

CHRISTMAS EVE 2020



ESG Christmas Eve Service at home

Preparation

This year everything is different. But a real Christmas service (about 20 minutes) can also be celebrated at home. Sit down together at a table or in front of your nativity scene and light a candle. Now you're ready to go.

If you are celebrating with others, you can divide the prayers and readings among up to 3 speakers using the numbers on the side. 'A' stands for ,All together'. If you are celebrating alone, the ,We' includes you in the community of all who are celebrating this service together in different places.

Opening Music

Opening Responses and Prayer

- 1 We are here in the name of God.
God calls the light out of the darkness.
 - 2 We are here following Jesus.
Jesus comes as light into our world.
 - 3 We are here in the power of the Holy Spirit.
She turns our hearts light.
- 1 We are here to celebrate Christmas.
 - 2 Five hundred years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem, the prophet Isaiah said: The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. For unto us a Child is born. The Son of God is born. His name is: „Jesus: God helps“. He is called: „For-ever-peace“. We believe that with the birth of Jesus this promise is fulfilled.
 - 3 God of heaven and earth, in dark night the angels have proclaimed to all the world the light of your love. Open our hearts, and let your light shine in them. Through Jesus, your Son, who is with us, today and every day.
- 1 Exciting and exhilarating is the time of preparation for Christmas for many, and for some, not without hectic or mixed feelings.
 - 2 We are invited to experience the joy of Christmas. A little quiet is needed, songs old and new, and the sound of our voices. And of course the Christmas story, too.
 - 3 God of heaven and earth, in dark night the angels have proclaimed to all the world the light of your love. Open our hearts, and let your light shine in them. Through Jesus, your Son, who is with us today and every day.

Hymn | Joy to the World

Lyrics: Isaac Watts 1719 | Music: Georg Friedrich Händel 1741

1. 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.
2. 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.
4. 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.

1 Scripture Reading

1 The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. 2a Thou hast multiplied the nation and not increased the joy. 5 For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder. And His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. 6 Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon His Kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.

(Isaiah 9:23a.6-7 | 21st Century King James Version)

Hymn | Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

Lyrics: Harriet Reynolds/Kraut Späth | Melody: Cologne 1599

1. Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming / from tender stem hath sprung! / Of Jesse's lineage coming / as seers of old have sung. / It came, a blossom bright, / amid the cold of winter / when half spent was the night.
2. Isaiah 'twas foretold it, / the Rose I have in mind, / with Mary we behold it, / the Virgin Mother kind. / To show God's love aright / she bore to us a Savior / when half spent was the night.
3. O Flower, whose fragrance tender / with sweetness fills the air, / dispel in glorious splendor / the darkness everywhere; / true man, yet very God, / from sin and death now save us / and share our every load.

1 Christmas Gospel Reading

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 Judea, 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, who was 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. (Luke 2:1-7 | KJV 21)

Hymn | O Little Town of Bethlehem

Lyrics: Philipp Brooks 1868 | melody: England 16th cent.

1. O little town of Bethlehem, / how still we see you lie! / Above your 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.
 2. For Christ is born of Mary; / and gathered all above, / while mortals sleep, the angels keep / their watch of wondering love. / O morning stars, together / proclaim the holy birth, / and praises sing to God the King, / and peace to all on earth!
 3. 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. / O come to us, abide with us, / our Lord Immanuel.
- 2 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, „Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, 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, good will toward men!“

(Luke 2:8-14 | KJV 21)

Hymn | Angels from the Realms of Glory

lyrics: James Montgomery 1816 | melody: France 18th cent.

1. Angels from the realms of glory, / wing your flight through all the earth; / heralds of creation's story / now proclaim Messiah's birth: / Gloria in excelsis Deo. / Gloria in excelsis Deo.
2. Shepherds, in the field abiding, / watching by your flocks by night, / God with man is now residing: / see, there shines the infant light! / Gloria in excelsis Deo. / Gloria in excelsis Deo.
3. Though an infant now we view him, / he will share his Father's throne, / gather all the nations to him; / every knee shall then bow down: / Gloria in excelsis Deo. / Gloria in excelsis Deo.

- 3 And it came to pass, when the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, „Let us now go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which has come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.“ And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this Child. And all those who heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

(Luke 2:15-21 | KJV 21)

Hymn | O Come, All Ye Faithful

lyrics: Frederick Oakley 1841 | melody: John Reading 1743

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: / O
come, let us adore him, / o come, let us adore
him, / o come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!
2. True God of true God, light of light eternal, /
lo, he abhors not the Virgin's womb. / Son of
the Father, begotten, not created, / O come,
let us adore him, / o come, let us adore him, /
o come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.
3. Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation, /
sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above: / Glory
to God, glory in the highest! / O come, let us
adore him, / O come, let us adore him, / O
come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!

