

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD—CHRISTMAS EVE

December 24, 2021 – 10 p.m.

AS WE GATHER

Throughout history, our gracious God has made outlandish promises. His spokesmen, the writers of biblical books, said that a descendant of David would come to sit on an eternal royal throne. More than that, His titles would include some reserved for God in heaven. He was and is a Wonderful Counselor, revealing God's love in His own life and death; the Mighty God, though hidden within fragile flesh and blood; the Everlasting Father, though trapped in time and space; and the Prince of Peace, ruling not by enforcement of divine law but by forgiving all who call to Him for grace and mercy. Today, we celebrate His birth among us in time, as promised long ago and in our hearts each day.

PRELUDE “Still, Still, Still” -Paul Manz

“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” -set. John A. Behnke

HYMN “O Come, All Ye Faithful” *LSB* 379

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: Refrain

ref O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord!

2 Highest, most holy,
Light of Light eternal,
Born of a virgin, a mortal He comes;
Son of the Father
Now in flesh appearing! Refrain

3 Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God
In the highest: Refrain

4 Yea, Lord, we greet Thee,
Born this happy morning;
Jesus, to Thee be glory giv'n!
Word of the Father
Now in flesh appearing! Refrain
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INVOCATION

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION *Hebrews 9:26*

Pastor: As we prepare to celebrate our Lord's birth and receive Him as He still comes to us today, let us also remember the reason Jesus was born: "He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." He has come to bring peace, yet not always in ways we can see in this world. He has come to bring peace, yet not always in ways we can see in ourselves in our thoughts, words, and actions. He has come to bring peace that is forgiveness of sins and peace with our Father in heaven.

People: We confess that we have sinned against God and against one another. We yearn for peace with God and reconciliation with one another, yet we cannot accomplish it ourselves. Forgive us, Lord, and restore our souls, that our lives reflect not our sin, but the joy of the birth of Your only Son into the world.

Pastor: Jesus is Immanuel, which means "God with us." What we are powerless to do, He has done for us. His name is Jesus, the name that means He has "come to save us from our sins." Know the peace He has come to bring; live it with others and share it with all. As a called and ordained servant of the Word, and in the stead and by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

CHOIR – INTROIT *Psalm 2:1–2, 4–6; antiphon: Liturgical Text* (*The congregation will chant the verses in **bold**.*)



When all was still, and it was | midnight,*
your almighty Word, O Lord, descended from the | royal throne.

Why do the | nations rage*
and the peoples | plot in vain?

The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel to- | gether,*
against the LORD and against his a- | noointed.

He who sits in the | heavens laughs;*
the Lord holds them in de- | rision.

Then he will speak to them | in his wrath,*
and terrify them in his fury, | saying,

"As for me, I have | set my King*
on Zion, my | holy hill."

Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy | Spirit;

as it was in the be- | ginning,*

is now, and will be forever. | Amen.

When all was still, and it was | midnight,*
your almighty Word, O Lord, descended from the | royal throne.

HYMN OF PRAISE "Gloria in Excelsis" *LSB p. 204*

1. To God on high be glory
And peace to all the earth;
Goodwill from God in heaven
Proclaimed at Jesus' birth!
We praise and bless You, Father;
Your holy name, we sing—
Our thanks for Your great glory,
Lord God, our heav'nly King.

2. To You, O sole-begotten,
The Father's Son, we pray;
O Lamb of God, our Savior,
You take our sins away.
Have mercy on us, Jesus;
Receive our heartfelt cry,
Where You in pow'r are seated
At God's right hand on high—

3. For You alone are holy;
You only are the Lord.
Forever and forever,
Be worshiped and adored;
You with the Holy Spirit
Alone are Lord Most High,
In God the Father's glory.
“Amen!” our glad reply.

SALUTATION

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Let us pray. O God, You make us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Grant that as we joyfully receive Him as our Redeemer, we may with sure confidence behold Him when He comes to be our Judge; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT READING *Isaiah 9:2–7*

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined. You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

CHOIR – GRADUAL *Isaiah 9:6; Psalm 98:1a*

To us a child is born, to us a son is | given;*
and the government shall be upon his | shoulder.
And his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, | Mighty God,*
Everlasting Father, | Prince of Peace.
Sing to the Lord a | new song,*
for he has done | marvelous things!

EPISTLE *Titus 2:11–14*

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL PROCESSIONAL “Angels from the Realms of Glory” sts. 1-2 *LSB 367*

1 Angels from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o’er all the earth;
Ye who sang creation’s story,
Now proclaim Messiah’s birth.

ref Come and worship, come and worship;
Worship Christ, the newborn King.

2 Shepherds in the field abiding,
Watching o’er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing,
Yonder shines the Infant Light. *Refrain* Text: Public domain

CHOIR – ALLELUIA AND VERSE (*The Congregation will sing the Alleluia and the Choir will sing the Proper Verse of the Day.*)

People: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia

Choir: For unto you is born this day in the city of David a | Savior,*
who is | Christ the Lord. *Luke 2:11*

People: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia

HOLY GOSPEL *Luke 2:1-20*

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the second chapter.

People: Glory to You, O Lord.

