

PRELUDE

O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM / P. BROOKS

1. O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie.
Above the deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light.
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

2. For Christ is born of Mary,
And gathered all above.
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars together
Proclaim the holy birth.
And praises sing to God the King,
And peace to men on earth.

3. How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is given.
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His heaven.
No ear may hear His coming,
But in this world of sin.
Where meek souls will receive Him still
The dear Christ enters in.

4. Oh holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us we pray.
Cast out our sin and enter in,
Be born to us today.
We hear the Christmas angels,
The great glad tidings tell.
Oh come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord, Emmanuel.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader

With joy you will draw water
from the wells of salvation.
In that day you will say:

All

**Give praise to the LORD, proclaim his name;
make known among the nations what he has done,
and proclaim that his name is exalted.**

Isaiah 12:3-4

SONG OF PRAISE

JOY TO THE WORLD / I. WATTS

1. Joy to the world; the Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King;
Let ev’ry heart prepare Him room,
And heav’n and nature sing.
And heav’n and nature sing.
And heav’n and heav’n and nature sing

2. Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns;
let men their songs employ,
While fields & floods, rocks, hills & plains,
Repeat the sounding joy.
Repeat the sounding joy.
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

3. No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found
Far as the curse is found
Far as, far as the curse is found

4. He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness,
And wonders of his love
And wonders of his love
And wonders, and wonders of his love

LIGHTING OF THE JOY CANDLE

Reader

⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.

Luke 2:9-11

SONG OF PRAISE

ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH / TRADITIONAL FRENCH CAROL

1. Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o’er the plains;
And the mountains in reply,
Echoing their joyous strains.

3. Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee,
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.

4. See Him in a manger laid,
Jesus, Lord of heaven and earth;
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid,
With us sing our Savior’s birth.

REFRAIN
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

2. Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be?
Which inspire your heavenly song?

CONFESSION OF SIN

Leader

O Father, we are gathered before You, the Maker of Heaven and Earth, whose chosen dwelling place is with the broken and contrite, to confess that we have sinned in thought and word and deed; we have not loved You with all our heart and soul, we have not loved You with all our mind and strength; we have not even loved our neighbor as ourselves. In Your mercy, deepen our sorrow for the wrong we have done and for the good we have left undone, so that we may hate our sin with a holy hatred. But, please, Father, do not leave us in sorrow. With You, O Lord, there is forgiveness. In Your mercy, restore the joy of our salvation; so that we may love You with a holy love. Amen.

from The Valley of Vision

(Silent Confession)

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Leader

Jesus said, “Your grief will turn to joy.” (John 16:20)

Hear the good news:
“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just
and will forgive us our sins
and purify us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)

In Christ, you are forgiven—
and joy is already breaking in.

All

Thanks be to God.

from John 16:20 & 1 John 1:9

SONG OF ASSURANCE

LIFT UP YOUR HEADS / WORDS: PS. 24, MUSIC: G. WEISEL

1. Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates!
Behold the King of glory waits;
the King of kings is drawing near,
the Savior of the world is here.

4. Fling wide the portals of your heart;
make it a temple, set apart
from earthly use for heav’n’s employ,
adorned with prayer and love and joy.

2. A helper just, he comes to thee,
His chariot is humility,
His kingly crown is holiness,
His scepter, pity in distress.

5. So come, my Sov’reign, enter in!
Let new and nobler life begin!
Thy Holy Spirit, guide us on,
until the glorious crown be won.

3. O blest the land, the city blest,
where Christ the Ruler is confessed!
O happy hearts and happy homes
to whom this King in triumph comes!

GREETINGS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

PASSING OF THE PEACE

Leader

May the peace of the Lord be always with you.

Together

And also with you!

** Children ages 2 to 5th grade are invited to participate in our children’s program during the sermon; children return for Communion.*

CHILDREN’S CHOIR

There Was A Little Baby
O Come, O Come Emmanuel

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Leader

God of our longing, you meet your people in the wilderness and speak comfort to all who feel tired, thirsty, or far from home. You promise that the desert will rejoice and the dry land will bloom. Strengthen us where we feel worn down, and remind us that your redemption is already breaking into our lives.
Lord, in your mercy,

All

Hear our prayer.

Leader

For all who feel weak in body, mind, or spirit—those whose hands are trembling, whose knees feel unsteady, whose hearts are weighed down by fear—steady them with your presence. Lift their eyes to the One who comes with salvation, healing, and joy.
Lord, in your mercy,

All

Hear our prayer.

Leader

We pray for a world still marked by violence, famine, displacement, and sorrow. Where the wilderness of sin and suffering seems overwhelming, let your renewing grace bring streams in the desert. Make your church a signpost of that coming restoration, a people who walk the holy way with humility, courage, and hope.
Lord, in your mercy,

All

Hear our prayer.

Leader

For those journeying through grief, loneliness, or uncertainty, draw near. Remind them that you are leading your people home, and that sorrow and sighing will one day flee away. Give us grace to walk alongside one another with patience and love.
Lord, in your mercy,

All

Hear our prayer.

Leader

Come, Lord Jesus. Make the wilderness bloom, renew the strength of your people, and lead us with joy to Zion. Until that day, keep us faith-ful and hopeful, trusting that you are the God who turns barrenness into beauty and wandering pilgrims into a rejoicing people.
Lord, in your mercy,

All

Hear our prayer. Amen.

