

THE HOLY EUCHARIST

The Lighting of the Christ Candle

Reader: "While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger" (Luke 2:6-7).

Reader: Tonight, angels far and near sing tender lullabies; well-worn fabric full of years holds in the warmth of parental love; animals and shepherds crowd in tight, glowing with adoration, while a muffled cry squeezes out to greet the world.

People: Tonight we give thanks for every child among us. Each new birth -- regardless of circumstances -- reminds us of the preciousness of life, the potential of tomorrow, the promise of God.

Reader: On this Christmas Eve, we light the Christ candle for the child-King, the infant-Redeemer, the lowly-Lord. And now we know . . . He is born and nothing will ever be the same!
(Light all candles.)

A Candle is Burning

A candle is burning, a flame warm and bright,
a candle of hope in December's dark night.
While angels sing blessing from heaven's starry sky,
our hearts we prepare now for Jesus is nigh.

A candle is burning, a candle of peace,
a candle to signal that conflict must cease:
for Jesus is coming to show us the way;
a message of peace humbly laid in the hay.

A candle is burning, a candle of joy.
A candle to welcome brave Mary's new boy.
Our hearts fill with wonder, and eyes light and glow
as joy brightens winter like sunshine on snow.

A candle is burning, a candle of love,
a candle to point us to heaven above,
A baby for Christmas, a wonderful birth,
for Jesus is bringing God's love to our earth.

We honour Messiah with Christ candle's flame
our Christmas Eve candles glad tidings proclaim.
O Come all you faithful, rejoice in this night,
as God comes among us, the Christian's true light.

("A Candle is Burning" is by Sandra Dean, 1986.)

The Gathering of the Community

Opening Hymn:

(#118) **O Come, All Ye Faithful**

The Grace *and* Collect for Purity
'Glory to God'

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The Collect of the Day

Eternal God, this holy night is radiant with the brilliance of your one true light. As we have known the revelation of that light on earth, bring us to see the splendour of your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Liturgy of the Word

First Reading:

Isaiah 62:6-12

Psalm 97

REFRAIN All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

The Lord is king; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of the isles be glad. Clouds and darkness are round about him, righteousness and justice are the foundations of his throne. R A fire goes before him and burns up his enemies on every side. His lightnings light up the world; the earth sees it and is afraid. R

The mountains melt like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the peoples see his glory. R Confounded be all who worship carved images and delight in false gods! Bow down before him, all you gods. Zion hears and is glad, and the cities of Judah rejoice, because of your judgements, O Lord. R For you are the Lord, most high over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods. The Lord loves those who hate evil; he preserves the lives of his saints and delivers them from the hand of the wicked. R Light has sprung up for the righteous, and joyful gladness for those who are truehearted. Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous, and give thanks to his holy name.

Second Reading: **Titus 3:4-7**

Gradual Hymn: **(#119) Silent Night**

The Gospel: **Luke 2:1-20**

Sermon

The Nicene Creed p. 189

The Prayers of the People
Confession and Absolution p. 191

The Peace

Offertory Hymn: **(#140) It Came Upon A Midnight Clear**

The Liturgy of the Table

Prayer over the Gifts

Source of light and gladness, accept all we offer on this joyful feast. May we grow up in him who unites our lives to yours; for his is Lord now and for ever.

The Great Thanksgiving (#3) p. 198

The Lord's Prayer p. 211

The Breaking of the Bread (#6) p. 213

The Communion

The Prayer after Communion

Father of all, tonight you have united earth and heaven in sending your Son to take our human nature. May we who have tasted heavenly things share in the life of his eternal kingdom. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Doxology

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The Blessing *and* Dismissal

Closing Hymn:

(#138) **Hark! The Herald Angels Sing**