

CHRISTMAS EVE 2016 – CANDLELIGHT SERVICE – ST. THOMAS

PRELUDE:

WELCOME: The **Light** of the World

(Lights off):

P.: “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth didn’t have any shape. And it was empty. Darkness was over the surface of the ocean. At that time, the ocean covered the earth. The Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. - God said, ‘**Let there be light.**’ And there was **light**. God saw that the **light** was good.” (Genesis 1:1-4a, NIRV).

(To light the altar candles and the Advent Wreath candles during the hymn)

Hymn: (LSB 379) – O come, all ye faithful

1. O come, all ye faithful, Joyful, and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem.
Come and behold Him, Born the King of angels!

Refrain: O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

2. Highest, most holy, **Light of Light** eternal,
Born of a virgin, a mortal He comes;
Son of the Father Now in flesh appearing. - Refrain:...

3. Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens, of heaven above!
Glory to God, in the highest! – Refrain:...

(To switch on the lights)

P. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer: P.: O God, You make this most Holy Night to **shine** with the brightness of the **true Light**. Grant that as we have known the mystery of that light on earth we may also come to the fullness of His joys in heaven; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

P.: Many prophecies in the Old Testament tell about a special **Light** that would come to shine into the darkness of the world:

R.: "I see him, but I don't see him now. I view him, but he isn't near...**A star** will come from among the people of Jacob... A king will rise up out of Israel...Israel will grow strong... A ruler will come from among the people of Jacob." (Numbers 24:17, 18b, and 19a).

P.: Perhaps the Three Wise Men from the East that prophecy, and when they saw the special **star** in the sky, they followed it to find the true **Light** and King of Israel.

Hymn: The First Noel (1-4)

1. The First Noel, the Angels did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel
Born is the King of Israel!

2. They looked up and saw a **star**
Shining in the East beyond them far
And to the earth it gave great light
And so it continued both day and night.

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel
Born is the King of Israel!

3. This **star** drew nigh to the Northwest
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest
And there it did both stop and stay
Right o'er the place where Jesus lay.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel
Born is the King of Israel!

4. Then entered in those Wise men three
Full reverently upon their knee
And offered there in His presence
Their gold and myrrh and frankincense.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel
Born is the King of Israel!

P.: Prophet Isaiah spoke about the **Light** that would shine over those
living in darkness:

(Carol) R.: The people who are now living in darkness
will see a great **light**.

They are now living in a very dark land.

But a **light** will shine on them.

A Child will be born to us.

A Son will be given to us.

He will rule over us.

And He will be called

Wonderful Adviser and Mighty God.

He will also be called Father Who Lives Forever
and Prince Who Brings Peace.

(Isaiah 9).

P.: The prophesy about the **Light** is linked to the prophecy about a child, a very special Child, that would be born to be King, a King forever!

Hymn: (LSB 412, vv.1-4) – The people that in darkness sat

1.The people that in darkness
sat
a glorious light have seen;
the **Light** has shined on them
who long
in shades of death have been....
in shades of death have been.

2.To hail thee, **Sun of
Righteousness,**
the gathering nations come,
their joy when the reapers bear
their harvest treasures home...
their harvest treasures home.

3. For unto us a Child is born,
to us a Son is given;
and on his shoulder ever rests
all power in earth and heaven...
all power in earth and heaven.

4.His name shall be the Prince
of Peace
the everlasting Lord,
the Wonderful, the Counsellor,
the God by all adored...
the God by all adored.

P.: The Evangelist John tells a different Christmas story. He doesn't tell about a stable and a manger, or about shepherd and wise men. He tells about the **Light** that comes, establishing a strong link with the beginning of the Bible, where the first **light** was created. John wrote:

R.: "In the beginning, the Word was already there. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.

All things were made through Him. Nothing that has been made was made without Him. Life was in Him, and that life was the **light** for all people. The **light** shines in the darkness. But the darkness has not understood it.

A man came who was sent from God. His name was John. He came to give witness about that **light**. He gave witness so that all people could believe.

John himself was not the **light**. He came only as a witness to the **light**. The true **light** that gives **light** to every man was coming into the world.

The Word was in the world that was made through Him. But the world did not recognize Him. He came to what was His own. But His own people did not accept Him.

Some people did accept Him. They believed in His name. He gave them the right to become children of God. To be a child of God has nothing to do with human parents. Children of God are not born because of human choice or because a husband wants them to be born. They are born because of what God does.

The Word became a human being. He made his home with us. We have seen His glory. It is the glory of the one and only Son. He came from the Father. And He was full of grace and truth.” (John 1:1-14).

