

“There’s No Turning Back”

School Christmas Service

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

Eighth Grade Piano Students

PROCESSIONAL HYMN “Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful” LW 41

Congregation and Students

**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!**

**Highest, most holy, Light of light eternal,
Born of a virgin, a mortal He comes;
Son 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!**

**Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation,
Sing all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God 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 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

PRAYER

P: Gracious God, You have given us all that we have and need. You have sent us heroes of faith, who believed Your promise to send Your Son and looked forward to His coming. You then sent Your Son to us to suffer, die, and rise from death for us. Help us to live by faith and to look forward to His final coming. In His name we pray.

C: Amen

ANTHEM “Prepare Thyself, Zion” - J. S. Bach

School Choir

Prepare thyself, Zion, with tender affection, the purest, the fairest, this day to receive.

Narrator 1: At Christmas time we often think of going back to the manger. It seems like such a pleasant and peaceful place to be. However, that is not what God intended. He always wanted His people to remember but look forward. This is shown time and time again in the Old Testament. He wanted His people to remember with faith the promises He had made and look forward to their fulfillment. These faithful heroes of the Old Testament were models of living in the hope of God’s promises.

Grade 4: Hebrews, chapter 11, verses 1 and 2 states: “Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for.”

Grade 6: Hebrews, chapter 11, verse 3, adds: “By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.”

Kindergarten: Genesis, chapter 1, verse 1: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

Narrator 2: At the beginning of time, God created all things good. He placed Adam and Eve in charge of caring for His creation.

Adam: God created many plants and animals. He then created me to take care of them. He knew I needed a helpmate so He created Eve. God told us never to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil for then we would surely die.

Eve: One day the serpent was crafty and tempted me. I ate from the tree and gave some to Adam; we sinned. We hid from God but He found us. The situation seemed hopeless; however, God already had a plan. He gave us a promise to look forward to.

Grade 3: Genesis 3:15 says: “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.”

Narrator 3: This was the first of God’s promises to His people. He would send a Savior for His people. One who would save us from the darkness of sin brought by Adam and Eve.

HYMN “All Mankind Fell in Adam’s Fall” *LW* 363

Congregation and grades 3-8

**All mankind fell in Adam’s fall, One common sin infects us all;
From sire to son the bane descends, And over all the curse impends.**

**Through humankind corruption creeps And them in dreadful bondage keeps;
In guilt they draw the infant breath And reap its fruits of woe and death.**

But Christ, the second Adam came To bear our sin and woe and shame,

To be our life, our light, our way, Our only hope, our only stay.

Grade 1: Hebrews 11:7: “By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family.”

Narrator 4: The Lord saw how great man’s wickedness had become. Every inclination of man was evil all of the time. The Lord was grieved that He had made man and His heart was filled with pain. However, Noah remained faithful to God.

Noah: God asked me to build a great ark. The people laughed at me, yet I did as God asked. We placed all the animals and things that God commanded into the ark. For forty days it rained and all living creatures were wiped out, but God remembered those of us on the ark. After the flood He told us to come out and bring the creatures so they could multiply on the earth. I then built an altar and made a sacrifice to the Lord.

Grade 2: Genesis 9:11 says: “I establish My covenant with you: Never again will all life be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.”

Narrator 5: The sign of the covenant was to be a rainbow set in the clouds. It was a sign established between God and all life on earth. This covenant was a promise to Noah and to all people. This covenant serves as a reminder that God always keeps His promises.

Narrator 6: God continued to take care of His people and moved forward toward fulfillment of His first promise. He called Abraham to be the father of His chosen people.

Grade 4: Hebrews, chapter 11, verses 11 and 12: “By faith Abraham, even though he was past age—and Sarah herself was barren—was enabled to become a father because he considered Him faithful who had made the promise.”

Abraham: God called me and gave me the faith to follow His commands. He asked me to leave my home and family and go to a new land. He said He would make me into a great nation, but this was hard to believe because I was already 75 years old and had no children.

Sarah: God is always faithful to His promises and He eventually gave us a son. We named him Isaac. Isaac was part of the plan of God to bring salvation to the world.

