

CHOSEN BY THE SPIRIT: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

The Sovereign Lord has filled me with his Spirit.

He has chosen me and sent me
To bring good news to the poor,
To heal the broken-hearted,
To announce release to captives
And freedom to those in prison.

² He has sent me to proclaim
That the time has come
When the Lord will save his people
And defeat their enemies.

He has sent me to comfort all who mourn,

³ To give to those who mourn in Zion
Joy and gladness instead of grief,
A song of praise instead of sorrow.

They will be like trees
That the Lord himself has planted.

They will all do what is right,
And God will be praised for what he has done.

⁴ They will rebuild cities that have long been in ruins.

⁸ The Lord says,

“I love justice and I hate oppression and crime.
I will faithfully reward my people
And make an eternal covenant with them.

⁹ They will be famous among the nations;
Everyone who sees them will know
That they are a people whom I have blessed.”

¹⁰ Jerusalem rejoices because of what the Lord has done.

She is like a bride dressed for her wedding.
God has clothed her with salvation and victory.

¹¹ As surely as seeds sprout and grow,
The Sovereign Lord will save his people,
And all the nations will praise him.



Hymn 282: Christmas is coming (3 verses)

➤ Those who wish may put on costumes now

GOD IS WITH US: Matthew 1:18-25

¹⁸This was how the birth of Jesus Christ took place. His mother Mary was engaged to Joseph, but before they were married, she found out that she was going to have a baby by the Holy Spirit.

¹⁹Joseph was a man who always did what was right, but he did not want to disgrace Mary publicly; so he made plans to break the engagement privately. ²⁰While he was thinking about this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, descendant of David, do not be afraid to take Mary to be your wife. For it is by the Holy Spirit that she has conceived. ²¹She will have a son, and you will name him Jesus—because he will save his people from their sins.”

²²Now all this happened in order to make come true what the Lord had said through the prophet,

²³“A virgin will become pregnant and have a son, and he will be called Immanuel” (which means, “God is with us”).

²⁴So when Joseph woke up, he married Mary, as the angel of the Lord had told him to. ²⁵But he had no sexual relations with her before she gave birth to her son. And Joseph named him Jesus.

☆ **Hymn 472: Come, thou long-expected Jesus (4 verses)**

MY SOUL IS GLAD: Luke 1:46-55➤ **Mary & Joseph go to the manger with Baby Jesus**

Mary said,

“My heart praises the Lord;

⁴⁷ my soul is glad because of God my Saviour,

⁴⁸ for he has remembered me, his lowly servant!

From now on all people will call me happy,

⁴⁹ because of the great things the Mighty God has done for me.

His name is holy;

⁵⁰ from one generation to another

he shows mercy to those who honor him.

⁵¹He has stretched out his mighty arm

and scattered the proud with all their plans.

⁵²He has brought down mighty kings from their thrones,

and lifted up the lowly.

⁵³He has filled the hungry with good things,

and sent the rich away with empty hands.

⁵⁴He has kept the promise he made to our ancestors,

and has come to the help of his servant Israel.

⁵⁵ He has remembered to show mercy to Abraham and to all his descendants forever!"

☆ **Hymn 359: *He came down that we may have ...love ...peace ...joy* (3 verses)**

MEEK AND LOWLY: Luke 2:8-12

➤ **Shepherds and sheep come forward to the manger**

⁸There were some shepherds in that part of the country who were spending the night in the fields, taking care of their flocks. ⁹An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone over them. They were terribly afraid, ¹⁰but the angel said to them, "Don't be afraid! I am here with good news for you, which will bring great joy to all the people. ¹¹This very day in David's town your Saviour was born—Christ the Lord! ¹²And this is what will prove it to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

☆ **Hymn 318: *Lord, you were rich* (3 verses)**

GLORY AND PEACE: Luke 2:13-19

➤ **Angels enter and gather at the manger**

¹³Suddenly a great army of heaven's angels appeared with the angel, singing praises to God:

¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and peace on earth to those with whom he is pleased!"

¹⁵When the angels went away from them back into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us."

¹⁶So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and saw the baby lying in the manger. ¹⁷When the shepherds saw him, they told them what the angel had said about the child. ¹⁸All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said. ¹⁹Mary remembered all these things and thought deeply about them.

☆ **Hymn 323: *The first Nowell* (3 verses)**

COME TO WORSHIP: Matthew 2:1-11

➤ **Wise Men – and Women – gather the offerings and bring them forward to the manger**

Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem in Judea, during the time when Herod was king. Soon afterward, some men who studied the stars came from the East to Jerusalem ² and asked, "Where is the baby born to be the king of the Jews? We saw his star when it came up in the east, and we have come to worship him."

³When King Herod heard about this, he was very upset, and so was everyone else in Jerusalem.

⁴He called together all the chief priests and the teachers of the Law and asked them, "Where will the Messiah be born?"

⁵“In the town of Bethlehem in Judea,” they answered. “For this is what the prophet wrote:

⁶‘Bethlehem in the land of Judah,
you are by no means the least of the leading cities of Judah;
for from you will come a leader
who will guide my people Israel.’”

⁷ So Herod called the visitors from the East to a secret meeting and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸ Then he sent them to Bethlehem with these instructions: “Go and make a careful search for the child; and when you find him, let me know, so that I too may go and worship him.”

⁹⁻¹⁰ And so they left, and on their way they saw the same star they had seen in the East. When they saw it, how happy they were, what joy was theirs! It went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹¹ They went into the house, and when they saw the child with his mother Mary, they knelt down and worshiped him. They brought out their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, and presented them to him.

☆ **Hymn 324: *Angels from the realms* (4 verses)**

➤ **ALL FOLLOW THE WISE MEN FORWARD AND GATHER AROUND THE MANGER**

.....

LORD’S PRAYER

☆ **Hymn 774: *Jesus, name above all names* (1 verse, repeated ad lib.)**

SHARING GOD’S PEACE

☆ **Hymn 543: *Christ, be our light* (3 verses)**

SENDING AND BLESSING: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Be joyful always, ¹⁷ pray at all times, ¹⁸ be thankful in all circumstances. This is what God wants from you in your life in union with Christ Jesus.

¹⁹ Do not restrain the Holy Spirit; ²⁰ do not despise inspired messages. ²¹ Put all things to the test: keep what is good ²² and avoid every kind of evil.

²³ May the God who gives us peace make you holy in every way and keep your whole being—spirit, soul, and body—free from every fault at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ He who calls you will do it, because he is faithful.

☆ **Hymn 819: *Threefold Amen* (1 verse)**

ORGAN POSTLUDE