

# **Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**

## **December 24, 2022**

### **Lessons and Carols on the Eve of the Nativity of our Lord**

*A very merry Christmas to all who have come to worship the Christ Child. Our service this evening tells the story of the birth of our Savior in lessons, hymns, responsive readings, prayer, and homily. One of the highpoints of the service is the Procession of the Christ Child. At this time, the gospel of Christ's birth is read, and the Christ Child is placed in the manger. An array of candles exemplifies Jesus as the "light of the world" (John 8:12), as the light is gradually spread during the service from the Advent wreath to candles throughout the church. Candles, processions, colorful adornments, carols, and songs, all combine to witness to the beauty and awe of this most holy night.*

**The Pre-service Music** ("O Come All Ye Faithful" – Bell Choir)

**The Call to Worship and Welcome**

**The Entrance Hymn:** LSB 379, "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

*(During the singing of this hymn, the Christ Candle on the Advent Wreath is lit.)*

**The Invitation to Worship**

P: Beloved in Christ, we are gathered here on this Eve of Christmas to prepare our hearts for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, to meditate upon the mystery of the Incarnation, that God became a man, and to receive with joy the message of our salvation.

**C: Come down from heaven, O Lord. Let the skies pour down righteousness and may You bring forth salvation.**

P: Let us pray. Almighty God, You have given Your only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and to be born of a pure virgin. Grant that we, who have been born again and made Your children by adoption through Holy Baptism, may daily be renewed by Your Holy Spirit; through our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with You and the same Spirit be honor and glory, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

## At the Manger: Mary

### A Hymn: “O Holy Night”

O Holy night! The stars are brightly shining  
It is the night of our dear Savior’s birth  
Long lay the world in sin and error pining  
’Til He appeared and the soul felt its worth  
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices  
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn  
Fall on your knees; O hear the Angel voices!  
O night divine, O night when Christ was born  
O night, O Holy night, O night divine!

*(During the hymn, the four candles on the Advent wreath are lit.  
After the hymn, the people are seated.)*

### The Story of Mary: St. Luke 1:26-35

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” But she was greatly troubled at the saying and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?” And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.

P: The Lord Himself will give you a sign.

**C: Behold, a virgin will conceive and bear a son.**

P: And they shall call Him Emmanuel,

**C: Which means, God is with us.** (Isaiah 7:14)

P: Let us pray. Almighty God, in choosing the virgin Mary to be the mother of Your Son, You made known Your gracious regard for the poor and lowly. Grant us grace to receive Your Word in humility and obedience. In the name of Mary's Son we pray,

**C: Amen.**

### **At the Manger: Joseph**

**An Anthem:** "It's So Still in Bethlehem" (Adult choir)

**A Hymn:** LSB 361, "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

*(During the hymn, the two candles by the altar are lit.)*

**The Story of Joseph:** St. Matthew 1:18-21

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

P: A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse.

**C: And a branch shall grow out of his roots.**

P: The Spirit of the Lord shall rest on him.

**C: The Spirit of wisdom and understanding.**

P: The Spirit of counsel and might.

**C: The Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord** (Isaiah 11:1-2)

P: Let us pray. O God, who from the family of Your servant David raised up Joseph to be the guardian of Your incarnate Son and the spouse of his virgin mother: Give us grace to imitate his

uprightness of life and his obedience to Your commands. In the name of Joseph's Son, we pray.

**C: Amen.**

### **At the Manger: The Star**

**A Hymn:** "We Three Kings"

We three kings of Orient are;  
Bearing gifts we traverse afar,  
Field and fountain, moor, and mountain,  
Following yonder star.

