



invited
Home
Christmas Eve

THE WORSHIP OF GOD

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24

Reflection

I've been thinking about a universal truth—the way we all want to be invited in. We want the door to be opened with cheers of, “You’re here!” We want the clerk at the store to ask how we’re doing, and the waiter to wink at us and whisper, “Good choice.” We want the barista to learn our names, which people call being “a regular,” but it feels more like being known. We want the stranger to help us pick up our sodas when the case breaks, and the woman to put her bag in her lap on the subway, which is to mean, “Come, you can sit by me.” We cherish every open palm wave from the child in the grocery store and every city church with open doors when the organist plays. At the end of the day we are all just a collection of heart and bones walking through this world, exchanging invitations, saying to one another in a million little ways— come matter here. Come make a difference here. Come be you, here. Jesus didn’t receive much of an invitation. No one moved their bag to their lap, or opened the door to the inn and said, “You’re here!” Still, he came.

*What a gift it is
to have a God
who does not wait on my invitation.
What a gift it is
to have a God
who can’t imagine
being anywhere but here.*

Prelude

“Sing We Now of Christmas/God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen”

arr. Brant Adams

James Tatum, Tim Hendrix
and

“What Child Is This?”

arr. Lani Smith

Tim Hendrix, Pam Weis

Welcome

Chrissy Tatum Williamson

✠ Call to Worship

Aaron Ng

One: An unmarried teenage girl was invited —

All: to carry Christ into this world.

One: An ordinary carpenter was invited —

All: to be a father to a child unlike any other.

One: The shepherds were invited —

All: outcast and isolated, included at the manger.

One: The Magi were invited —

All: foreigners and seekers, included at the manger.

One: And if she was invited, and he was invited, and they were invited —

All: then we can trust that we too are invited.

One: This story is for us.

All: This love is for us.

One: Family of faith, this is our invitation. Welcome home.

All: Amen.

✠ Opening Song

“Close to Home”

Christian McIvor

Words and Music by
Christian McIvor ©2021

**After all that we’ve been through,
We’re homesick for the world we knew but wanting more.
Help us know what’s good and true –
That in our hearts, O God, it’s you we’re longing for.
As we seek to build your kin-dom far and near,
Give us hope that lets us know that you’re still here,
Close to home, close to home.**

(cont’d next page)

Help us now prepare a place
 In us, O God, for you a space to break right through.
 In our action and our word,
 May your great love be felt and heard and all made new.
 As we lay a strong foundation on your way,
 Give us peace that lets us know you always stay
 Close to home, close to home.

Help us always make the choice
 To cry out loud and be the voice that welcomes all.
 Let us show the whole world how
 To create change, 'cause here and now is where we're called.
 We will work for justice and equality,
 Give us joy that for our neighbors we might be
 Close to home, close to home.

Help us set your Spirit free,
 In your abundance, let us be your open arms;
 Shelter from the endless storm,
 A refuge where all might stay warm and safe from harm.
 Let us be a sanctuary of your grace,
 Give us love that we might always make this place
 Close to home, close to home.

Let the love of Christ be born in us each day;
 Through this invitation, we can hear you say,

"Welcome home." In our staying ("home"), in our going
 ("Home"), in our failing ("home"), in our growing
 ("Home"), in our doubting ("home"), in our knowing,
 You are here with us, calling us home,
 Home, home, home, home.

Lighting of the Advent Candles

John, Kay, and Kevin Meyer, Katie McDonnell

First Lesson

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

Zachary Brawner

Children's Message

April Alston

✠ Carol 249

"O Come, All Ye Faithful"

Call to the Offering

April Alston

*Tonight's offering will be given for Together for Hope.
 You may place your offering in one of the baskets which are
 located under both trees and in the back.*

✠ Offertory Carol 250

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"
 Stanzas 1 and 4

Second Lesson

Luke 1:26-38

Trish Boone

✠ Carol 277

"Hark the Herald Angels Sing"

Third Lesson

Luke 2:1-7

Bob and Debbie Potter

✠ Carol 262

“Away in a Manger”

Stanzas 1 and 3

Fourth Lesson

Luke 2:8-20

Julie Green

Homily

“Invited Home”

Chrissy Tatum Williamson

Silent Reflection

Pastoral Prayer

April Alston

Communion

Chrissy Tatum Williamson, Anna Beth Cross

“Still, Still, Still”

Austrian Carol,
arr. Norman Luboff

Still, still, still, one can hear the falling snow.
For all is hushed, the world is sleeping,
Holy Star its vigil keeping,
Still, still, still, one can hear the falling snow.

Sleep, sleep, sleep, 'tis the eve of our Saviour's birth.
The night is peaceful all around you,
Close your eyes, let sleep surround you,
Sleep, sleep, sleep, 'tis the eve of our Saviour's birth.

Dream, dream, dream of the joyous day to come.
While guardian angels without number
Watch you as you sweetly slumber.
Dream, dream, dream of the joyous day to come.

Fifth Lesson

John 1:1-14

Chrissy Tatum Williamson

✠ Carol 253

“Silent Night! Holy Night!”

✠ Carol 270

“Joy to the World”

Stanzas 1, 2, and 4

Postlude

“Tidings of Joy”
Tim Hendrix, Pam Weis

arr. Lloyd Larson
and Mary MacDonald

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*With Christ as the Cornerstone, we will build a church of living stones,
where every member is a minister and is equipped to express God's love by word and deed to all people.*

Based on 1 Peter 2:5, 6

✠ Please rise in body or spirit.

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