

(The program starts with the singing of Once in Royal David's City.)

All Sing: ~~Once in Royal David's City~~

Opening Prayer

NARRATOR 1:

Let us pray for the needs of the whole world; for peace on earth and goodwill among all His people; for unity and fellowship and forgiveness and joy within the Church He came to build, and especially among us gathered here.

And let us remember, the poor, the helpless, the cold, the hungry, the oppressed, the sick, the sad, the lonely, and the unloved. We pray that they can discover the peace that Jesus brings to our hearts.

May Almighty God bless us with His grace and grant us the joys of everlasting life. Amen.

All Sing: ~~O Holy Night~~

NARRATOR 2:

The First Lesson:

The promise of a redeemer was present from the beginning

The story of Christmas really begins in the Book of Genesis.

In this passage,

the works of the devil are seen in the actions of the *snake*

who is tempting human beings

to turn against God.

And Jesus Christ himself can be seen in this story,

in the *offspring* of the woman.

So taken together

this passage can be understood to be

the very first promise of a Redeemer

for a sinful mankind.

Lector:

~~A reading from the book of Genesis.~~

~~Genesis 3: 1-15~~

~~All Sing: Hark the Herald Angels Sing~~

NARRATOR 1:

The Second Lesson:

Isaiah's prophesy of a new-born king is fulfilled in Jesus Christ

In this reading,

the prophet Isaiah addresses a people who are gloomy,
who walk in darkness.

Isaiah was encouraging the people

with the promise that God will give them a new king, who would
drive out their enemies
and unite them.

For us, with the benefit of hindsight,

there is a deeper meaning,
which is especially meaningful at Christmas.

Our Christian tradition understands

that this Prince of Peace in Isaiah's prophecy
is none other than Jesus the Christ

who proclaims himself "the Light of the World."

Lector:

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah 9: 1-6

All Sing: Joy to the World

NARRATOR 2:

The Third Lesson:

Isaiah stirs hope for a just leader from the descendants of King David

Before David was king,

he was chosen for his role from among his brothers,

who were all sons of a man named Jesse in the town of Bethlehem.

So when Isaiah speaks of a shoot sprouting from the stump of Jesse,

he means a new king who is a descendent of Jesse and King David.

Isaiah says from the stump that remains from the family tree of Jesse,
there will indeed be new growth:

A promising shoot that will grow and blossom,

producing a wise, and strong, and glorious leader,

who will finally bring peace and justice to his people.

Lector: *A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.*

Isaiah 11:1-10

All Sing: ~~O Come, O Come, Emanuel~~

NARRATOR 1:

The Fourth Lesson: Jeremiah predicts the rise of a just shepherd.-

Jeremiah was a prophet that lived about seven centuries before Christ. He preached that the people of Judah, the Southern Kingdom, needed and deserved better leadership.

In this reading, Jeremiah predicts the rise of a new and good shepherd of the people in the family line of King David.

We here today have the benefit of knowing about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, who suffered and died so that the Israelites, and indeed the people of all nations could be saved from the consequences of their sinfulness.

This is the Jesus who we celebrate at Christmas.

Lector: *A reading from the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah.*
Jeremiah 23:5-8

All Sing: ~~What Child is This?~~

NARRATOR 2:

The Fifth Lesson:

With great faith, Mary says *yes*, for nothing is impossible for God

The Angel Gabriel appeared Mary

with some glorious and probably overwhelming news:

God sent his messenger to Mary

to invite her to become

the mother of the Savior.

Showing great faith, she said yes.

Mary was able to do so because she believed
that “Nothing is impossible for God.”

Lector:

~~*A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.*~~

~~**Luke 1: 26–38**~~

~~Laura Sings: Hail Mary~~

~~All Sing: Gentle Woman~~

NARRATOR 1:

The Sixth Lesson:

Jesus – the Savior, Messiah, and Lord of *all* – is born in Bethlehem

Luke's basic message of the Infancy narrative
is contained in the angel's announcement to the shepherds
that Jesus is

savior,
and Messiah,
and Lord.

As savior, Jesus rescues humanity from sin.

As Messiah, Jesus is the one who now brings salvation
to *all* humanity, whether Jew or Gentile.

As Lord, Jesus is God, who has dominion over humanity.

For all of us gathered here, a savior has been born, who is Messiah and
Lord.

Lector: ~~*A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.*~~
Luke 2: 1-18

All Sing: Silent Night

NARRATOR 2:

The seventh Lesson:
The magi honor a newborn king,
while Herod is worried about a new rival

The magi came to Jerusalem
to honor what appeared to be a newborn king.

King Herod, and indeed all of Jerusalem,
were troubled by this news of a newborn king.

According to a Jewish legend about the child Moses,
some sacred scribes warned *Pharaoh* about
the imminent birth of one
who would deliver the Israelites from *Egypt*.
A worried *Pharaoh* then made plans to destroy the child.

King Herod apparently had similar concerns about this newborn king.

Lector: ~~*A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.*~~
~~Matthew 2:1-12~~

All Sing: ~~We Three Kings~~

NARRATOR 1:

The Eighth Lesson:

Jesus, the Word, the Creator, the Light of the Human Race, is eternal

In this passage, St. John calls Jesus “the Word”
and presents Him

as eternal,

as creator,

as the true light which enlightens each of us.

Jesus was not created.

He always existed.

Jesus *is* the creator.

Through Him all things were made.

Jesus is the true light.

He shines through

the darkness of fear,

the darkness of ignorance, and

the darkness of sin.

Lector:

~~*A reading from the beginning of holy Gospel according to John.*~~

~~**John 1: 1-14**~~

All Sing: O Come, All Ye Faithful

NARRATOR 2:

The Ninth Lesson:

The followers of Jesus are commissioned to make disciples of all

This passage from the end of the Gospel according to Matthew
is about the risen Jesus commissioning the eleven Apostles
to make disciples of all nations.

It has an important message for all of us, especially at Christmas:
Jesus, whose birth we celebrate at Christmas,
remains with us, always.

So, as we continue the mission
of sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with others,
we can take comfort in the fact that
Jesus is with us, and
will *help* us in accomplishing His work.

Lector:

~~*A reading the end of the holy Gospel according to Matthew.*~~
~~**Matthew 28:16-20**~~

~~All Sing: Go Tell It on the Mountain~~

NARRATOR 1:

(Thanks to all the Lectors.)

(Merry Christmas on behalf of the Knights of Columbus Councils at Immaculate Conception and St. Vincent de Paul.)

(All are invited to now join us in the Walter Hall for a Christmas celebration.)

[end]