



St. John's Lutheran Church

A congregation of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod

Christmas Eve
December 24, 2024
7 p.m. Worship



Regarding Holy Communion, the scriptures teach that in this sacramental meal, our Lord gives His own true body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins. In the forgiveness of our sins we become partakers of the new covenant in His blood. For this reason, scripture also teaches that anyone who receives the sacrament ought to examine himself (see 1 Cor. 11:17-29). To that end, we encourage all who receive the sacrament regularly to make use of the literature provided for this purpose and to regularly visit with the pastor personally.

For guests and visitors: If you are a member of a Missouri Synod church or a church which shares fellowship with the Missouri Synod, you are welcome to commune with us. If not, you are welcome to come forward to receive a blessing while the sacrament is being given out (Please indicate your desire to receive a blessing by crossing your arms in front of you). If you would like a pastoral exception, please arrange for a meeting with the pastor.

The Word Became Flesh

John 1:1–18 introduces one of the Bible’s greatest and grandest books—the Gospel according to St. John. These eighteen verses contain some of the most important words written—ever. They explode with light and brilliance, truth and grace. And John 1:1–18 is chock full of dearly loved Advent and Christmas themes, with the most famous one being, “The Word became flesh.” (John 1:14). Historically, the fourth Gospel is likened to an eagle—an image suggesting that John soars to awesome heights of glory and grandeur. As we begin Advent and dig deep into John 1:1-18, get ready to fly!

Theme of the Day: If you need a Savior from sin, a Friend who loves at all times and a Redeemer who restores and renews, it’s time to open your eyes and this night join the faithful in saying, “We have seen His glory!”

Invocation and Call to Worship

- P** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
- C Amen.**
- P** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
- C He was with God in the beginning.**
- P** Through him all things were made.
- C Without him nothing was made that has been made.**
- P** In him was life, and that life was the light of men.
- C The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not overcome it.**
- P** The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.
- C We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only.**
- P** Who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.
- C From his fullness we have all received grace upon grace.**
- P** The Law was given through Moses.
- C Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ!**

Hymn

“Once in Royal David’s City”

LSB 376

Once in royal David’s city
Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby
In a manger for His bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven,
Who is God and Lord of all,
And His shelter was a stable,
And His cradle was a stall;
With the poor and mean and lowly
Lived on earth our Savior holy.

For He is our childhood's pattern,
Day by day like us He grew;
He was little, weak, and helpless,
Tears and smiles like us He knew;
And He feels for all our sadness,
And He shares in all our gladness.

And our eyes at last shall see Him,
Through His own redeeming love;
For that child so dear and gentle
Is our Lord in heav'n above;
And He leads His children on
To the place where He is gone.

Not in that poor, lowly stable
With the oxen standing by
Shall we see Him, but in heaven,
Set at God's right hand on high.
Then like stars His children, crowned,
All in white, His praise will sound!
Text: Public domain

Confession and Absolution

P If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

C But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

P Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

C Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in

**your will and walk in your ways to the glory of your holy name.
Amen.**

P Almighty God in his mercy has given his Son to die for you and for his sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

Introit

Ps. 24:1, 3-5; antiphon: Ps. 2:7

I will tell of the decree:

The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you."

**The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof,
the world and those who dwell therein.**

Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD?

And who shall stand in his holy place?

**He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul
to what is false and does not swear deceitfully.**

He will receive blessing from the LORD

and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

**Glorify be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

I will tell of the decree:

The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you."

Collect of the Day

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P 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.

C **Amen.**

Chancel Choir

"Noel, Noel"

Linda Spevacek

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 40:1-5

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. A voice of one calling: In the desert prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. Every valley shall be

raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Epistle

2 Corinthians 4:13-18

It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken." With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence. All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God. Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Holy Gospel

Luke 2:1-20

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 2nd chapter.

C **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.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

A Christmas Creed (A Confession of What We Believe)

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, who sent his Son as my Savior on Christmas. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, announced by the angels, worshiped by the shepherds, and adored by the wise men; who lived to suffer, die, and rise again to free me from sin, death, and the power of the devil. I believe in the Holy Spirit, who has brought me to faith in the Christ of Christmas and by whose work in my heart I am led to lay before the feet of Christ the treasures of my love and live under him as my King both now and forevermore. Amen.

Children’s Message

Anna Kruger

Hymn

“From Heaven Above to Earth I Come”

LSB 358, vv. 1-5 only

“From heav’n above to earth I come
To bear good news to ev’ry home;
Glad tidings of great joy I bring,
Whereof I now will say and sing:

“To you this night is born a child
Of Mary, chosen virgin mild;
This little child of lowly birth
Shall be the joy of all the earth.

“This is the Christ, our God Most High,
Who hears your sad and bitter cry;
He will Himself your Savior be
From all your sins to set you free.

“He will on you the gifts bestow
Prepared by God for all below,
That in His kingdom, bright and fair,
You may with us His glory share.

“These are the signs that you shall mark:
The swaddling clothes and manger dark.
There you will find the infant laid
By whom the heav’ns and earth were made.”

