

# ***See What Great Love***

*A Children's Christmas—December 24, 2019*

**Processional: “Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful” (CW 55)**

**Oh, come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant,  
Oh, come ye, oh, come ye to Bethlehem;  
Come and behold Him, Born the King of angels.  
Oh, come, let us adore Him,  
Oh, come, let us adore Him,  
Oh, come, let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord.**

**God from true God, and Light from Light eternal,  
Born of a virgin, to earth He comes,  
Only begotten Son of God the Father.  
Oh, come, let us adore Him,  
Oh, come, let us adore Him,  
Oh, come, let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord.**

**Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation;  
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above.  
Glory to God, All glory in the highest.  
Oh, come, let us adore Him,  
Oh, come, let us adore Him,  
Oh, come, let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord.**

**Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, Born this happy morning;  
Jesus, to Thee be all glory giv'n,  
Word of the Father, Now in flesh appearing.  
Oh, come, let us adore Him,  
Oh, come, let us adore Him,  
Oh, come, let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord.**

## **Invocation**

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

**C:** Amen.

## **Sermonette**

## Christmas Prayer

P: Almighty God, You made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that as we have known on earth the wonder of that light, we may also behold Him in all His glory in the life to come through Your only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

P: “See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!”

## 1. GOD’S LOVE AT CREATION

**Narration (Emma):** Little children sing, “God is so good, he’s so good to me.” God has always been good to his creation. God’s love was at work even before the world was made.

The very first verse of the Bible says, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Mountains, seas, and rivers; every form of plant life; the universe with the sun, moon, and all the stars; all the living creatures on land and in the water. For all of it, he simply said, “Let there be . . .” and there it was. And then . . . and then he created once more. This time, the Bible chronicles a different process altogether.

**Narration (Kailyn):** “Then God said, ‘Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’” (Genesis 1:26)

“So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.” (Genesis 1:27)

**Recitation (Level 3):** “God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.’” (Genesis 1:28)

**Narration (Kailyn):** Genesis chapter 2 goes on to describe the way God created the first human:

**Recitation (Level 3):** “Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.” (Genesis 2:7)

**Narration (Emma):** And God provided for every need of this special creation, his children.

“Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” (Genesis 2:8,9)

“See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!”

## Congregational Hymn: CW 52 “On Christmas Night All Christians Sing”

On Christmas night all Christians sing  
To hear the news the angels bring;  
On Christmas night all Christians sing  
To hear the news the angels bring,  
News of great joy, news of great mirth,  
News of our merciful King's birth.

When sin departs before Your grace,  
Then life and health come in its place.  
When sin departs before Your grace,  
Then life and health come in its place.  
Angels and saints with joy may sing  
All for to see the newborn King.

From out of darkness we have Light  
Which made the angels sing this night.  
From out of darkness we have Light  
Which made the angels sing this night:  
"Glory to God and peace to men  
Now and forevermore, Amen."

## 2. GOD’S LOVE WHEN HUMANS SINNED

**Narration (Seann):** The perfect world God made for his perfect children did not last. Genesis 2:15-17 tells us more about the beginning days of God’s new earth:

**Narration (Emma):** “The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the LORD God commanded the man, ‘You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.’” (Genesis 2:15-17)

**Narration (Seann):** Why would God give such a command? The threat of death does not sound very loving at all. Placing the tree in the garden, along with the command not to eat from what is always there in front of them, seems like a recipe for disaster. With our limited reason, we might wonder how that could be good.

God had made the entire universe for his children—the cycle of day and night, food for nourishment, a suitable place in which to live, and beauty beyond compare. What love God had shown for his children! And that completely out of his goodness, for they had done nothing to earn it or deserve it.

What could they do to show their love for him in return? How could God’s children express their love to their most generous God?

God gave them a way. They could eat from ANY tree . . . except one. In walking past the forbidden tree, they were able to show their love for God by following what he said. God says that his children listen to his voice, and they follow him (John 10:27). But Genesis chapter 3 tells us what happened not long after God gave his children a way to express love for him.

**Recitation (Level 2):** “Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, ‘Did God really say, “You must not eat from any tree in the garden?”’” (Genesis 3:1)

**Narration (Seann):** “The woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, “You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.”’” (Genesis 3:2,3)

**Recitation (Level 2):** “‘You will not surely die,’ the serpent said to the woman. ‘For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’” (Genesis 3:4,5)

**Narration (Emma):** “When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.” (Genesis 3:6)

What happened next shows us again the great love of our God and Father. Sin had come. Death was inevitable. But God promised a Savior who would defeat death and the devil and restore peace between God and people. Let’s listen to these words from Genesis chapter 3:

**Narration (Seann):** “Then the LORD God said to the woman, ‘What is this you have done?’ The woman said, ‘The serpent deceived me, and I ate.’ So the LORD God said to the serpent, ‘Because you have done this, Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life.’”

