



Processional: "Oh Come Little Children"

Oh come, little children, O come one and all,
 To Bethlehem haste, to the manger so small,
 God's Son for a gift has been sent you this night
 To be your redeemer, your joy and delight.

He's born in a stable for you and for me,
 Draw near by the bright gleaming starlight to see,
 In swaddling clothes lying, so meek, and so mild,
 And purer than angels - the heavenly Child.

See Mary and Joseph, with love-beaming eyes,
 Are gazing upon the rude bed where He lies,
 The shepherds are kneeling, with hearts full of love
 While angels sing loud hallelujahs above.

Kneel down and adore Him with shepherds today,
 Lift up little hands now and praise Him as they
 Rejoice that a Savior from sin you can boast,
 And join in the song of the heavenly host.

The Call to Worship:

(Order of Vespers)

P: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.
 C: ♪ Amen.

P: O Lord, open Thou my lips.
 C: ♪ And my mouth shall show forth Thy praise.

P: Make haste, O God, to deliver me.
 C: ♪ Make haste to help me, O Lord.
 Glory be to the Father and to the Son
 and to the Holy Ghost:
 As it was in the beginning, is now,
 and ever will shall be:
 World without end. Amen. Hallelujah!

P: Let us pray: O God, because You once caused this holy night to
 shine with the brightness of the true Light, grant that we who have
 known the mystery of that Light here on earth may come to the full
 measure of its joys in heaven; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who
 lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and
 forever.
 C: ♪ Amen.

Introduction:

See Christmas Through a Child's Eyes

Pastor: Christmas is so exciting, especially for children. The candy and gifts bring a sparkle to a child's eyes, causing even adults to smile. But Christmas is really to be special for everyone, a time in which people of all ages can be excited as little children - for the greatest of gifts has been given to all: a Savior, Christ the new-born King! Even He was once a Child as He in love came to save us. And so tonight in child-like faith we return to Bethlehem to:

See Christmas Through a Child's Eyes

Responsive Reading:

(Galatians 4:1-7)

- P: Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all,
C: But is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father.
- P: Even so we, when we were children,
C: Were in bondage under the elements of the world.
- P: But when the fullness of the time had come,
C: God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,
- P: To redeem those who were under the law,
C: That we might receive the adoption as sons.
- P: And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts,
C: Crying out, "Abba, Father!"
- P: Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son,
C: And if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Children's Hymn:

Your little ones, dear Lord, are we
And come Your lowly bed to see;
Enlighten ev'ry soul and mind
That we the way to You may find.

Oh, draw us wholly to You, Lord,
To us Your constant grace accord;
True faith and love to us impart
That we may hold You in our heart,

Until at last we too, proclaim,
With all Your saints, Your glorious name;
In paradise our songs renew
And praise You as the angels do.



Part One:

"The Eyes of the Children of Men"

Narrator: When God created the world, everything was perfect. Genesis 1:31 tells us, "Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good." Adam and Eve were innocent and did not have to deal with the negative effects of aging. They were perfect children of God without any worries. But the moment they disobeyed God and brought sin into the world everything changed. Sin ruined everything, making us all children of men who have a sinful nature.

To the woman [the LORD] said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children..." (Genesis 3:16)

The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men, To see if there are any who understand, who seek God. They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one. (Psalm 14:2-3)

"Woe to the rebellious children," says the LORD, "Who take counsel, but not of Me, And who devise plans, but not of My Spirit, That they may add sin to sin..." (Isaiah 30:1)

Congregation Hymn: 105 - "Praise God the Lord, Ye Sons of Men"

Praise God the Lord, ye sons of men,
Before His highest throne;
Today He opens heaven again
And gives us His own Son. (: repeat :)

He leaves His heavenly Father's throne,
Is born an infant small,
And in a manger, poor and lone,
Lies in a humble stall. (: :)

A wondrous change which He doth make!
He takes our flesh and blood,
And He conceals for sinners' sake
His majesty of God. (: :)

He serves that I a lord may be;
A great exchange indeed!
Could Jesus' love do more for me
To help me in my need? (: :)

Part Two:

The Eyes of the Child's Love

Narrator: In spite of becoming sinful, even as children, God in His grace looked upon mankind through His eyes of grace. He set forth the plan to rescue us from our plight by sending His Son, Jesus, into the world. As Jesus came as one of us, He too, looked through His eyes in love. He was committed to changing things: reconciling us to God by His life, death, and resurrection.

In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. (1 John 4:9)

...the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared... (Titus 3:4)

(God) did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all... (Romans 8:32)

In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. (1 John 4:10)

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

Adult Choir:
"Of the Father's Love Begotten"

Part Three:

The Eyes of the Child Who's Born

Narrator: To carry out God's plan to save sinful mankind, Jesus needed to be born. Even as Jesus lay in the manger as a little Child, He remained our almighty God and Savior. He looked out at the world through His eyes in compassion and lovingkindness. He saw the world's need and began His mission of saving sinners.

Congregation and Children Hymn:

Congregation: 1) Little children, can you tell,
Do you know the story well,
Ev'ry girl and ev'ry boy,
Why the angels sing for joy
On this Christmas evening?

Children: 2) Yes, we know the story well;
Listen now, and here us tell,
Ev'ry girl and ev'ry boy
Why the angels sing for joy
On this Christmas evening.

Children: 3) For a little Babe that day
Cradled in a manger lay,
Born on earth our Lord to be;
This the wond'ring angels see
On this Christmas evening.