#### **Chorus**

*O star of wonder, star of light,  
Star with royal beauty bright,  
Westward leading, still proceeding,  
Guide us to thy perfect light.*

Born a King on Bethlehem's plain  
Gold I bring to crown Him again,  
King forever, ceasing never,  
Over us all to reign. **(Chorus)**

Frankincense to offer have I;  
Incense owns a Deity nigh;  
Prayer and praising, voices raising,  
Worshiping God on high. **(Chorus)**

Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume  
Breathes a life of gathering gloom;  
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,  
Sealed in the stone-cold tomb. **(Chorus)**

Glorious now behold Him arise;  
King and God and sacrifice;  
Alleluia, Alleluia,  
Sounds through the earth and skies. **(Chorus)**

*(During the hymn the candles along the chancel wall are lit.)*

**The Story of the Star:** St. Matthew 2:1-2, 7-10

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” ... Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.” After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.

P: Arise, shine, for your light has come.

**C: And the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.**

P: For darkness shall cover the earth,

**C: And thick darkness the peoples.**

P: But the Lord will arise upon you.

**C: But His glory will appear over you.** (Isaiah 60:1-2)

P: Let us pray. O God, by the leading of a star You manifested Your only Son to the peoples of the earth. Lead us, who know You now by faith, to Your presence, where we may see Your glory face to face, in the name of the Light of the world.

**C: Amen.**

**At the Manger: Angels**

**A Hymn:** LSB 368, “Angels We Have Heard on High”

*(During the hymn, the candles in the nave are lit.)*

## **The Story of the Angels: St. Luke 2:8-14**

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 great fear. And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of 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!”

P: Rise up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings.

**C: Lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings.**

P: Lift it up, do not fear.

**C: Say to the cities of Judah, “Here is Your God.”** (Isaiah 10:9)

P: Almighty God, You have made Yourself known in Your Son, Jesus, the Redeemer of the world. We pray that the people of this world would believe in Him as their Savior and be the recipients of Your good will. In the name of Jesus, who is Christ the Lord.

**C: Amen.**

## **The Birth of Christ**

**A Hymn:** LSB 376, “Once in Royal David’s City”

*(During the hymn, the Christ Child is brought to the manger. The poinsettia cross is lit reminding us that the Christ Child will one day shed his blood on the cross of Calvary so that we may be saved from the curse of sin and death. “Though our sins be as scarlet they will be white as snow.” – Isaiah 1:18)*

## **The Story of Jesus' Birth: St. Luke 2:1-7**

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.

P: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe. You have enriched our lives with the greatest gift of all – Your Son. Through Him You fill our lives with love, joy, peace, and hope. May this Christ Child in the manger be a visible reminder of Your saving grace and love in all our Christmas celebrations, in Jesus' name, we pray.

**C: Amen.**

**A Hymn:** LSB 380, “Hark the Herald Angels Sing”

**A Christmas Homily**

**The Offering** (“In the Bleak Midwinter” – Bell Choir)

**The Offertory Prayer and Christmas Prayer**

P: Let us pray. Lord of Christmas,

**C: We are mindful of the supreme gift You gave us in a manger at Bethlehem. Humbly we offer our gifts of service and possessions in joyful thanksgiving for the love You have shown us and continue to show us. Accept these gifts for the sake of Your Son who was born for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## **A Confession of Our Sin & Absolution**

P: Having heard the glorious announcement of our Savior’s birth, we bow our hearts before our Lord confessing our sin.

**C: O eternal and gracious God, we covet material gifts. Yet You alone offer us the only everlasting gift: Your Son, Jesus Christ, God with us. We confess to You our pride, our faithlessness, and our reluctance to receive Your grace and forgiveness. Through the work of the Holy Spirit in Word and Sacrament, correct us, forgive us, heal us, and transform us. Enable us to be still, to know You are present with us every day, and to praise, worship, and serve You throughout the year. We pray through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

P: Fellow believers of the Christ Child, our Savior: “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this Savior was conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary and born in Bethlehem so that He might save us from the curse of sin and death. Therefore, we who once walked in darkness have seen a great light, and that light, the light of Christ shines on us. I, a called and ordained servant of Christ, by our Savior’s authority, forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

**An Anthem:** “Of the Father’s Love Begotten” (Adult Choir)

### **The Words of Institution**

**An Anthem:** “Christmas Communion Song” (Adult Choir)

### **The Distribution**

### **Hymns During the Distribution**

- LSB 370 “What Child Is This”



- “Oh Come, All Ye Children”

1. Oh Come, all ye children, oh, come, one and all  
To Bethlehem haste, to the manger so small  
God’s Son for a gift has been sent you this night,  
To be your Redeemer, your Joy and Delight.