Nativity Reflection

Christmas 2020 under Corona conditions. Many things are different tonight - but the old texts and hymns remain. They give home and security. This also includes the Christmas cribs. There are many different ones, depending on taste and culture. The woodcarvers in the Erzgebirge in Southern Saxony depicted the scene as they imagined it for their region. This is also the case in the nativity scene from Tanzania that we printed on the cover, or the Latin American nativity scene that was featured in our digital Advent calendar this morning.

In this way, the nativity scenes show us the core of the Christmas message: God becomes human and comes to us in the child in the manger. Yes,

God's reality transcends cultures, languages and traditions and wants to meet us directly in a very personal way.

If we imagine the Child, the Holy Family and the shepherds as people from next door, this is not an unhistorical approach, but a deeply existential one. Of course, we know that they looked different. But by letting the characters of the Christmas story enter our culture and our everyday life, they become familiar to us.

Even in this year of the Corona pandemic. Christmas may be different, the gatherings around Christmas trees and dining tables are smaller than usual, many visits and meetings with loved ones cannot take place. We have to express our attachments and live our relations differently. These are great challenges. Nevertheless, it is Christmas - today, here and now.

God comes into the world, into our midst and lightens our lives. May the glow of the candles make our hearts light and bright. May it warm us, give us strength and strengthen our hope that God means well with us. We can be assured: God is with us and our loved ones and holds us through these difficult times.

By the way: We are interested in what comes to you out of the manger. Maybe you would like to write to us or post on our social media presences, with a picture of your crib at home or elsewhere.

Hymn | Silent Night, Holy Night

lyrics: John F. Joung | melody: Franz Xaver Gruber 1818

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 first saw the light, / heard resounding clear and long / far and near the angels' song: / Christ, the Saviour, is here, / Christ, the Saviour, is here!"
3. Silent night, holy night! / Son of God, oh how bright / love is smiling from thy face! / Peal for us the hour of grace. / Christ, the Saviour, is born, / Christ, the Saviour, is born!

Intercession and Our Father

- 1 God, a light rises for us in the darkness, the light of the child in the manger, your light in our world. We thank you and rejoice.
- 2 We ask you to shine on those whose lives are dark, who cannot rejoice today because they are alone or sick, because they have nothing to eat and no home, because they live in strife and have a hard time with themselves and others.
- 3 We ask you to shine on us, so that we can take your light with us into our Christmas, into our homes, into our lives. As children of God, we pray with Jesus' words:
 - A 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 king-

dom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

Blessing

- 1 God, we ask your blessing.
 - 2 Deep within us - your patience.
 - 3 Flowing towards us - your strength.
 - 1 In the midst of us - your nearness.
 - 2 Enfold us with your blessing
 - 3 and make us a blessing to others,
today, tomorrow, and always.
- A Amen.

Hymn | O Thou Joyful Time

lyrics: anonymous | melody: from Sicily before 1788

1. O thou joyful time, blessed Christmastime /
bringing grace to humankind! / To a world
so lost in sin / Christ as a child came in. /
Joyful be, joyful be, you Christians all!
2. O thou joyful time, blessed Christmastime /
bringing grace to humankind! / Christ is from
heaven come, / mankind to ransom. / Joyful
be, joyful be, you Christians all!
3. O thou joyful time, blessed Christmastime /
bringing grace to humankind! / Angels are
winging, / thy glory singing. / Joyful be, joyful
be, you Christians all!

Closing Music

**We wish you a merry and
blessed Christmas!**

Here you will find the hymns
to sing along or listen to:

Joy to the World

instrumental https://youtu.be/_EZI_F50UGU

sung <https://youtu.be/kyciMYZq2-Y>

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

instrumental <https://youtu.be/R5An8WGonLQ>

sung <https://youtu.be/mz2H1VE7maU>

O Little Town of Bethlehem

instrumental <https://youtu.be/7wIuuEkQPJc>

sung <https://youtu.be/Jrn6Dscd0M8>

Angels from the Realms of Glory

instrumental <https://youtu.be/ZJO1iIrK2kw>

sung <https://youtu.be/dz26gCXVG1E>

O Come, All Ye Faithful

instrumental <https://youtu.be/n8DKYxerQ8Y>

sung <https://youtu.be/QjpGtqzjAr4>

Silent Night, Holy Night

instrumental <https://youtu.be/ZS68FwbefCA>

sung <https://youtu.be/IuG0NFWQjZg>

O Thou Joyful Time

instrumental <https://youtu.be/TzRRUDa-pZ>

sung <https://youtu.be/bcyW3GVhQNk>

Weil wir Hoffnung brauchen
Weihnachten 2020



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