2 His name is Jesus, God ever with us, God given for us in Bethlehem. [Refrain]
6 Gladly we praise him, love and adore him, give ourselves to him of Bethlehem. [Refrain]

*Response

#607, “Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow”

Doxology

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Christ, all creatures here below; Praise Holy Spirit evermore; Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.

*Prayer of Dedication

Holy God, we give thanks for the many gifts given unto you this day. May we be inspired by your word made flesh for us. Amen.

Prayers of the People and The Lord’s Prayer  Rev. Dr. Heather Shortridge

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.

*Sending Hymn

#113, (verses 1, 2, 3) “Angels We Have Heard on High”

Gloria

Evelyn, Maya and Enola trio

1 Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o’er the plains, and the mountains in echo echoing their joyous strains. Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

2 Shepherds, why this jubilee? What joyous strains are these, and what glad news of salvation? Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

3 Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing; and there let us be all for him, and time for making friends. For more information, contact Phil Telfeyan, ptelfeyan@post.harvard.edu.

Community Club - Washington D.C.’s oldest tutoring and mentorship program for public and charter school students needs adult volunteers to make a difference in a child’s life. Students and volunteers meet at the church on Thursday nights during the school year. Contact Tom Karr or Shamina Bradley at directors@communityclub.org or go to www.communityclub.org for more information.

*Please rise in body or in spirit

Introit

O Come: All Ye Faithful, Traditional

Maya Smith

*Lincoln Chimes

I. The Community Gathers for Worship

*Lighting the Advent Candles

The Shepherd-Kelly Family: Margaret, Chris, Linda and William

*Call to Worship

(Advent, Christmas and Epiphany by Brian Wren)

Leader: In Isaiah 35:5-6, the prophet declares that when God comes among us, the deaf shall hear, the blind shall see, and the tongue of the speechless shall sing for joy. For we light these candles as a sign of our hope that God’s love in Christ brings healing to us, and to the world, as we witness to the power of healing love, in ourselves and in others.

All: Risen Christ, Light of the world, Shine in our lives And shine among us now. Amen.

*Opening Hymn

(“Peace on Earth”)

(“Come, Ye”)

(“O Come, Ye”)

(Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany by Brian Wren)

Adeste Fidelis

1 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!

2 O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!

3 Sing, choirs of angels; sing in exultation; sing, all ye citizens of heaven above! Glory to God, all glory in the highest! [Refrain]

Prayer of Confession

(Adapted from Advent prayer by Rev. Beth Merrill Noah)

Holy God, we might need to confess that we have forgotten what this story is about – the story of the birth of Jesus. We wrap ourselves with so much planning and shopping, gift giving and sending, with so many preparations that we haven’t left any time to contemplate the Incarnation and to give thanks for this one life that changed the world. May the generosity that drives us this season be present all year. May the intentional reaching out to the far-flung and to the stranger continue past the holidays. May our hearts, so full of so much, be mostly full of love For You, for each other, and for ourselves. Heal us, we pray. Amen
Silent Confession
Assurance of Grace
*Passing of the Peace of Christ
*Response (Please stand and join the youth choir to sing!)
#119, verses 1 and 3  “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”
Mendelssohn
1 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 the angelic host proclaim,
“Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
Refrain
Hark! The herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn king!”
3 Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth. [Refrain]

*Affirmation of Faith

How Can This Happen?

*Offertory Hymn
#139, verses 1, 2, 6  “That Boy-Child of Mary”
Blauroc
Solo by Etsola Yoder Danewicz
Refrain
That boy-child of Mary was born in a stable,
a manger his cradle in Bethlehem.
1 What shall we call him, child of the manger?
What name is given in Bethlehem? [Refrain]

Surprise Visitors (Luke 2:8-20)
Narrated by Malcolm
You have seen a real sheep! Taking care of sheep is hard work. People who take care of sheep are called shepherds. They stay with the sheep all the time and make sure they are safe.

On the same night Jesus was born, shepherds in the field near Bethlehem saw an amazing sight. They were watching their sheep, as they did every night. Suddenly, an angel stood in front of them. A bright light surrounded them. The shepherds were frightened.
The angels said: (Angels say this) “Do not be afraid!”

Then the angels also said, “I have good news for you. A baby was born tonight in Bethlehem. This baby will be your Saviour. He is Christ the Lord! Look for him wrapped in clothes and sleeping in a manager.”

Then many angels appeared and said, “Glory to God and peace to all people!” As quickly as they came, the angels left. “Let’s go find the baby!” said the shepherds.

The shepherds left their sheep and hurried to Bethlehem. They found the baby lying in a manger, just like the angels said. They told Mary about the angels. She was amazed and thought carefully about what they said. She wanted to remember this night forever.

The shepherds went back to their sheep. As they walked, they praised God and told everyone they saw what had happened. What great news!

