



Contemplative Candlelight Christmas Eve

4:00 p.m. + December 24, 2025

*Here, in time, we are celebrating the eternal birth
which God the Father bore and bears unceasingly in eternity,
because this same birth is now born in time, in human nature.
St. Augustine says, "What does it avail me that this birth is always happening,
if it does not happen in me? That it should happen in me is what matters."
We shall therefore speak of this birth, of how it may take place in us
and be consummated in the virtuous soul,
whenever God the Father speaks His eternal Word
in the perfect soul.
Meister Eckhart (14th century)*

Crossing the Threshold

Longing for the Advent of Christ

"O Come, O Come Emmanuel"

*O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

*O Come, thou Key of David, come, and open wide our heavenly home.
The captives from their prison free, and conquer death's deep misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

The Birth of Jesus

Luke 2:1-7

It came to pass in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. And it came to pass, while they were in there, the days were fulfilled for Mary to bring forth. And she brought forth her son, the Firstborn, and wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Song of Response

"O Come, All Ye Faithful"

*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!*

Lighting the Candle of Preparation

Prepare Him Room

"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, and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven, and nature sing.*

*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.*

Shepherds and Angels

Luke 2:8-14

Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Christ, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in 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 among those whom he favors!"*

Song of Response

"O Come, All Ye Faithful"

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

Lighting the Candle of Watchfulness

Proclaiming the Coming Christ

"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

*Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies;
With th'angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"*

*Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord;
Late in time behold him come, offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, hail th'incarnate Deity,
Pleased with us in flesh to dwell, Jesus our Emmanuel.
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"*

Seeing and Sharing Goodness

Luke 2:15-18

And it came to pass, when the angels had gone away from them into the heavens, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us." So, they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it marveled at what the shepherds told them.

Song of Response

"O Come, All Ye Faithful"

*See how the shepherds, summoned to his cradle,
leaving their flocks, draw nigh to gaze.
We too will journey, bend our joyful footsteps;
O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him;
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!*

Lighting the Candle of Joy

Worshiping at the Manger

"Infant Holy, Infant Lowly"

*Infant holy, infant lowly, for his bed a cattle stall;
Oxen lowing, little knowing, Christ the babe is Lord of all.
Swift are winging angels singing, noels ringing, tidings bringing:
Christ the babe is Lord of all, Christ the babe is Lord of all.*

*Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping vigil till the morning new,
Saw the glory, heard the story, tidings of a Gospel true.
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow, praises voicing, greet the morrow:
Christ the babe was born for you, Christ the babe was born for you.*

Contemplating the Mystery

Luke 2:19-20

Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them.

Song of Response

"O Come, All Ye Faithful"

*True God of true God, Light from Light Eternal,
Now held incarnate in 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!*

Lighting the Candle of Incarnation

Be Born in Us Today

"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.*

*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 Emmanuel!*

Lighting the Christ Candle

Welcoming the Light

"Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence"

Resting in the Light of Christ

During these 5 minutes of silence, simply rest in God's abiding and loving presence in this moment. Simply be here now. Descend into this Silence. There is nothing you need to do. Just relax. Sense your body. Breathe more deeply than usual. It can help to focus on the region of the heart. You might use a breath prayer to help you descend into this silence at the level of the heart, such as "Fill my heart" (inhale), "with Love" (exhale), or use a sacred word (such as Love, Peace, Abba, Jesus, or Spirit). Or you may simply gaze at the Light of the Christ Candle as a form of silent meditation. Allow the Light to still you and open your heart to God's Love.

Holy Communion

"Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence"

Receiving the Light

Bearing the Light

"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.*

*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.*

*Silent night, holy night, wondrous star, lend thy light;
With the angels let us sing, Alleluia to our King;
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born.*

Benediction



Our Staff

Haley Brown – Associate Director of The Anchor House
Courtney Garrison – Ministry Assistant
Christian Ibanez – AV Production
Peter Johns – Associate Director of Contemplative Worship

Zachary Montasser – Violinist
Nick Cavazos – AV Production
Rev. Rachel Sciretti – Associate Pastor
Rev. Dr. Michael Sciretti, Jr. – Pastor of The Center

Dear Friend,

We are honored that you are sharing your Christmas Eve with us. The Center exists to support people in their deepening awareness of Divine Love within you and around you, transforming who you are with God, self, others, and creation. We are a community of pilgrims seeking to live the Christ-Life today. Visit our website to learn more about our offerings for 2026 that includes regular centering prayer meetings, guided silent retreats, classes on contemplative living, and ways to engage your creativity. We would love for you to join us in any way that feels right for you.

*Light and Life,
Michael*

For information about The Center for Christian Spirituality and upcoming events, visit:

www.TheCenterFCS.org