“‘And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.’”

“‘See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!’”

### **Congregational Hymn: CW 62 “Joy to the World”**

**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.**

**Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!  
Let all their songs employ,  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**

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.

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, wonders of His love.

### 3. GOD'S LOVE IN HIS FAITHFULNESS

**Narration (Emma):** The Savior did not come right away. Adam and Eve did not know it, but it would be many centuries before the Savior would be born.

God lavished his love on his children by reminding them of his promise over and over. Again and again, he renewed his promise through his believers and prophets. The prophet with perhaps the most to say about the coming Savior lived eight hundred years before the Savior was born. His name was Isaiah, and he said this:

**Narration (Kailyn):** "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14)

**Narration (Emma):** "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, . . . and he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:2,6)

**Narration (Kailyn):** "See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!"

### 4. GOD'S LOVE IN BETHLEHEM

**Sunday School Song: "Listen to the Story"**

*Listen to the story that we love to tell, Story of the Holy One.  
Tell you of the Savior whom we love so well; Story of the Father's Son!  
Born as a baby in the midnight, Bringing us eternal day;  
Came like the dawning of the sunlight, Came to take our sins away.*

*Angels told the story to a dying world; Listen as we sing it to you.  
Like the shepherds looking for the living Lord, Seek and you will find Him, too.  
Born as a baby in the midnight, Bringing us eternal day;  
Came like the dawning of the sunlight, Came to take our sins away.*

**Narration (Seann):** Finally, the time came. The time was right. Over three hundred reminders from the Old Testament prophets had revealed details of the great love the Father lavishes on us. When that set time had come, all the events came together in one moment in history. Listen to the account from Luke 2:1-20.

**Recitation (Level 1):** “In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register.

**Recitation (Level 2):** “So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

**Recitation (Level 1):** While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

**Congregational Hymn: CW 65 “O Little Town of Bethlehem”**

O little town of Bethlehem,  
How still we see thee lie!  
Above thy 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.

For Christ is born of Mary,  
And, gathered all above,  
While mortals sleep, The angels keep  
Their watch of wond'ring love.  
O morning stars, together  
Proclaim the holy birth,  
And praises sing To God the King  
And peace to all the earth.

How silently, how silently  
The wondrous gift is giv'n!  
So God imparts To human hearts  
The blessings of His heav'n.  
No ear may hear His coming,  
But in this world of sin  
Where meek souls will Receive Him still,  
The dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem,  
Descend to us, we pray;  
Cast out our sin And enter in;  
Be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels  
The great glad tidings tell;  
Oh, come to us, Abide with us,  
Our Lord Immanuel!

**Recitation (Level 3):** “And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.’

“Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

**ALL Levels Recitation:** ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.’

**Congregational and Sunday School Hymn: CW 63 “Angels We Have Heard on High”**

*(Congregation sings the verses; Children sing the refrain)*

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

*Refrain:*

*Gloria in excelsis Deo;*

*Gloria in excelsis Deo.*

Shepherds, why this jubilee?  
Why your joyous strains prolong?  
What the gladsome tidings be  
Which inspire your heav'nly song? [Refrain]

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

**Narration (Seann):** “When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.’

**Narration (Kailyn):** “So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

**Narration (Seann):** But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.”

**Narration (Kailyn):** “See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!”

**Sunday School Song: CW 51 vs. 1, 2, 5 “I Am So Glad When Christmas Comes”**

*I am so glad when Christmas comes, The night of Jesus’ birth,  
When Bethl’em’s star shown as the sun, And angels sang on earth.*

*The little child of Bethlehem, He was a king indeed!  
For He came down from heav’n above To help a world in need.*

*And so I love each Christmas Eve, And I love Jesus, too;  
And that He loves me ev’ry day I know so well is true.*

## 5. GOD’S LOVE TO ALL

**Narration (Emma):** Who are the “children of God”? In the Old Testament, the descendants of Abraham were rarely called God’s children but were instead often referred to as “God’s people” or his “chosen people.” God kept these people separate from other nations to preserve the human line for the birth of the promised Savior. But “children of God” appears more often in the New Testament, and the inspired writers tell us who God’s children are:

**Narration (Seann):** “In Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith.” (Galatians 3:26)

**Narration (Emma):** “It is not the children by physical descent who are God’s children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham’s offspring.” (Romans 9:8)