2. He’s born in a stable for you and for me,  
Draw near by the bright gleaming starlight to see,  
In swaddling clothes lying, so meek and so mild,  
And purer than angels, the heavenly Child.

3. See Mary and Joseph with love-beaming eyes  
Are gazing upon the rude bed where He lies,  
The shepherds are kneeling, with hearts full of love,  
While angels sing loud hallelujahs above.

4. Kneel down and adore Him with shepherds today,  
Lift up little hands now, and praise Him as they;  
Rejoice that a Savior from sin you can boast,  
And join in the song of the heavenly host.

5. Dear Christ Child, what gift can we children bestow  
By which our affections and gladness to show?  
No riches and treasures of value can be,  
But hearts that believe are accepted with Thee.

6. Our hearts, then, to Thee we will offer today,  
We offer them gladly, accept them, we pray,  
And make them so spotless and pure that we may  
Abide in Thy presence in heaven for aye.

CCLI Song # 478703 Christoph von Schmid | Johann Abraham Peter Schulz | Melanie Schulte  
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## **The Light of Christ Fills Our Hearts**

**An Anthem:** “O Beauteous Heavenly Light” (Adult Choir)

*(As the anthem is sung, the ushers will pass the light to the worshippers. DO NOT TIP a lighted candle.)*

**Lesson of the Light:** St. John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

**A Hymn:** LSB 363, “Silent Night”

### **The Closing Prayer and Benediction**

P: Let us pray. Almighty God, You have made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that we may walk in the light of Jesus’ presence all the days of our life until we awake to the brightness of His eternal glory.

**C: Amen.**

P: The Almighty God, Father, Son (+), and Holy Spirit bless you now and forever with His peace.

C: Amen.

*(All extinguish their candles.)*

**A Closing Hymn:** LSB 367 “Angels from the Realm of Glory”

**A Postlude**

*Thank you! Our hearts are filled with gratitude to God for all the people who enriched our worship of the Christ Child through their special participation in the service!*

*Please join us for our Christmas Day Service and our New Year’s Day Service.  
The services begin at 9:30 a.m.*

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## A Statement on Holy Communion

**We rejoice in the celebration of the LORD'S Supper** as the Lord Jesus comes to us in a very personal manner, giving to us His true Body and Blood in, with, and under the bread and wine in this sacred meal. St. Paul writes, *"A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself."* (1 Corinthians 11:28-29) It is out of love and care for every individual that comes to the Lord's Supper that we ask those who are not instructed in the faith and/or doubt the presence of the Body and Blood of Jesus in this Sacrament to refrain from attending the Lord's Supper.

Members of Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod congregations, who:

- Repent of their sin;
- Believe in Jesus as their Savior;
- Trust that they are receiving, not only bread and wine, but also the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in the Lord's Supper for the forgiveness of their sins; and
- Intend, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to live as forgiven sinners resisting the devil, saying no to sinful desires, and walking in the newness of life;

are invited to partake of this Holy Meal with us. We request that ALL guests who desire to commune, kindly speak to the Pastor before the service.

If you prefer to come forward for a blessing at the time of Holy Communion, please do so. We ask that you cross your arms over your chest so that Pastor knows you want to receive a blessing.

**NOTE:** We provide gluten-free communion host and non-alcohol grape juice. Just let Pastor and/or the assistants know when you come for Holy Communion.