Hymn: (LSB 380, vv. 1,3) – Hark! The herald angels sing

1. Hark! The herald angels sing
Glory to the new-born King,
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled.
Joyful, all you nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim
"Christ is born in Bethlehem".
Hark! The herald angels sing
Glory to the new born King.

3. Hail, the Heav'n-born Prince
of peace!
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
Ris'n with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by,
Born that we no more may die,
Born to raise each child of
earth,
Born to give us second birth.
Hark! The herald-angels sing
Glory to the new-born King.

P.: Jesus identified Himself with the true **Light** when he said:

R.: “I am the **light** of the world. Those who follow me will never walk in darkness. They will have the **light** that leads to life.” ... “I have come into the world to be a **light**. No one who believes in me will stay in darkness.” (John 8:12; John 12:46).

P.: And Jesus spoke about us as Christians that we are **lights** too, shining His love into the world:

R.: “You are the **light** of the world. A city on a hill can’t be hidden. Also, people do not **light** a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand. Then it gives **light** to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your **light** shine in front of others. Then they will see the good things you do. And they will praise your Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:14-16).

Hymn: (LSB 337,vv. 1,4,5) – The night will soon be ending

1. The night will soon be ending; the dawn cannot be far.
Let songs of praise ascending now greet the **Morning Star!**
All you whom darkness frightens with guilt or grief or pain,
God’s **radiant Star** now brightens and bids you sing again.

4. Yet nights will bring their sadness and rob our hearts of peace,
and sin in all its madness around us may increase.
But now one **Star** is beaming whose rays have pierced the night:
God comes for our redeeming from sin’s oppressive might.

5. God dwells with us in darkness and makes the night as day;
yet we resist the brightness and turn from God away.
But grace does not forsake us, however far we run.
God claim us still as children through Mary’s infant son.

P.: When Jesus was born, it was dark in the stable where His parents found room. Perhaps a small lamp was giving some **light** on that very special night.

(Carol) R.: “In those days, Caesar Augustus made a law. It required that a list be made of everyone in the whole Roman world. It was the first time a list was made of the people while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be listed.

So Joseph went also. He went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea. That is where Bethlehem, the town of David, was. Joseph went there because he belonged to the family line of David. He went there with Mary to be listed. Mary was engaged to him. She was expecting a baby.

While Joseph and Mary were there, the time came for the child to be born. She gave birth to her first baby. It was a boy. She wrapped him in large strips of cloth. Then she placed him in a manger. There was no room for them in the inn.” (Luke 2:1-7).

Hymn: LSB 393. Vv.1,2) – Infant Holy

1. Infant holy, infant lowly,
For His bed a cattle stall;
Oxen lowing, little knowing
Christ the child is Lord of all.
Swiftly winging, angels singing,
Bells are ringing, tidings
bringing:
Christ the child is Lord of all!
Christ the child is Lord of all!

2. Flocks were sleeping,
shepherds keeping

Vigil till the morning new
Saw the glory, heard the story,
Tidings of a Gospel true
Thus rejoicing, free from
sorrow,
Praised voicing, greet the
morrow:
Christ the child was born for
you!
Christ the child was born for
you!

P.: But God wanted to celebrate the coming of His Son into the world! So, he **shone** His glory on some shepherds in the fields of Bethlehem:

R.: “There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby. It was night, and they were looking after their sheep. An angel of the Lord appeared to them. And the glory of the Lord **shone** around them. They were terrified.

But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy. It is for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord. Here is how you will know I am telling you the truth. You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger.”

Suddenly a large group of angels from heaven also appeared. They were praising God. They said,

“May glory be given to God in the highest heaven!

And may peace be given to those He is pleased with on earth!” (Luke 2:8-14).

Hymn: (LSB 368. Vv. 1-3) – Angels we have heard on high

1. Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o'er the plains
and the mountains in reply,
echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo! (2x)

2. Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains
prolong?
what the gladsome tidings be

which inspire your heav'nly
song?

Gloria in excelsis Deo! (2x)

3. Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels
sing:

come, adore on bended knee,
Christ the Lord, the new born
king.

Gloria in excelsis Deo! (2x)

P.: The **light** which shone over the fields of Bethlehem and the message of the angel were contagious!

R.: The angels left and went into heaven. Then the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem. Let's 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. The baby was lying in the manger. After the shepherds had seen him, they told everyone. They reported what the angel had said about this child. All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

But Mary kept all these things like a secret treasure in her heart. She thought about them over and over.

