



*this night, we are*  
THOSE WHO  
DREAM  
*christmas eve*

Prelude

Lo! How a Rose E'er Blooming

What Is This Lovely Fragrance?

arr. Brant Adams

Welcome

Call to Worship

This year, we dreamed of world peace.

**We dreamed of deep breaths and restful sleep.**

We dreamed of love that lasts and suffering that passes.

**We dreamed of doors open wide and a cure to disease.**

We dreamed, because to dream is to believe.

**For to dream is to hope; to dream is to see.**

So make room in your being to dream yet again,

**Of a world without fear, and a God that draws near.**

For it is almost Christmas.

**Love is almost here.**

May we dream to see, and hope to believe. Let us worship Holy God.

Opening Prayer

We come to you tonight with dreams tucked into our pockets,  
admitting that at times it feels risky to dream.

At times it feels risky to ask for too much, to believe in that which we cannot see.

So instead we make wishes on stars and search for luck in clover fields.

Instead of sinking into you, we try to control the narrative.

However, somewhere rumbling deep in our heart,

there is a dream of a better world,

trapped like a caged bird.

Open our eyes to you in our midst.

Give us the confidence of Mary to sing into the mystery.

Dust your dream for us off the shelves of our hearts until once more, we are those who dream.

Amen.

Lighting of the Christ Candle

The McClure Family

*May this light be an invitation to keep awake.*

*May this light be our invitation to be Advent people – people who dream.*

Hymn # 133

O Come, All Ye Faithful

Prayer of Confession

**Ever-present God, from time to time we dream radical dreams. We dream of freedom for the imprisoned, food for the hungry, and equality for all. We dream bold, radical dreams, until the world tells us that these dreams are impossible. And when that happens, we are tempted to tuck our dreams into coat pockets and let them collect dust on the shelves of our hearts. Forgive us for giving up so easily. Forgive us for giving up, for on this night we remember and celebrate a radical dream— that you dwelled among us. Give us the courage to dust old dreams off the shelf, with the confidence that with you, the impossible is possible. With you, a light always shines in the darkness. With you, even an unwed teenage couple and a band of shepherds can bring joy to the world. Thanks be to God for a dream like that. Amen.**

Assurance of Forgiveness

Good news! Great joy!

**In Jesus Christ, the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all.**

Glory to God in heaven, and on earth, peace.

**In Jesus Christ, we all are forgiven, tonight and forevermore. Amen.**

Response

Angels We Have Heard on High

*Glo-ri-a in ex-cel-sis De-o!*

*Glo-ri-a in ex-cel-sis De-o!*

Giving and Receiving of Christmas Offerings

Hymn # 134

Joy to the World

Prayer for Illumination

Ever-present God,

If we listen closely, we can almost hear the angels sing.

If we listen closely, we can almost hear the bleats of sheep following shepherds,

If we listen closely, we can almost hear the innkeeper say, “No room.”

If we listen closely, we can almost hear the star whisper, “Follow me.”

If we listen closely, God, we can almost hear you.

So as we turn to your Word, Holy Writer, don't let us miss a thing—

The smell of the hay, the cool of the air, the way Mary cherished this wild dream in her heart.

We want to hear it all; we don't want to miss a thing.

So today we pray—can you help us listen closely? Amen.

Scripture Reading

Isaiah 9:2-7

*A Child Has Been Born to Us*

*The people who walked in darkness*

*have seen a great light;*

*those who lived in a land of deep darkness—*

*on them light has shined.*

<sup>3</sup>*You have multiplied the nation,*

*you have increased its joy;*

*they rejoice before you*

*as with joy at the harvest,*

*as people exult when dividing plunder.*

<sup>4</sup>*For the yoke of their burden,*

*and the bar across their shoulders,*

*the rod of their oppressor,*

*you have broken as on the day of Midian.*

<sup>5</sup>*For all the boots of the tramping warriors*

*and all the garments rolled in blood*

*shall be burned as fuel for the fire.*

<sup>6</sup>*For a child has been born for us,*

*a son given to us;*

*authority rests upon his shoulders;*

*and he is named*

*Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,*

*Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

<sup>7</sup>*His authority shall grow continually,*

*and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom.*

*He will establish and uphold it*

*with justice and with righteousness*

*from this time onward and forevermore.*

*The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.*

Special music

Consolation No.3

Franz Liszt

Hymn # 115

Away in a Manger

Scripture Reading

Luke 2:1-20  
The Birth of Christ

*In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup> This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup> All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup> And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. <sup>8</sup> In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: <sup>11</sup> to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup> This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” <sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup> “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!” <sup>15</sup> When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” <sup>16</sup> So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup> When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; <sup>18</sup> and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.*

Sermon

“Uncertain and Hopeful”

Rev. Bob Sheldon

Sacrament of the Lords Supper

Invitation to your Tables and the Lord’s Table

Prayers of Great Thanksgiving and the Lord’s Prayer

**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. Amen.**

Sharing of the Elements

Prayer after Communion

Hymn # 113

Angels We Have Heard on High

Blessing

Response # 122

Silent Night, Holy Night!

Postlude

Silent Night  
arr. Lennie Niehaus

## WHAT'S HAPPENING AT FIRST PRES

**Leading us in worship** today are Rev. Bob Sheldon, Interim Pastor; Rev. Caroline Cupp, Executive Pastor; Sandor Kadar, Director of Music; Eric Hankins, Creative Arts Director; Kira Boros, Choir Accompanist; Sam Prochnau, piano; Tracy Burke, flute; Julie Claeys, piano; Evan Roberts, trumpet.

This service was adapted from a liturgy by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | [sanctifiedart.org](http://sanctifiedart.org)