Sermon

“We Have Seen His Glory!” (John 1:14b)

Offering

Vocal Solo

“O Holy Night”

Lowell Tolly

The Christmas Prayers

P Let us pray this Christmas night for those who live in darkness: Source of eternal light and life, come to those who live far from You. Call, gather, and enlighten them that they may know and believe in Your Son. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Let us pray for the poor and the homeless: Lord, You who once were homeless Yourself, come among those who this night have no place to rest and little food to eat. Reach to them through Your caring people and by Your presence bring them hope. Lord in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Let us pray for peace among nations: O Prince of Peace, through Your Word inspire peace throughout the world. Reconcile us to one another even as You have reconciled us to Your Father. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Let us pray for the sick and the recovering: Loving Lord, bring to those who face sickness at Christmas a wholeness of spirit, a healing of body, and an endurance empowered by Immanuel, God-with-us, and with them, too. We speak these names silently before you now. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P We pray for those who grieve the loss of loved ones: Grant them, Father, especially this night, a oneness with the saints in light, a unity spanning space and time, for if Christ is with them and Christ is with us, then we are one in Christ. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Let us pray for the Church across the world: Almighty Father, make us one that Your Church on earth may increasingly speak with one voice and with one heart so that together in the Body of Christ we may proclaim Christ to the world. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P For these, and the needs of all Your people, we come to You in prayer through Him who has opened the way for us, Jesus Christ, Your Son.

C **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

C **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.**

Communion Preparation

P With joy we praise You, gracious God, for You have created heaven and earth, made us in Your image, and kept covenant with us—even when we fell into sin.

C **We give You thanks for Jesus Christ, our Lord, who came among us as the Word made flesh to show us Your glory, full of grace and truth. Therefore we join our voices with all the saints and angels and the whole creation to proclaim the glory of Your name.**

The Words of Institution

The Peace of the Lord

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C **And also with you. Amen.**

“Noel”

Words and Music by Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash and Matt Redman

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Love incarnate, love divine,
Star and angels gave the sign.
Bow to babe on bended knee,
The Savior of humanity.
Unto us a Child is born;
He shall reign forevermore.

Chorus: Noel, Noel!

Come and see what God has done!

Noel, Noel!

The story of amazing love!

The light of the world,

Given for us.

Noel.

Son of God, and Son of man,

There before the world began.

Born to suffer, born to save,

Born to raise us from the grave.

Christ, the everlasting Lord;

He shall reign forevermore. (*Chorus—Instrumental—Chorus*)

♪ “O Little Town of Bethlehem”

Words and music by Lewis Redner, Phillips Brooks, Shane Barnard, Ross Fishburn and Adrian Disch
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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 men 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 to us today.

We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell.

O come to us, abide with us, O Lord Emmanuel.

Ending: The hopes and fears of all the years are met in Thee tonight.

♪ “Away in a Manger”

Text and Tune: Public Domain, Arranged by Phil Wickham and Jonathan Smith
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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 take us to heaven to live with Thee there.

“What Child Is This”

LSB 370

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 Christian, fear; for sinners here
The silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce Him through,
The cross be borne for me, for you;
Hail, hail the Word made flesh,
The babe, the son of Mary!

So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh;
Come, peasant, king, to own Him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.
Raise, raise the song on high,
The virgin sings her lullaby;
Joy, joy, for Christ is born,
The babe, the son of Mary!

“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

LSB 380

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

Refrain: Hark! The herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King!”

Christ, by highest heav’n adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold Him come,
Offspring of a virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail the_incarinate Deity!
Pleased as Man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel! Refrain

Hail, the heav’n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
Ris’n with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth. Refrain

Communion Dismissal

Service of Light

Pastor will light the candles of the ushers. The person at the end of each pew should receive the light from an usher, then pass the light to the other candles in their pew. A lighted candle is NEVER tilted but always held upright while giving light to another lest wax be dripped on the floor and pews.

- P Jesus Christ is the Light of the world,
C **the light no darkness can overcome.**
P Stay with us, Lord, for it is evening,

C and the day is almost over.

P Let Your light scatter the darkness,

C and illumine your church.

P The Lord be with you.

C and also with you.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C it is right to give him thanks and praise.

Lighting of the Candles

The Prayer of Thanksgiving

P O God, because You once caused this holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light, grant that we who have known the mystery of that Light here on earth may come to the full measure of its joys in heaven; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

C Amen.

Hymn

“Silent Night”

**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.**

**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!**

**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.**

Benediction

P The Lord bless thee and keep thee.

The Lord make His face shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee.

The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and T give thee peace.

C Amen.

Blessing and Dismissal

P May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the determination of the magi, and the peace of the Christ Child. And may the Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit bless you now and forevermore!

C **Let us worship the newborn King!**

Hymn

“Joy to the World”

LSB 387

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let men 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.

*Please join us for
Christmas Day Worship at 10 a.m.
Christmas Day Community Dinner from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.*

Acknowledgments

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