The shepherds returned. They gave glory and praise to God. Everything they had seen and heard was just as they had been told.

(Luke 2:15-20).

Hymn: (LSB 370, v.1) – What child is this

1. What child is this, who, laid to rest

On Mary's lap, is sleeping?

Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,

While shepherds watch are keeping?

This, this is Christ the King,

Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:

Haste, haste to bring him laud,

The Babe, the Son of Mary!

P.: And the star prophesied in the Old Testament **shone** in the sky when Jesus was born! Matthew tells us:

(Carol) R.: Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea. This happened while Herod was king of Judea.

After Jesus' birth, Wise Men from the east came to Jerusalem. They asked, "Where is the child who has been born to be king of the Jews? When we were in the east, we saw his **star**. Now we have come to worship him." ...

The star they had seen when they were in the east went ahead of them. It finally stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the **star**, they were filled with joy.

The Wise Men went to the house. There they saw the child with his mother Mary. They bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures. They gave him gold, incense and myrrh."

(Matthew 2:1-11).

The Offering + Hymn: (LSB 397, vv.1-3) – As with gladness

1. As with gladness men of old
Did the guiding **star** behold;
As with joy they hailed its **light**,
Leading onward, beaming
bright,
So, most gracious Lord, may we
Evermore be led by Thee!

2. As with joyful steps they
sped,
Savior, to Thy lowly bed,
There to bend the knee before
Thee whom heaven and earth

adore,
So may we with willing feet
Ever seek Thy mercy-seat!

3. As they offered gifts most
rare
At Thy cradle, rude and bare,
So may we with holy joy,
Pure and free from sin's alloy,
All our costliest treasures bring,
Christ, to Thee, our heavenly
King!

Thanksgiving Prayer

P.: The enemies of Jesus always tried and still try to blow out the true **Light**. Jesus warned the people of His time and warns us as well:

R.: "You are going to have the **light** just a little while longer. Walk while you have the **light**. Do this before darkness catches up with

you. Anyone who walks in the dark does not know where he is going... While you have the **light**, put your trust in it. Then you can become sons of **light** ... Here is the judgment: **Light** has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of **light**. They loved darkness because what they did was evil...Everyone who does evil things hates the **light**. They will not come into the **light**. They are afraid that what they do will be seen. But anyone who lives by the truth comes into the **light**. He does this so that it will be easy to see that what he has done is with God's help." (John 12:35,36a; John 3:19-21).

P.: The Apostle John wrote in his First Letter:

R.: "Here is the message we have heard from him and announce to you. God is **light**. There is no darkness in Him at all. Suppose we say that we share life with God but still walk in the darkness. Then we are lying. We are not living by the truth. But suppose we walk in the **light**, just as he is in the **light**. Then we share life with one another. And the blood of Jesus, his Son, makes us pure from all sin." (1 John 1:5-7).

Hymn: (LSB 365, vv.1-3) –Away in a manger

1. Away in a manger,
No crib for His bed
The little Lord Jesus
Laid down His sweet head
The **stars** in the bright sky
Looked down where He lay
The little Lord Jesus
Asleep on the hay.

2. The cattle are lowing
The poor Baby wakes
But little Lord Jesus
No crying He makes,

I love Thee, Lord Jesus
Look down from the sky
And stay by my side,
'Til morning is nigh.

3. 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.

Apostles' Creed:

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. From thence he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Hymn: (LSB 387, vv. 1,2,4) – Joy to the world -

To give led candles to the congregation during the hymn).

1. Joy to the world! The Lord
has come;
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart/ prepare him
room,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven, and heaven, and
nature sing.

2. Joy to the Earth! the Savior
reigns;
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and streams
and hills and plains

Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding
joy.

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

P.: Peter encourages us to share this message with all:

R.: “But God chose you to be his people. You are royal priests. You are a holy nation. You are a people who belong to God. All of this is

so that you can sing his praises. He brought you out of darkness into his wonderful **light**.” (1 Peter 2:8-9).

P.: And our hope is God’s promises of the new earth and the new heaven in eternity, as we read in the Book of Revelation:

(Carol) R.: “The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city. God’s servants will serve him. They will see his face. His name will be on their foreheads.

There will be no more night. They will not need the **light** of a **lamp** or the **light of the sun**. The Lord God will give them **light**. They will rule for ever and ever.

