



**Emmanuel
Lutheran**
CHURCH & SCHOOL
ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

Tuesday December 24th, 2024

Christmas-Eve Candlelight

7:00pm Blended Worship



AS WE GATHER

Can you imagine a person who has never heard of Christmas? How would you explain what we are hearing on Christmas night to such a person? To fully understand what Christmas is about, that person needs to know, first, that God who created everything, including the person you are explaining this to. Then that person needs to know that, from the beginning, all people have sinned against God, with the result that “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). Christmas is the discovery that God’s love is so deep that, even though we have sinned, from eternity He planned a way everyone could be forgiven, return to Him, and live forever in the way He originally intended for us. People in Old Testament times were saved by faith in the promised Christ. And people are saved by faith now in that same Christ who has come in the person of the Son of God, “conceived by the Holy Spirit” and “born of the virgin Mary.” He was born in our flesh so that He could satisfy those “wages of sin” before God for us and for the whole world by His sacrificial death. The proof that His payment was sufficient is His resurrection from the dead and return to the Father to live and reign over all forever. Paul said, “My heart’s desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved.” Then he asked our question, “But how are they to call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? . . . So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:1, 14–17). It is not that difficult to imagine someone who has never heard of Christmas for one more reason. For even we who have heard still too often live as if we have never heard! Because sin continues to be our struggle until we are finally delivered from its power, we need to hear this story over and over again. Tonight we recall how Christmas and the entire Gospel of our salvation is beautiful news to hear and to believe over and over again.

CALL TO WORSHIP Emmanuel (Hallowed Manger Ground)

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WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING SONG O Come All Ye Faithful (based on LSB 379)

Chorus 1

For He alone is worthy, for He alone is worthy, For He alone is worthy, Christ the Lord!

(Verse 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

(Chorus 2)

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

(song continues to next page)

(Verse 2)

Sing choirs of angels, sing in exultation

O sing all ye citizens of heav'n above

Glory to God all, glory in the highest

(Sing Chorus 2)

(Verse 3)

Yea Lord we greet Thee, born on Christmas morning

Jesus, to Thee be all glory giv'n

Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing

(Sing Chorus 2)

(Chorus 3)

We'll praise His name forever, we'll praise His name forever

We'll praise His name forever, Christ the Lord!

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INVOCATION

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

People: **Amen.**

OPENING SENTENCES *Isaiah 9:2; 2 Samuel 22:29*

Pastor: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;

People: **those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.**

Pastor: You are my lamp, O Lord,

People: **and my God lightens my darkness.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION *Romans 13:11–12*

Pastor: The apostle Paul reminds us, "You know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light." In order to hear again the beautiful Good News of how the Savior of the world came to save us all, let us confess our need to hear, to repent of our sin and to believe.

People: **Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, I confess to You once again this night that I have walked in the darkness of sin, that I have sinned in the shadows of my conscience and in words and actions toward others; all of it in disobedience to Your commands. I pray You to send forth the light and truth of Your Son, my Savior. Have mercy on me, forgive me my sins, and bring me to everlasting life.**

Pastor: The Lord sends out His light and His truth to find you and to save you. Upon this, your confession, I, by virtue of my office as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God to all of you. In the stead and by the command of my 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.**

SALUTATION

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Let us pray. O God, You make this most holy night to shine with the brightness of the true light, Jesus Christ. 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.**

OLD TESTAMENT READING *Isaiah 9:2–7* (From darkness to light)

² ^[a] The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.

³ 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.

⁴ 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.

⁵ For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult
and every garment rolled in blood
will be burned as fuel for the fire.

⁶ For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon ^[b] his shoulder,
and his name shall be called ^[c]

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷ 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!**

EPISTLE *Titus 2:11–14* (*Changed lives by the grace of God*)

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ¹² training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, ¹³ waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ 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.

HOLY GOSPEL *Luke 2:1–20* (*The time came*)

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

People: Glory to You, O Lord.

2 In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration when ^[a] Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴ 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, ⁵ to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, ^[b] who was with child. ⁶ And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷ 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. ^[c] ⁸ And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!” ^[d] ¹⁵ 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.” ¹⁶ And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷ And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰ 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.

CREED *Nicene Creed*

C I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end. And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life ☩ of the world to come. Amen.

SERMON SONG *Midnight Clear (Love Song)*

(Verse 1)

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

(Chorus)

**Glory to God in the highest, glory to God evermore
Good news great joy for all
Melody breaks through the silence, Christ the Savior is born
Jesus the love song of God**

(Verse 2)

Still through the cloven skies they come, with peaceful wings unfurled
And still their heavenly music floats, through all the weary world
And man at war with man hears not, the love song which they bring
O hush the noise and cease the strife, and hear the angels sing

(Sing Chorus Again, 2X)

(Ending)

Jesus the love song of God

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SERMON *“Beneath Your Heavy Load” Luke 2:1-14*

OFFERING

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

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 which 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:

LORD'S PRAYER:

☩ 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.

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 ✠ 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 ✠ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

PAX DOMINI

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

People: **Amen.**

DISTRIBUTION HYMNS

LSB 370 What Child Is This

- 1 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!
- 2 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!

- 3 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!

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LSB 374 Gentle Mary Laid Her Child

- 1 Gentle Mary laid her child
Lowly in a manger;
There He lay, the Undefined,
To the world a stranger.
Such a babe in such a place,
Can He be the Savior?
Ask the saved of all the race
Who have found His favor.
- 2 Angels sang about His birth,
Wise Men sought and found Him;
Heaven's star shone brightly forth
Glory all around Him.
Shepherds saw the wondrous sight,
Heard the angels singing;
All the plains were lit that night,
All the hills were ringing.

- 3 Gentle Mary laid her child
Lowly in a manger;
He is still the Undefined
But no more a stranger.
Son of God of humble birth,
Beautiful the story;
Praise His name in all the earth;
Hail the King of glory! *Text: Public domain*

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.

CLOSING SONG Angels We Have Heard On High (LSB 368)

(Verse 1)

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains

And the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains

(Chorus)

Gloria. In excelsis Deo

Gloria. In excelsis Deo

Verse 2

Shepherds why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong

What the gladsome tidings be, which inspire your heav'nly song

(Sing Chorus)

(Verse 3)

Come to Bethlehem and see, Christ whose birth the angels sing

Come adore on bended knee, Christ the Lord the newborn King

(Sing Chorus)

(Verse 1)

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains

And the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains

(Sing Chorus)

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