**Narration (Seann):** Believers are God’s children! When the Holy Spirit works faith in a person’s heart, that person becomes a child of God. And this is how faith comes:

**Narration (Emma):** “Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.” (Romans 10:17)

**Narration (Seann):** And that word of Christ is this:

**Narration (Emma):** “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

**Narration (Seann):** “See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!”

## Sunday School Song: "See What Great Love" by Debra Bakken

### Refrain

*See what great love the Father has shown, the Father has shown to us  
That we should be called the children of God, and that is what we are!*

*See, how God shows His love for us: while we were still in our sin,  
He sent His son a tiny child so we will live with Him!*

### **Refrain**

*See, how God shows His love for us: His son was Emmanuel!  
He healed the sick, He raised the dead, and taught God's word to all.*

### **Refrain**

*See, how God shows His love for us: His Son washed away our sin.  
He died on Calv'ry's gruesome cross! His blood has made us clean!*

### **Refrain**

## Offering

### Christmas Prayer of the Church

P: Father, with joy and wonder we gather around the manger on this night as we recall how great is Your love for us, sending Your Son into our world wrapped in our flesh as a tiny child to forgive our sins.

**C: Thank You, Lord, for this Christmas gift.**

P: Jesus, on this night we recall how great is Your love for us. You gave up heaven to live on earth as one of us, and one with us, to forgive our sin.

**C: Thank You, Lord, for this Christmas gift.**

P: Holy Spirit, on this night we recall how great is Your love for us, gathering us together through the waters of Baptism and nourishing our faith through the Word and by the body and blood of Jesus for the forgiveness of our sin.

**C: Thank You, Lord, for this Christmas gift given, received in faith, and kept unto life eternal.**

P: Gracious Lord, we pray that we not shut the Lord Jesus out of our hearts, but be ever ready to welcome Him as He comes to us still today, while awaiting the Last Day when He comes as a thief in the night, not born in our flesh but to resurrect all flesh and to make all things new. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

P: Everlasting Lord, we pray that we see Jesus not only as the baby of Bethlehem, but also honor Him as the Christ of the cross and recognize the majesty of the King of kings and Lord of lords, both humbly adoring and proudly proclaiming Him as our King and Lord. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

P: Renewing Lord, let the Good News of Christmas inspire a renewing of hope, faith, joy, wonder, and witness in our hearts, our homes, in this congregation, and in the Church throughout the world. Lord, in Your mercy,  
**C: hear our prayer.**

P: Comforting Lord, we pray for all those who lack joy this Christmastime due to afflictions spiritually, mentally, and physically. We remember those who request our prayers, and those we name in our hearts [brief pause for silent prayer]. Grant that the hope and promise found in a Savior born for them will give peace in times of trial. Lord, in Your mercy,  
**C: hear our prayer.**

P: Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy through the Savior born for us, Jesus Christ, our Lord.  
**C: Thank You, Lord, for this Christmas gift. Amen.**

### **Lighting of the Candles**

*The pastor will call forward the ushers and will light his candle off the Christ Candle, and then light their candles. The ushers will go down the aisles lighting the person on the end's candle. The person WITHOUT the flame will tip their candle towards the lighted candle and will pass the flame on to the next person in the row. Be careful not to spill candle wax.*

### **Prayer**

P: O God, who makes us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of Your only Son, Jesus Christ, grant that as we joyfully receive Him as our Redeemer, so we may with sure confidence behold Him when He shall come to be our judge, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.  
**C: Amen.**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

**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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are Yours now and forever. Amen.**

### **Blessing**

P: May He who by His incarnation gathered things earthly and heavenly into one, fill us with such joy that comes with the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins and the hope of eternal life. And the blessing of God Almighty—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—be upon you and remain with you always.  
**C: Amen.**

**Recessional Hymn: CW 60 “Silent Night”**

**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.**

*(sung in German)*

**Stille Nacht! Heil'ge Nacht!  
Alles schläft; einsam wacht  
Nur das traute hoch heilige Paar.  
Holder Knab' im lockigen Haar,  
Schlafe in himmlischer Ruh!**

**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!**

**Silent night! Holy night!  
Son of God, love's pure light  
Radiant beams from Thy holy face  
With the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth,  
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth. (CW 60)**

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- ❖ The children will receive Christmas bags as they leave church this evening.
- ❖ When you leave the chapel, extinguish candles in the entryway of the church and place them in the receptacles provided.
- ❖ Christmas Day worship will take place tomorrow at 10:30 AM.