Grade 3: In Genesis 15:5 God says to Abram: “Look up at the heavens and count the stars—if indeed you can count them. Then [God] said to [Abram], ‘So shall your offspring be.’ ”

Narrator 7: The people of the Old Testament lived by faith. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. They knew God would keep His promise to them and provide them with a Savior and a heavenly home.

HYMN “Let the Earth Now Praise the Lord” *LW* 33

Grades 1 and 2: Stanzas 1 and 4; Grades 3 and 4: Stanzas 1-4

Let the earth now praise the Lord, Who has truly kept His word

And at last to us did send Christ, the sinner's help and friend.

What the father's most desired, What the prophets' heart inspired,
What they longed for many a year, Stands fulfilled in glory here.

Abram's promised great reward, Zion's helper, Jacob's Lord—
Him of twofold race behold—Truly came, as long foretold.

Welcome, O my Savior, now! Joyful, Lord, to You I bow.
Come into my heart, I pray; Oh, prepare Yourself a way!

Narrator 8: As God's people moved forward through His divine plan, He provided them with many leaders. One of them was a lowly shepherd boy named David. Because of the faith God gave him, he became a great king of Israel.

David: My battle with Goliath showed what faith in the one true God can do. Later, when I became king, God used me to expand and strengthen Israel. God promised that one of my descendants would rule forever.

Grade 1: Second Samuel 7, verse 16: "Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before Me; your throne will be established forever."

Narrator 9: God's love for His people was shown through this prophecy of an everlasting kingdom for those who have faith in Him. The One who was mentioned in the original promise to Adam and Eve would eventually come from David's line.

Narrator 10: The people of God were still looking forward to a Savior, but it had been a long time since the original promise was made. It seemed as if the Savior would never come. To help His children remain faithful, God sent prophets to foretell what was to come.

Narrator 11: One of the prophets who clearly foretold the coming Savior was Isaiah.

Isaiah: Being a prophet was not always an easy job. I had to give bad news like telling Judah that her sin would bring captivity at the hands of Babylon. But I was also blessed with visions that told of the Savior that was to come.

Grade 2: Isaiah 9, verse 6: "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

Narrator 12: Isaiah revealed God's promise to have compassion on His people and deliver them. He would redeem them and save them. Isaiah helped the people of Israel look forward and see that the long-promised Savior was coming.

HYMN "Lo, How a Rose is Growing" *LW 67*

Grades 5-8

Lo, how a rose is growing, A bloom of finest grace;

The prophets had foretold it: A branch of Jesse's race
Would bear one perfect flow'r
Here in the cold of winter And darkest midnight hour.

The rose of which I'm singing, Isaiah had foretold.
He came to us through Mary, Who sheltered Him from cold.
Through God's eternal will
This child to us was given At midnight calm and still.

O Savior, child of Mary, Who felt all human woe;
O Savior, King of glory, Who triumphed o'er our foe:
Bring us at length, we pray,
To the bright courts of heaven And into endless day.

Grades 3 & 4: Hebrews 11:39 says, "These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised."

Narrator 13: Finally, at just the right time, God did send the promised Savior that the people of the Old Testament had longed for. The story of our Savior's birth, as told in Luke, chapter 2, shows us the faith of those who came before was not in vain.

Grade 5: "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."

Joseph: God gave me faith to believe that the child Mary was carrying would be the Savior. We traveled to Bethlehem for the census.

Grade 5: "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."

HYMN "Away in a Manger" LW 64

Kindergarten: Stanzas 1-3; Grade 1: Stanzas 2-3; Grade 2, Stanza 3

Away in a manger, no crib for a 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.

The cattle are lowing, the Baby awakes, But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.
I love Thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky, And stay by my side until morning is nigh.

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 love with Thee there.

Mary: This was such an overwhelming experience. While we had many strangers visit that night, God gave me faith to know that this Child would do something great for all people.

Grade 5: “And there were shepherds 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.”

Shepherd #1: We couldn’t believe our eyes or ears. We were tending our sheep when one of God’s angels came to us and said a Savior had been born and He was Christ the Lord.

Grade 5: “Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying:”

Kindergarten: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom His favor rests.”