THE OFFERING & OFFERTORY

During the offertory, we consider all that we have and all that God may be asking us to give. Please take this time to ask God how you might give of your financial gifts, personal time and even vocational calling. There are different ways to give. You may place your offering in the blue box at the back of the sanctuary on Sunday mornings; mail your offering to 254 N Lake Ave #287, Pasadena, CA 91101; or give via our app (iOS and Android) or website: www.gracepasadena.org/give.

SCRIPTURE READING

¹ The desert and the parched land will be glad;
the wilderness will rejoice and blossom.
Like the crocus,
² it will burst into bloom;
it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy.
The glory of Lebanon will be given to it,
the splendor of Carmel and Sharon;
they will see the glory of the LORD,
the splendor of our God.

³ Strengthen the feeble hands,
steady the knees that give way;

⁴ say to those with fearful hearts,
“Be strong, do not fear;
your God will come,
he will come with vengeance;
with divine retribution
he will come to save you.”

Isaiah 35:1-10

⁵ Then will the eyes of the blind be opened
and the ears of the deaf unstopped.
⁶ Then will the lame leap like a deer,
and the mute tongue shout for joy.
Water will gush forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert.
⁷ The burning sand will become a pool,
the thirsty ground bubbling springs.
In the haunts where jackals once lay,
grass and reeds and papyrus will grow.
⁸ And a highway will be there;
it will be called the Way of Holiness;
it will be for those who walk on that Way.
The unclean will not journey on it;
wicked fools will not go about on it.
⁹ No lion will be there,
nor any ravenous beast;
they will not be found there.
But only the redeemed will walk there,
¹⁰ and those the LORD has rescued will return.
They will enter Zion with singing;
everlasting joy will crown their heads.
Gladness and joy will overtake them,
and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Reader This is the word of the Lord.
All Thanks be to God!

MORNING MESSAGE

Home At Last

Nick Locke

COMMUNION

GUIDELINES: The sacrament of Communion is also called the Lord’s Supper or Eucharist. It is the family meal for those who are willing to forsake their sin and trust in Jesus Christ for salvation. The invitation is from Jesus Christ alone, not from this church or any minister. If you are baptized and can call yourself a Christian, come to the table.

DIRECTIONS: When instructed, please come forward to receive Communion. Receive the bread and juice from the servers and return to your seat. Communion will be taken together after the Song of Communion.

CHILDREN: Children who are baptized, can profess faith in Jesus Christ in an age appropriate manner, and have talked to a pastor or an elder may participate in communion.

COMMUNION SONG

GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST

Glory to God in the highest
And peace on earth
Peace on earth

Glory to God in the highest
And peace on earth
Peace on earth

CHORUS
Good will to men
O daughter of Zion rejoice
Shout with joy and sing
Our Savior is here!

COMMUNION ACCLAMATION

Leader Therefore we declare the great mystery of our faith as signed and sealed in this sacrament

All Christ has died,
Christ is risen,
Christ will come again!

Leader These are the gifts of God for you, the people of God.

CLOSING SONG

JOYFUL, JOYFUL WE ADORE THEE / H. VAN DYKE

1. Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee
God of glory, Lord of love.
Hearts unfold like flowers before Thee,
Opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
Drive the dark of doubt away.
Giver of immortal gladness,
Fill us with the light of day.

2. All Thy works with joy surround Thee,
Earth and heaven reflect Thy rays.
Stars and angels sing around Thee,
Center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
Flow’ry meadow, flashing sea,
Chanting bird, and flowing fountain
Call us to rejoice in Thee.

3. Thou art giving and forgiving,
Ever blessing, ever blest.
Wellspring of the joy of living,
Ocean depth of happy rest.
Thou the Father, Christ our Brother,
All who live in love are Thine.
Teach us how to love each other,
Lift us to the joy divine.

4. Mortals, join the mighty chorus,
Which the morning stars began.
Father love is reigning o’er us,
Brother love binds man to man.
Ever singing, march we onward,
Victors in the midst of strife.
Joyful music lifts us sunward
In the triumph song of life.

BENEDICTION

Jude 1:24-25

Leader To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore!

All Thanks be to God, Amen!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Advent Prayer Guide | Find a hard copy at the Welcome Table or scan the QR code for a digital version.

Christmas Eve Service | Wednesday, December 24, at 4:30 pm

All Family Service | Sunday, December 28, at 10 am



GIVING & BUDGET

	JAN-NOV 2025	DEC 2025
GIVING AS OF 12/11/2025	\$475,832	\$10,527
BUDGETED EXPENSE	700,317	65,385
DIFFERENCE	224,485	54,858



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“Thanks be to God, He is a Savior who seeks the lost, who with eyes supernaturally farsighted discerns us a long way off, and draws our interest to Himself by the sweet constraint of His grace, till we are face to face with Him and our soul is saved. As once, in the incarnation, He came down from heaven to seek mankind, so He still comes down silently from heaven in the case of each sinner, and pursues his search for that individual soul following it through all the mazes of its waywardness and the devious paths of its folly, sometimes unto the very brink of destruction, till at last His grace overtakes it and says, “I must lodge at your house.” For, besides the divine omniscience here manifested, we are made witnesses of the Lord’s sovereign and almighty power.”

GEERHARDUS VOS
AMERICAN THEOLOGIAN (1862–1949)

O Radiant Dawn,
Splendor of eternal light,
Sun of righteousness:
Come, shine on those who dwell in darkness
and the shadow of death.

O ORIENS (O RADIANT DAWN)
FROM THE O ANTIPHONS (7TH CENTURY)

DECEMBER 14, 2025
THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT