup>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. <sup>21</sup>She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." <sup>22</sup>All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: <sup>23</sup>"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." <sup>24</sup>When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, <sup>25</sup>but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

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L: The Light shines in the darkness

**All: and the darkness has not overcome it.**

**The Annunciation — Luke 1:26-28, 30-32, 38** *(Sung)*

L: An angel went from God to a town called Nazareth to a woman whose name was Mary. The angel said to her, “Rejoice, O highly favored, for God is with you. You shall bear a child, and his name shall be Jesus, the Chosen One of God Most High.” And Mary said, “I am the servant of my God, I live to do your will.”

**The Magnificat — Luke 1:46-55** *(Sung)*

<sup>1</sup> My soul proclaims your greatness, O God, and my spirit rejoices in you,  
You have looked with love on your servant here, and blessed me all my life through.  
Great and mighty are you, O Holy One, strong is your kindness evermore.  
How you favor the weak and lowly one, humbling the proud of heart.

<sup>2</sup> You have cast the mighty down from their thrones, and up lifted the humble of heart,  
You have filled the hungry with wondrous things, and left the wealthy no part.  
Great and mighty are you, O Faithful One, strong is your justice strong your love,  
As you promised to Sarah and Abraham, kindness forevermore.

<sup>3</sup> My soul proclaims your greatness, O God, and my spirit rejoices in you,  
You have looked with love on your servant here, and blessed me all my life through.

**Litany and Prayers** *(Hum while Leader prays, then respond.)*

**All: Hmmm. God of mercy, hold us in love.**

*Repeat until Leader sings:*

L: Help us, comfort us, all of our days:

**All: Keep us, hold us, gracious God.**

*(Spoken)*

L: Great and merciful god, Source and Ground of all goodness and life, give to your people the peace that passes all understanding, and the will to live your Gospel of mercy and justice, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen.**

L: God, remember us in your love, and teach us to pray:

**All: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your Kingdom come: your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the Kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

**Final Blessing** (*Sung*)

L: Let us bless our God:

**All: praise and thanks to you.**

L: May God, Creator bless us and keep us, may Christ be ever light for our lives, may the Spirit of Love be our guide and path, for all of our days.

**All: Amen.**

(*Spoken*)

L: Go in Peace. Serve the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God!**