



God became man; the Almighty appeared on earth as a helpless human baby, unable to do more than lie and stare and wriggle and make noises, needing to be fed and changed and taught to talk like any other child The babyhood of the Son of God was a reality. The more you think about it, the more staggering it gets. Nothing in fiction is so fantastic as is this truth of the Incarnation.

- J.I. Packer

To those joining us on line today...THANK YOU!

We are made to worship together, but we find ourselves living in a particular and unprecedented moment that has not touched American lives in generations. The good news is that while we are made to worship God together, we do not need to be in a particular place to meet with God. So I hope you have gathered together with your housemates, family, and maybe a couple others. God is present with us at all times, and He delights to meet with you today regardless of where you are or how many people you are with. We seek to offer this service as an encouragement to you amid these difficult times. We look forward to worshiping together again, breaking bread and giving hugs to one another. You are missed.

As an encouragement to others, please take a picture of your home gathering, post it to social media with the hashtag *#abbottchurchathome* and tag us on Instagram *@abbottchurchbaltimore*

NEED PRAYER? From 12:00 PM until 1:00 PM, Monday through Friday, someone will be available to pray for anyone in need of prayer. The time will also be focused on praying for the ministry of our church and for God's Spirit to be at work in our midst. If you would like to be part of this new prayer ministry, please let the pastor know. Please text prayer requests to the pastor, Julius and/or George.

You can access children's bulletins at the following address:
www.childrensbulletins.com/Covid19-childrens-activites-for-churches

ORDER OF WORSHIP

The Christian Year

Christian-year spirituality is nothing less than the calling to enter by faith into the incarnation, the life and ministry, the death and resurrection of Jesus. God's saving action is not only presented to us through the practice of the Christian year, it also takes up residence within us and transforms us by the saving and healing presence of Christ in our lives. As we enter the saving events of Jesus, he shapes us by the pattern of his own living and dying so that our living and dying in this world is a living and dying in him.

-Robert Webber

Christmas

Christmas celebrates God's incarnation, which means "in the flesh." Christmas is all about the amazing truth that God took on our flesh, our bones, and our human life. The task of the Christmas liturgy is to recall us, amid all the joyful customs and celebrations of Christmas, to this central truth of the Word made flesh for our salvation.

WELCOME TO ABBOTT CHURCH

CALL TO WORSHIP (read responsively)

Psalm 66 (selected verses)

Shout for joy to God, all the earth;

**sing the glory of his name;
give to him glorious praise!**

All the earth worships you

**and sings praises to you;
they sing praises to your name."**

Come and see what God has done:

he is awesome in his deeds toward the children of man.

Bless our God, O peoples;

**let the sound of his praise be heard,
who has kept our soul among the living
and has not let our feet slip.**

Come and hear, all you who fear God,

and I will tell what he has done for my soul.

I cried to him with my mouth,

and high praise was on my tongue. (continued)

Blessed be God,
because he has not rejected my prayer
or removed his steadfast love from me!

SILENT PREPARATION

OPENING HYMN

TH#149 Joy to the World

Joy to the world, the Lord has 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

Joy to the world, the Savior reigns
Let men 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 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

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

Isaac Watts 1719

CONFESSION OF SIN (in unison)

God our Father, you sent your Son full of grace and truth: forgive our failure to receive him. Jesus our Savior, you were born in poverty and laid in a manger: forgive our greed and rejection of your ways. Spirit of Love, your servant Mary responded joyfully to your call: forgive the hardness of our hearts.

(Please confess your sins silently to the Lord)

WORDS OF COMFORT AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON

May the God of all healing and forgiveness draw you to himself and cleanse you from all your sins, that you may behold the glory of his Son, the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: **AMEN**

SONG OF PRAISE

TH#168 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 hosts 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 the Virgin's womb:
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail th'Incarnate Deity,
Pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus, our Immanuel.**

Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King".

**Hail, the heaven-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 the sons of earth, born to give them second birth.**

Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King"
EXTENDING GOD'S WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS and GREETING

Minister: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

All: **And also with you.**

SONG OF PRAISE

TH#152 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.**

**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 men on earth.**

**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.**

**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.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER.

Members of the congregation lead us in prayer.

Our incarnate Lord, you have brought us out of darkness and into your own marvelous light: help the Church to reveal the mystery of your love, and fill her with the Spirit of truth. For this, O Lord, we pray:

All Lord, hear our prayer.

Mighty God, Everlasting Father, the government is on your shoulders: guide in righteousness the leaders of the nations and cities; protect by your mercy all your children; bless our families, and renew our communities. For this, O Lord, we pray:

All Lord, hear our prayer.

Prince of peace, you bring reconciliation through the cross: by your healing power give to all who suffer sickness or distress your gift of wholeness and peace. For this, O Lord, we pray:

All Lord, hear our prayer.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Father, full of the Spirit, hear our prayer, receive our praises, fill our lives. For this, O Lord, we pray:

All Lord, hear our prayer.