ANTHEM “Gloria Deo!” - Mary Lynn Lightfoot

Gloria Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo! Laudamus te. Benedicimus te. Adoramus te. Glorificamus te.
Gloria Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo! Et in terra pax. (*Glory to God! Glory to God in the highest! We praise You. We bless You. We worship You. We glorify You. Glory to God! Glory to God in the highest! And on earth peace.*)

Shepherd #2: When we were finally able to speak again, we decided to go to Bethlehem to see this miracle for ourselves.

Narrator 14: How awesome God’s plan is. Shepherds who were busy tending sheep were the first to come see The Shepherd who came to save His sheep.

Grade 5: “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.”

HYMN “Angels We Have Heard on High” LW 55

Congregation and Students

Men and Boys: Angels we have heard on high, Sweetly singing o’er the plains,
And the mountains in reply, Echoing their joyous strains.

All: Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Women and Girls: Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be Which inspire your heav’nly song?

All: Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Men and Boys: Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn king.

All: Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Narrator 15: The shepherds didn’t stay at the manger. They went out to tell people what they saw, looking forward to a new King and a new kingdom.

Narrator 16: Jesus didn’t stay in the manger either. He continued to move forward through God’s plan to be the sacrifice for all people. He would die on a cross so we could be saved. Jesus also

didn't remain in the tomb. His resurrection on Easter and His ascension assure us that He has conquered death, has won eternal life for us, and will come again.

Narrator 17: Because of His resurrection, we live in hope remembering God's great deeds of the past just as the New Testament saints did after the resurrection. Even after Jesus' resurrection and ascension, God's plan was not finished. It continued to move forward.

Narrator 18: God poured out His Holy Spirit on the disciples at Pentecost. Peter shared his faith with the people of Jerusalem and the church grew. Missionaries, like Paul, took the faith to many new places, just as faithful missionaries continue to do today. Throughout history God's people have lived by faith and died in faith. We too are called by faith to share that faith with all nations.

Grade 6: Hebrews 12, verses 1 and 2 say: "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Narrator 19: We can't stay at the manger. By faith, we move on continuing to look forward to Christ's return, just as the people of the Old and New Testaments did before us.

Grade 6: In Philippians 3:14, St. Paul writes: "I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

Narrator 19: Think of our theme for this school year: "Press on towards the goal." Using all the saints who have come before us as an example, let us be instruments of God's plan. Together with all Christians, we can rely on God's direction and power to take each opportunity to live out our faith and hope as all the saints before us have.

Narrator 20: It is our prayer tonight and always that you remember all the promises of our great God and His fulfillment of them. As we go on our way tonight, we live in the knowledge that He will bring His plan to completion and we will reach our final goal of heaven through Jesus Christ, His Son.

OFFERING

HYMN "O Little Town of Bethlehem" *LW* 59 and 60

Congregation and Children

**All (*LW* 60): 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.**

**Grades 1-8 (*LW* 59): 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!**

All (LW 60): 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.

All (LW 59): 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!

HYMN “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” (LW 49)

Congregation

**Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn 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 hosts proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”**

**Christ, by highest heav'n adored, Christ the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold Him come, Offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see! Hail, incarnate deity!
Pleased as man with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel!
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”**

**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 newborn King!”**

HYMN “Silent Night, Holy Night” (LW 68)

Congregation and Students

Grades 5-8: 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.

All: 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!

All: 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.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

P: From before the foundations of the world were laid, before God spoke the first word of His creation,

S: *God had a plan,*

C: **That we would be His children.**

P: Before Adam and Eve sinned, God knew we would all sin and need saving,

S: *God had a plan,*

C: **That He would save His children.**

P: For our heroes of faith and for all believers living and dead,

S: *God had a plan,*

C: **That as His children, we will live eternally with Him in heaven. Thank you God, for your great plan. Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

P: Taught by our Lord and trusting in His promise, we are bold to say:

C: **Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as 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**

BENEDICTION

P: The Lord bless you and keep you.

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

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

C: **Amen**

RECESSIONAL HYMN “Joy to the World” *LW 53*

Congregation and Students

**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 sin and sorrow 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.

SILENT PRAYER

POSTLUDE

✠ GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST ✠