

**Christmas Eve
December 24, 2021
8:00 pm**

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

The ache for home lives in all of us, the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned. ~ Maya Angelou

GATHERING MUSIC

Susan Buffington

WELCOME AND LIFE IN THE CHURCH

INTROIT

Of the Father's Love Begotten

*CALL TO WORSHIP

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 PRAYER

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

Patrick Family

*HYMN

O Come, All Ye Faithful

GG: 133

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 12:2-6, pg. 641

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (in unison)

Holy God, You throw open the door and invite us into relationship, day in and day out. However, instead of running toward you, we dip our toes in the water of this faith. We hold our breath. We play it safe. We struggle to believe that a love so unfettered, so unfiltered, could be for us. As a result, we often deny this worth for ourselves and others. Forgive us for ignoring your invitation to be the people you call us to be. Forgive us for the ways in which we hold back from deeper connection to you or withhold your radical love from others. Open our ears to not only hear your invitation, but to trust that this good news exists even for us. Gratefully we pray,

(A time of silent confession)

Amen.

WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

One: Family of faith, even when we fail to trust God's love, and even when we fail to love others as we should, God still loves us. That door *never* closes. So hear and believe this good news:

All: God invites us into a life of faith. God loves us through every season of life. God forgives us when we make mistakes and invites us deeper every step of the way. We are loved, invited, claimed, celebrated, and forgiven. Thanks be to God!

ANTHEM

The Angel Gabriel Basque Carol, arr. Raymond Howell

SCRIPTURE: Luke 2:1-20, pg. 58

One: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