The Christmas Story - Luke 2:

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.



Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.

Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. "For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, 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, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

Congregation Hymn: 103 - "To Shepherds as They Watched by Night"

To shepherds as they watched by night
Appeared a host of angels bright;
Behold the tender Babe, they said,
In yonder lowly manger laid.

At Bethlehem, in David's town,
As Micah did of old make known;
'Tis Jesus Christ, your Lord and King,
Who doth to all salvation bring.

Oh, then rejoice that through His Son
God is with sinners now at one;
Made like yourselves of flesh and blood,
Your brother is the eternal God.

So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us."

And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.

Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child.

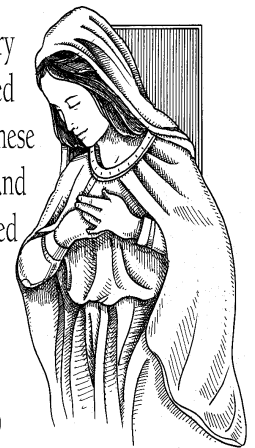
And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.

Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.

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

Luke 2:19



Congregation Hymn: 87 - "Joy to the World!"

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room
And heaven and nature sing. (: repeat :)

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let men their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
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. (: :)

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

Part Four:

The Eyes of the Children of God

Narrator: Jesus' mission was to live a perfect life in our place and then to give His life as a payment for the penalty of sin. Because Jesus did just that, God the Father has declared the entire world of sinners to be "not guilty" in His sight! This message of salvation is that which the Holy Spirit uses to draw the children of men to Him so that they become children of faith, God's very own people.

By the Holy Spirit, the Apostle Paul testifies in Romans chapter 8 - For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs -- heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ... (Romans 8:14-17a)

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:12-13)

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. (Galatians 3:26-27)

Part Five:

The Eyes of the Child-Like Faith

Narrator: Many of us look back fondly at Christmas celebrations of the past, the days when we were younger and seemed to enjoy Christmas more. As we age our makeup and joy can be scarred by the impacts of this sinful world. But Christmas reminds us that Christ was born to resolve all this, coming into the world to take away our sin. As Children of God, we struggle to simply believe this and to place our total trust in our heavenly Father, just as a little child places his trust in his parents. No matter what age we are, the joy and excitement of Christmas can be ours, for we are all to be as little children toward our Savior, living in child-like faith.

At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said - - -

"Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 18:3)

"Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 18:4)

"Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me." (Matthew 18:5)

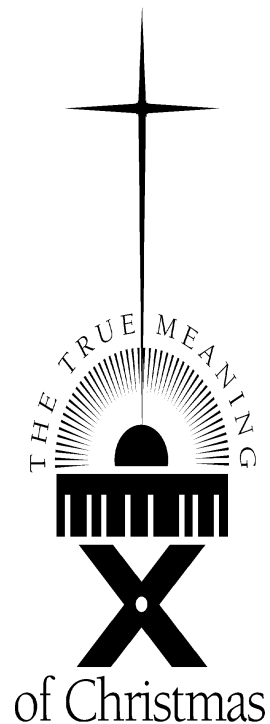
Children's Song:

God loves me dearly, grants me salvation;
God loves me dearly, loves even me.
Therefore I'll say again: God loves me dearly,
God loves me dearly, loves even me.

I was in bondage, sin, death, and darkness:
God's love was working to make me free.
Therefore I'll say again: God loves me dearly,
God loves me dearly, loves even me.

He sent forth Jesus, my dear Redeemer;
He sent forth Jesus and set me free.
Therefore I'll say again: God loves me dearly,
God loves me dearly, loves even me.

Jesus, my Savior, Himself did offer;
Jesus, my Savior, paid all I owed.
Therefore I'll say again: God loves me dearly,
God loves me dearly, loves even me.



Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, ... having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will... (Ephesians 1:3, 5)

And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. (1 John 2:28)

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. (1 John 3:2)

You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. (1 John 4:4)

Adult Choir and Congregation: 785 "Children of the Heavenly Father"

Choir:

Children of the heav'nly Father
Safely in His bosom gather;
Nestling bird nor star in heaven
Such a refuge e'er was given.

God His own doth tend and nourish;
In His holy courts they flourish.
From all evil things He spares them;
In His mighty arms He bears them.

Congregation:

Neither life nor death shall ever
From the Lord His children sever;
Unto them His grace He showeth
And their sorrows all He knoweth.

Though He giveth or He taketh,
God His children ne'er forsaketh;
His the loving purpose solely
To preserve them pure and holy.

~ Children's Offering - Closing Prayer ~

P: Benediction

C: ♪ Amen! A-men! A- -men!

~ Announcements ~

Recessional - Silent Night

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,
Heavenly 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 Thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

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Serving us tonight:

Nathan J. Pfeiffer, Pastor  
Mrs. Cindy Odenbach, Piano and Organ  
Mrs. Gweneth Hansen, Organ

Narrators:

Mr. Scott Hansen, Sunday School Superintendent  
Mr. Steve Hansen, Upper Grade Sunday School Teacher

Upper:

Lydia Hansen (6<sup>th</sup>)  
Shelby Schwab (6<sup>th</sup>)

Middle:

Bella Hansen (4<sup>th</sup>)  
Spencer Schwab (4<sup>th</sup>)  
Levi Schwab (2<sup>nd</sup>)

Lower:

Sadie Hansen (K)  
Steele Hansen (K)