Anthem
*(Group of the children’s choir and youth sings; children’s choir dances)
“Little Drummer Boy”

The Wise Men are Led by the Star to Jesus
Narrated by Corinne
*(Matthew Chapter 2; Desmond Tate Storybook Bible)*
Far across the desert, wise people watched a new star burst into the night sky and knew it was a sign from God that a great king had been born.

They followed the star to Jerusalem.

“Where can we find the newborn king?” they asked.

King Herod was shocked to hear about a new king.

“Will be take my throne?” he wondered.

“Come back to me when you have found the child,” he told the wise men.

So they continued on their way, following the star to Bethlehem where they found Jesus in his mother’s arms. The wise people bowed down to the baby King and offered him gifts of gold, incense and myrrh.

But an angel warned the wise men not to tell Herod about the child.

So when they left Bethlehem, they traveled back home by a different road.

III. The Community Responds to the Word

*Musical Offering

“Child is This” (Greensleeves), Traditional
Sam Neill, saxophone

A Baby is Born (Luke 2:1-7)
Narrated by Annabel
Do you know about day you were born or when you were brought home? Who was there? How did you get your name?

After the angel Gabriel visited Mary to tell her the news about her baby, she and Joseph got some more news. They heard that the Roman ruler, Caesar Augustus, wanted to count all the people in the Roman Empire; every man had to go to his hometown so that his family could be counted. Joseph’s family was from Bethlehem. So Mary and Joseph let their home in Nazareth to go to Bethlehem. The trip was hard for a pregnant woman. Just imagine what it would have been like for Mary to make that trip with Joseph!

While Mary and Joseph were in Bethlehem, they looked and looked for a place to stay. It wasn’t easy! Many people had come to Bethlehem. Every guest room was full. At last, they found space in a room where the animals stayed. The baby was born in that room.

Mary gently wrapped him in clothes and laid him in the manger, where the animals ate. This was the baby that the Angel Gabriel had told her she would have.

A Prophet is Born (Luke 1:5-21, 39-45, 57-80)
Narrated by Linda
When a baby is born or adopted by a family, parents wonder how they will grow or what they will do, especially as the baby grows bigger and older. Ask you parents what they thought you would be like. Elizabeth and Zechariah had a good idea what their son would be like.

Elizabeth and her husband, Zechariah, loved each other very much. They wanted to share that love with a baby. They prayed for a baby. But they were very old and never had a baby.

Zechariah was a priest. One day at the temple, the angel Gabriel showed up. The Angel said, “Zechariah, God is happy with you. You and Elizabeth will have a baby. His name will be John. He will be a prophet filled with the Holy Spirit. He will prepare people for the One God sends.”

“But we are too old,” said Zechariah.

The angel said, “God sent me to tell you this good news. I promise you it is true. But because you don’t believe me, you will not be able to speak with your own mouth after your son is born.” When Zechariah left the temple, everyone could see that something had happened to him. Elizabeth and Zechariah did have a baby. Everyone came to see him.

“What is his name?” They asked. They thought he would be named after his father.

Elizabeth said, “His name is John.”

The people named to Zechariah, who still couldn’t talk. “No one in your family has that name,” they said.

Zechariah wrote on a table. “His name is John.”

At that moment, Zechariah could speak again. He praised God. He told his son, John, “You will grow up to be a prophet of God. God has a special job for you.”

Anthem
*(Group of the children’s choir and youth sings; children’s choir plays percussion)*
“Buzatto Sufuardo”

How Can This Happen? (Luke 1:36-38)
Narrated by Penny
Has someone ever told you something that you didn’t understand? Did you feel confused? Did you wonder about why it was said to you? This happened to a woman named Mary.

Mary and Joseph lived in the village of Nazareth. They would soon be married. One day, the Angel Gabriel showed up at Mary’s house. The Angel said, “Mary you should be very happy! God has chosen you for something very special. God is with you!”

An angel had never come to her house before. Mary was surprised. The angel said, “It’s okay! God has sent me with a message for you. You will have a baby boy. You will name him Jesus. He will be king one day. He will sit on David’s throne. And his realm will never end!”

Now Mary was very surprised and confused. “How can this happen?” She asked. “Joseph and I aren’t ready to have children yet.”

“This baby will be a gift form God,” said Gabriel. “The Holy Spirit will come to you. Your baby will be very special. People will call him God’s son. Listen, Mary, your cousin Elizabeth will also have a baby, even though she is very old. God can do anything!”

Mary thought about what the angel said. God was with her. She didn’t feel so confused or surprised anymore. She said to the angel, “I will do what God asks me to do.”

Refrain
Surprise Visitors (Luke 2:8-20)  (Shepherds, Angels and Sheep join in during this story.)
Refrain
What name is given in Bethlehem? [Refrain]