



Christmas Lovefeast
Sudbury United Methodist Church
Sudbury, Massachusetts

Christmas Lovefeast

*Glory to God in the highest heaven!
And on earth peace among those whom he favors!*

Herald Angels

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!”

*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,
off-spring of a virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh the God-head see;
hail the incarnate Deity,
pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel. **Ref.**

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. **Ref.**

Adeste Fideles

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;

*O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

True God of true God, Light from Light Eternal,
lo, he shuns not the Virgin’s womb;
Son of the Father, begotten, not created; **Ref.**
Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation;
O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest; **Ref.**

ISAIAH 9:2-7 and LUKE 2:1-20

The First Noel

The first Noel the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds
in fields as they lay;
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter’s night that was so deep.

*Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,
born is the King of Israel.*

They looked up and saw a star
shining in the east,
beyond them far;
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night. **Ref.**

And by the light of that same star
three Wise Men came from country far;
to seek for a king was their intent,
and to follow the star wherever it went. **Ref.**

This star drew nigh to the north-west,
o’er Bethlehem it took its rest;
and there it did both stop and stay,
right over the place where Jesus lay. **Ref.**

Then entered in those Wise Men three,
full reverently upon the knee,
and offered there, in his presence,
their gold and myrrh and frankincense. **Ref.**

ANTHEMS I and II (serve)

BLESSING

Come, Lord Jesus, our Guest to be,
and bless these gifts, bestowed by Thee.
Bless our dear ones everywhere,
keep them in Thy loving care. Amen.

ANTHEMS III and IV (partake)

St. Louis

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 wondering love.
O morning stars together,
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the King,
and peace to all on earth!

How silently, how silently,
the wondrous gift is given!
so God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of his heaven.
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!

Greensleeves

What child is this who, laid to rest,
on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
while shepherds watch are keeping?

*This, this is Christ the King,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud,
the babe, the son of Mary.*

Why lies he in such mean estate
where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christians, fear, for sinners here
the silent Word is pleading. **Ref.**

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh,
come, peasant, king, to own him;
the King of kings salvation brings,
let loving hearts enthrone him. **Ref.**

PRAYER AND OFFERING

*(Please stand as able. The congregation
will sing the words in bold type.)*

Hagen, 310 B

Morning Star, O cheering sight!
Ere Thou cam'st, how dark earth's night!
Morning Star, O cheering sight!
Ere Thou cam'st, how dark earth's night!
Jesus mine, **In me shine;**
In me shine, **Jesus mine;**
Fill my heart with light divine.

Morning Star, Thy glory bright
Far excels the sun's clear light:
Morning Star, Thy glory bright
Far excels the sun's clear light.
Jesus be, **Constantly,**
Constantly, **Jesus be**
More than thousand suns to me.

Thy glad beams, Thou Morning Star,
Cheer the nations near and far.
Thy glad beams, Thou Morning Star,
Cheer the nations near and far;
Thee we own, **Lord alone,**
Lord alone, **Thee we own,**
Our dear Saviour, God's dear Son.

Morning Star, my soul's true light,
Tarry not, dispel my night.
Morning Star, my soul's true light,
Tarry not, dispel my night.
Jesus mine, **In me shine;**
In me shine, **Jesus mine;**
Fill my heart with light divine. Amen

Away in a Manger

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes:
I love thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky
and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask thee to stay
close by me forever, and love me, I pray;
bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
and fit us for heaven to live with thee there.

Carol

It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth,
to touch their harps of gold:
“Peace on the earth, good will to men,
from heaven's all-gracious King.”
The world in solemn stillness lay,
to hear the angels sing.

For lo! the days are hastening on,
by prophet seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years
shall come the time foretold;
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendors fling,
and the whole world send back the song
which now the angels sing.

Es Ist Ein Ros

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming
from tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming, as those of old have sung.
It came, a floweret bright, amid the cold of winter,
when half spent was the night.

Isaiah 'twas foretold it, the Rose I have in mind;
with Mary we behold it, the Virgin Mother kind.
To show God's love aright, she bore to us a Savior,
when half spent was the night.

O Flower, whose fragrance tender
with sweetness fills the air,
dispel in glorious splendor the darkness everywhere.
True man yet very God, from sin and death now save us,
And share our every load.

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

Antioch

Joy to the world, the Lord is 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 all 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.

BENEDICTION

Lovefeasts and the Christmas Candle

The early Christians met and broke bread together to signify their union, fellowship, and love. In 1727 the Moravian Church revived this practice and established the custom of celebrating the partaking together of a simple meal known as a “lovefeast.” The Lovefeast service also includes music, primarily singing hymns of love and fellowship. After the Lovefeast, lighted candles are distributed to each worshiper.

Moravians brought this service with them as they came to America first in Savannah, Georgia (1735); then in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania (1741); and Bethabara (1753) and Salem (1766) North Carolina. John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement, took part in a Moravian Lovefeast in 1783 and introduced it to his fellow Methodists the following year.

The candles are handmade of bees-wax and tallow with a red non-flammable paper frill around the bottom. Some say the bees-wax and tallow symbolize the humanity of Christ; the lighted wick Christ's divinity; and the red frill Christ's atonement. Others say the lighted candle reminds us of Jesus' words:

**“I am the light of the world,” and
“Ye are the light of the world. Let your light so shine before men that,
that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father Who is in heaven.”**

The Christmas Candle thus reminds us that the one whose birth we celebrate came to be the light of the world. Also that we, Christ's followers, are to be lights in the world, letting our lights so shine that others, seeing our good works, may glorify our Father Who is in heaven.