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!” When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up

all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

GOSPEL RECESSIONAL “Angels from the Realms of Glory” sts. 3-4 *LSB* 367

3 Sages, leave your contemplations,
 Brighter visions beam afar;
Seek the great Desire of nations,
 Ye have seen His natal star.

ref Come and worship, come and worship;
Worship Christ, the newborn King.

4 Saints before the altar bending,
 Watching long in hope and fear,
Suddenly the Lord, descending,
 In His temple shall appear. *Refrain*
Text: Public domain

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY “O Little Town of Bethlehem” *LSB* 361

1 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.

2 For Christ is born of Mary,
 And, gathered all above
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
 Their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together
 Proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the king
 And peace to all the earth!

3 How silently, how silently
 The wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts
 The blessings of His heav'n.
No ear may hear His coming;
 But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him, still
 The dear Christ enters in.

4 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 Immanuel!
Text: Public domain

SERMON

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

OFFERING "How Far Is It to Bethlehem" -Paul Manz

We offer our gifts to the Lord as we use this time in our service for contemplation and preparation for the sacrament of communion. Offerings can be placed in the plates at the back entrance doors as you leave the sanctuary.

PREFACE 2 Timothy 4:22

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

PROPER PREFACE

Pastor: It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord; for in the mystery of the Word made flesh You have given us a new revelation of Your glory that, seeing You in the person of Your Son, we may know and love those things that are not seen. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

SANCTUS



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of Sab - a - oth a - dored;



Heav'n and earth with full ac-claim shout the glo-ry of Your name.



Sing ho - san-na in the high-est, sing ho - san - na to the Lord;



Tru - ly blest is He who comes in the name of the Lord!

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PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Blessed are You, Lord our God, for You have had mercy on those whom You created and sent Your only-begotten Son into time and space as You had promised. He has borne our sin and become our Savior. Gathered in the name of Jesus, we ask, O Lord, that You forgive, renew, and strengthen us with Your Word and Spirit. Gather us together with all Your saints on that day when we join them at the eternal banquet, which we anticipate in this foretaste of the feast to come. To You—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—be all praise and glory, now and forever.

People: Amen.

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD *Matthew 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:19–20; 1 Corinthians 11:23–25*

Pastor: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: “Take, eat; this is My \times body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me.”

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: “Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My \times blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

PROCLAMATION OF CHRIST *1 Corinthians 11:26; Revelation 22:20*

Pastor: As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.

People: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Pastor: O Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, in giving us Your body and blood to eat and to drink, You lead us to remember and confess Your holy cross and passion, Your blessed death, Your rest in the tomb, Your resurrection from the dead, Your ascension into heaven, and Your coming for the final judgment. So remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

LORD'S PRAYER *Matthew 6:9–13*

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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

PAX DOMINI

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: Amen.

AGNUS DEI

1 O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,
2 O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,

You take the sin of the world a - way;
You take the sin of the world a - way;

O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,
Have mer - cy on us, Je - sus Christ,

Have mer - cy on us, Lord, we pray.
And grant us peace, O Lord, we pray.

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You are invited to receive the Lord's Supper if you believe and confess that Jesus Christ is your Savior from sin, you are a baptized child of the Triune God, and you believe that He gives you His body and blood in the bread and wine you receive. White grape juice can be found in the center of each tray for those who cannot receive alcohol. Children are welcome to come forward for a blessing.

MUSIC DURING DISTRIBUTION Choir: "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

Organ: "From Heaven Above to Earth I Come" -set. John A. Behnke

BLESSING

Pastor: May our Lord's body and blood strengthen and preserve you in true faith to life everlasting. Depart in peace and with joy.

People: Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

The pastor will take the light from the Christ Candle and pass it to the ushers at the chancel. Please tip only the unlit candle to be lit. Do not tip the lighted candles. Note: Parents, please assist your children to prevent accidents.

The ushers will begin at the front of the church and light the candle of the worshipper closest to the center aisle. From the center to the aisles, the flame will be passed from one worshipper to the next, saying: "CHRIST IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD"

HYMN "Silent Night, Holy Night" LSB 363

1 Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
 Sleep in heavenly peace,
 Sleep in heavenly peace.

2 Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight;
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heav'nly hosts sing, Alleluia!
 Christ, the Savior, is born!
 Christ, the Savior, is born!

3 Silent night, holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
 Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,
 Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.
Text: Public domain

COLLECT

Pastor: Let us pray. O God, You make this most holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that as we have known the mysteries of that Light on earth we may also come to the fullness of His joys in heaven; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

BENEDICTION *Numbers 6:24–26*

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

People: Amen.

EXTINGUISH CANDLES

Please extinguish your candle now, using caution regarding the flame and hot wax!

POSTLUDE "Antioch" free harmonization by Jan Bender

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

SANCTUARY CHRISTMAS DECORATION donation slips are available in the narthex. Please indicate your willingness to help defray decoration costs by using the donation slip. Place it in the offering plate or hand it to an usher. Donation slips will be available through December 25.

HATS, MITTEN, AND SCARVES are being collected during the month of December to help local kids. They will go to the local organization, Hats and Mittens, whose mission is “to warm the bodies and hearts of kids everywhere. That starts by providing free hats and mittens to children in need during the cold winter months.” They can be new or gently used, knitted or crocheted items too! Waterproof mittens and gloves, especially for younger kids, are preferred. We are collecting until January 2nd. Questions? Contact Marie G.