The angel said to me, “You can trust these words. They are true. The Lord is the God of the spirits of the prophets. He sent his angel to show those who serve him the things that must soon take place... (Jesus said:) “Look! I am coming soon! Blessed are those who obey the words of the prophecy in this book”... I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this witness for the churches. I am the Root and the Son of David. I am the **bright Morning Star**.”... He who gives witness to these things says, “Yes. I am coming soon.”

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!... May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with God’s people. Amen.” (Revelation 22:3-7, 16, 20, 21).

Hymn (LSB 363, vv.1-3) – Silent Night, Holy Night (in English, Afrikaans, German and Portuguese). (*To witch off the lights*)

ENGLISH:

1.Silent night, Holy night,
All is calm, all is bright,
'Round yon Virgin Mother and
Child
Holy Infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

2.Silent night, Holy night,
Shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven
afar,
Heav'nly hosts sing Alleluia;
Christ the Savior is born,
Christ the Savior is born.

3. Silent night, Holy night,
Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from your holy
face,
With the dawn of redeeming
grace
Jesus, Lord, at your birth,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth.

AFRIKAANS

1. Stille nag, heilige nag,
Alles rus, eensaam wag
Slegs Maria, geseënde vrou
By haar Kindjie, met Josef so
trou
Soete Hemelse rus!
Soete Hemelse rus!

2. Stille nag, heilige nag,
oor die veld, lief en sag,
klink die lied van die
engelekoor.
eers deur herders, dan verder
gehoor
Juig, die Redder is daar!
Juig, die Redder is daar!

3. Stille nag, heilige nag,
Jesus-kind, vriend'lik lag
liefde teer uit u godd'like
mond;

tans daag heerlijk die
vrywordingstond
Heer, gebore vir ons!
Heer, gebore vir ons!

GERMAN

1. Stille Nacht! Heil'ge Nacht!
Alles schläft; einsam wacht
Nur das traute hoch heilige
Paar.

Holder Knab' im lockigen Haar,
Schlafe in himmlischer Ruh!
Schlafe in himmlischer Ruh!

2. Stille Nacht! Heil'ge Nacht!
Gottes Sohn, o wie lacht
Lieb' aus deinem göttlichen
Mund,
Da uns schlägt die rettende
Stund'.

Jesus in deiner Geburt!
Jesus in deiner Geburt!

3. Stille Nacht! Heil'ge Nacht!
Hirten erst kundgemacht
Durch der Engel Alleluja,
Tönt es laut bei Ferne und Nah:
"Jesus der Retter ist da!"
"Jesus der Retter ist da!"

PORTUGUESE

1. Noite feliz, noite feliz!
O Senhor, Deus de Amor,
Pobrezinho, nasceu em Belém
Eis na lapa Jesus, nosso Bem
Dorme em paz, ó Jesus!
Dorme em paz, ó Jesus!

2. Noite feliz, noite feliz!
Eis que no ar vem cantar
Aos pastores os anjos dos céus,

Anunciando a chegada de Deus:
De Jesus Salvador!
De Jesus Salvador!

3. Noite feliz, noite feliz!
Ó Jesus, Deus da luz!
Quão afável é o teu coração
Que quiseste nascer nosso
irmão
E a nós todos salvar!
E a nós todos salvar!

P.: The countless **lights** of the Christmas Season remind us of the **True Light** that comes to us, Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

P.: Let us pray: Blessed are you, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have had mercy on us and given Your only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. We give You thanks for the salvation You have granted to us through Jesus, the Word made flesh, the child of Mary; the **Light** of the world, our Immanuel. Send the Spirit of Your Son into our hearts, that as Your beloved children we may welcome always our Saviour who comes to us in His Word and in His Sacrament. Bless our families as we are celebrating Christmas Eve after this Service. Be with the sick and with the lonely and bless them. In Jesus name, Amen.

P. & C.: The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver

us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.

P.: The Blessing:

P.: The LORD bless you and keep you.

The LORD make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The LORD lift up His countenance on you and give you peace. Amen.

(To switch on the lights)

Announcements:

Welcome all + visitors:

Next services:

25 December, (Tomorrow), 09:30am – Christmas Service

01 January,(next Sunday), 09:30am – New Year Service

Merry Christmas in several languages...

Hymn: We wish you a merry Christmas - (SttL 18) -

(all greet all in a circle).

- We wish you a Merry
Christmas
We wish you a Merry
Christmas
We wish you a Merry
Christmas
And a Happy New Year.
- Good tidings we bring
To you and your kin
Good tidings for
Christmas
And a happy new year.

(Pastor Carlos Walter Winterle, Cape Town,
(Adapted from Christmas Eve 2013)