

Christmas Eve: Candlelight Communion

Date = December 24, 2014

Thank-you for offering to read! You may do your reading from your place.

Attached: you will find the text for your reading.

I will bring copies to the church in large font – just pick them up when you arrive.

Prelude

Welcome

Call to Worship **#283 *O Come, All Ye Faithful***

Opening Carol: Greeting

Reading **John 1:1-14 – Sylvia McCutcheon**

Bidding **WOV#638 *Holy Child within the Manger***

Reading **Romans 8:18-25 – Judy Michel**

Prayer of the Day

Hymn of Praise **#289 *Angels We Have Heard on High***

Reading Colossians 1:15-20 – **Cherilyn Spraakman**

Scripture Song Choir ***Go Tell It On the Mountain***

Reading Galatians 4:4 – **Cassandra Schultz**

Acclamation **#276 *Infant Holy***

Gospel Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]

The Readings:

A reading from the Gospel according to John:

In the beginning there was the word; the Word was in God's presence, and the Word was God.

The Word was present to God from the beginning. Through the Word all things came into being, and apart from the Word nothing came into being that has not come into being.

In the Word was life, and that life was humanity's light—a Light that shines in the darkness, a Light that the darkness has never overtaken.

Then came one named John, sent as an envoy from God, who came as a witness to testify about the Light, so that through his testimony everyone might believe.

He himself was not the Light; he only came to testify about the Light—the true Light that illumines all humankind.

The Word was coming into the world—was in the world—and though the world was made through the Word, the world didn't recognize it.

Though the Word came to its own realm, the Word's own people didn't accept it.

Yet any who did accept the Word, who believed in the Name, were empowered to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor urge of flesh nor human will—but born of God.

And the Word became flesh and stayed for a little while among us; we saw the Word's glory—the favour and position a parent gives an only child—filled with grace, filled with truth.

A reading from the Apostle Paul's letter to the Romans. St. Paul writes:

Indeed, I consider the sufferings of the present to be nothing compared with the glory that will be revealed in us.

All creation eagerly awaits the revelation of the children of God.

Creation was subjected to transience and futility, not of its own accord, but because of the One who subjected it—in the hope that creation itself would be freed from its slavery to corruption and would come to share in the glorious freedom of the children of God.

We know that from the beginning until now, all of creation has been groaning in one great act of giving birth.

And not only creation, but all of us who possess the firstfruits of the spirit—we too groan inwardly as we wait for our bodies to be set free.

In hope we were saved. But hope is not hope if its object is seen; why does one hope for what one sees?

And hoping for what we cannot see means awaiting it with patient endurance.

A reading from the Apostle Paul's letter to the Colossians. St. Paul writes:

Christ is the image of the unseen God and the firstborn of all creation, for in Christ were created all things in heaven and on earth: everything visible and invisible, Thrones, Dominations, Sovereignities, Powers—all things were created through Christ and for Christ.

Before anything was created, Christ existed, and all things hold together in Christ. The church is the body; Christ is its head.

Christ is the Beginning, the firstborn from the dead, and so Christ is first in every way.

God wanted all perfection to be found in Christ, and all things to be reconciled to God through Christ—everything in heaven and everything on earth—when Christ made peace by dying on the cross.

In the Apostle Paul's letter to the Galatians we find the earliest record of the birth of Christ.

Written two decades after the life of Jesus, and somewhere between 20 to 50 years prior to the parables about Jesus birth that we find in the Gospels according to Matthew and Luke, there is no mention of the nativity.

St. Paul simply writes:

When the designated time had come, God sent forth the Christ—born of a woman.

Gospel: Luke 2:8-20

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.

Then an angel of God stood before them, and the glory of the God shone around them, and they were terrified.

But the angel said to them, “do not be afraid; for see- - I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth 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 heaven, and on earth peace among those whom God favors!”

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.”

So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them.

But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.

The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.