And for what else should we pray?

Members of the congregation may add their own intercessions at this time, ending with,

For this, O Lord, we pray:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Now gathering our prayers into one, let us pray boldly as our Savior has taught us:

**All Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

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.

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— 2 the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— 3 that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. 4 And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON**PASTOR PAUL WARREN**

“Christmas Really Happened”

OFFERING

The offering is a way for members and friends of Abbott Church to support the church’s mission and ministry. If you are our guest today, please feel under no compulsion to give. If you would like to give online, you may do so at www.abbottchurch.org/giving

What a fellowship, what a joy divine,
Leaning on the everlasting arms;
What a blessedness, what a peace is mine,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

Leaning, leaning,
Safe and secure from all alarms;
Leaning, leaning,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

Oh, how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way,
Leaning on the everlasting arms;
Oh, how bright the path grows from day to day,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

What have I to dread, what have I to fear,
Leaning on the everlasting arms?
I have blessed peace with my Lord so near,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

BENEDICTION

PRAYERS FOR REFLECTION

Prayer for those searching

Lord Jesus, you claim to be the way, the truth, and the life. Please guide me, teach me, and open to me the reality of who you are. Grant that I might be undaunted by the cost of following you as I consider the reasons for doing so. Give me an understanding of you that is coherent, convincing, and that leads to the life that you promise. Amen.

Prayer of belief

Lord Jesus Christ, I admit that I am weak and sinful, but through you I am loved and accepted. I thank you for taking my place in death, in order to offer me forgiveness and renewal. Knowing that you have been raised from the dead, I turn from my sins and receive you as my Savior and my Lord. Amen.

Prayer for those struggling with sin

Lord Jesus, grant that I may see in you the fulfillment of all my need, and may turn from every false satisfaction to feed on you, the true and living bread. Enable me to lay aside the sin that clings so closely, and faithfully follow you in life. Amen.

Prayer of commitment to God's people

Lord Jesus, you have called us to follow you in baptism and in a life of committed discipleship in your church. Grant that I may take the steps necessary to be one with your people and live in the fullness of your Spirit. Amen.

Prayer of thanksgiving

Lord, you have put gladness in our hearts; you have satisfied our hunger with good things. In giving all, you have not withheld from us your own dear Son. How can we withhold anything from you, our Lord and our God? Renew us day by day with the gift of your Spirit, that we may give ourselves completely to your service and walk with joy in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

HE HEARS

"This is the assurance we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us." — 1 JOHN 5:14

"The Lord is near to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in truth."

— PSALM 145:18

Please pray for:

- Your church staff, officers and leaders
- Men and women of the military, police and fire departments
- Family members and friends who are not walking with Christ
- Ongoing health concerns for the following members and friends:
Larry Halterman, Milly Flynn, Gene and Diane Shaw, Phyllis Brown, Dawn Brewer, Brent Schepleng, Clint Neuder, Brenda Neuder, Robin and Toni (Billie Mitchell's granddaughters), Narouz family (especially Vicky), Don Sapp, Jackie Lubin
- *Raj Mohan's wife, dementia, and granddaughter, mental health issues*
- *Lydia Frasca, chemotherapy and radiation treatment*
- *David Files, pain management*
- *Mike Brooks, son of Earl and Betty Brooks, fighting a rare cancer.*

MISSIONARIES AND MINISTRIES WHICH WE SUPPORT:

- Andy and Bev Warren with MTW in Ethiopia
- Jason and Liz Polk with MTW in Ethiopia
- Jessica Ringsmuth with MTW in Kenya
- Bert and Nancy Williams with MTW in Uganda
- Bruce and Pat with MTW in France
- Chris Garriott with RUF at the University of Maryland
- Jacob Jasin with RUF-I at Johns Hopkins University
- Mountain View Bible Camp — Abbott Center for the Arts
- Abbott Tutoring Center — We Care Ministry

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

WE NEED YOU! There are currently many areas of service and leadership that you may be able to fill. Some areas of need are immediate and can be done during this time of COVID and limited in person activities, others are more strategic and longer term. Ministries such as "WeCare", children's ministry, social media, diaconal programs, teaching, and more all have needs. If you know of someone that you believe would make a good elder or deacon, we would encourage you to speak to that person and encourage them towards that ministry. Also speak to one of the elders or the pastor about them and let us know so that we can follow up as well.

Welcome to Abbott.

We're glad we worshiped
with you today!

January 3, 2021

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

How may we serve you?

(please check the appropriate box)

- I am a visitor
- I would like to find out about how
to become a Christian
- I am interested in membership
(Abbott schedules classes regularly)
- I would like a call from the pastor
- I would like prayer
- I would like to join a
community group
- My contact information has changed

Staff Contacts

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