

Bethlehem Lutheran Church



The Eve of the Nativity of Our Lord December 24, 2020

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A SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

*(Please stand if you able for the portions of the liturgy marked with an *)*

ENTRANCE HYMN: O Come, All Ye Faithful (LSB 379, Stz. 1-3)

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

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The congregation stands.

INVOCATION

P: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

INTROIT

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 together,
against the LORD and against his anointed.

**He who sits in the heavens laughs;
the Lord holds them in derision.**

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 beginning 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.

COLLECT

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And with your spirit.

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.

The congregation is seated

THE FIRST LESSON – GENESIS 3:1-19

The first lesson for the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord comes from the Book of Genesis, the third chapter. Here, God reveals to us man’s fall into sin. He also declares the seed of the Woman, that is the promised Messiah, shall crush the head of the evil serpent Satan.

¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’”

² And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

⁸ And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” ¹⁰ And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.”

¹¹ He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” ¹² The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” ¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

¹⁴ The LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. ¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

¹⁶ To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.”

¹⁷ And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; ¹⁸ thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹ By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

HYMN: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (LSB 357, Stz. 1, 4)

1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear. Refrain

ref Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

4 O come, Thou Branch of Jesse’s tree,
Free them from Satan’s tyranny
That trust Thy mighty pow’r to save,
And give them vict’ry o’er the grave. Refrain

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THE SECOND LESSON – ISAIAH 7:10-14

The second lesson comes from the Prophet Isaiah, the seventh chapter. Here, the prophet foretells of a virgin who would conceive and give birth to the promised Messiah. He shall be called Immanuel, that is, “God with us.”

¹⁰ Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz: ¹¹ “Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” ¹² But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” ¹³ And he said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

HYMN: What Child Is This (LSB 370, Stz. 1-2)

- 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!

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THE THIRD LESSON – ISAIAH 9:2-7

The third lesson comes from the Prophet Isaiah, the ninth chapter. Here, the prophet foretells of the promised Messiah's birth and His kingdom.

² 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 his shoulder, and his name shall be called 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.

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

HYMN: It Came upon the Midnight Clear (LSB 366, Stz. 1, 4)

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, goodwill to all,
From heav’n’s all-gracious king.”
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.

4 For lo, the days have come to pass
By prophets seen of old,
When down into the circling years
Came Christ as was foretold.
His word of peace shall to the earth
God’s ancient promise bring,
And all who take this gift will hear
The song the angels sing.

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THE FOURTH LESSON – ISAIAH 11:1-5

The fourth lesson comes from the Prophet Isaiah, the eleventh chapter. While the axe of divine judgment would cut down the kingdom of David, the son of Jesse, the prophet Isaiah foretells of a single Sprout that would rise from the old helpless trunk. The Sprout is none other than the promised Messiah, from the line of David.

¹ There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. ² And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. ³ And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, ⁴ but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. ⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins.

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

HYMN: Go Tell it on the Mountain (LSB 388, Stz. 1, 3)

ref Go tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and ev’rywhere;
Go tell it on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born!

1 While shepherds kept their watching
O'er silent flocks by night,
Behold, throughout the heavens
There shone a holy light. Refrain

3 Down in a lonely manger
The humble Christ was born;
And God sent us salvation
That blessèd Christmas morn. Refrain

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THE FIFTH LESSON – JEREMIAH 23:5-6

The fifth lesson comes from the Prophet Jeremiah, the twenty-third chapter. Here, the prophet speaks of a new and righteous King who will arise from the line of David. This King is none other than the promised Messiah Himself. Through Him, sinners become righteous in God's sight.

⁵“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ⁶In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: ‘The LORD is our righteousness.’”

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

HYMN: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing (LSB 380)

1 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

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

2 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_incarnate Deity!

Pleased as Man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel! Refrain

- 3 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

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THE SIXTH LESSON – MICAH 5:2-4

The sixth lesson comes from the Prophet Micah, the fifth chapter. Here, the prophet writes of the promised Messiah's birth in a little town named Bethlehem. His origin is from old, that is He is begotten of the Father from eternity.

² But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days. ³ Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel. ⁴ And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth.

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

HYMN: O Little Town of Bethlehem (LSB 361, Stz. 1-2)

- 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!

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THE SEVENTH LESSON – LUKE 1:26-38

The seventh lesson comes from the Gospel according to St. Luke, the first chapter. Here, evangelist writes of the angel Gabriel's visit to a virgin name Mary. He announces that she will give birth of the promised Messiah. He shall be given the name Jesus, which means, "The Lord Saves."

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" ²⁹ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³² 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, ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

³⁴ And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

³⁵ 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.

³⁶ And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸ And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

HYMN: Savior of the Nations, Come (LSB 332, Stz. 1-4)

- 1 Savior of the nations, come,
Virgin's Son, make here Your home!
Marvel now, O heav'n and earth,
That the Lord chose such a birth.
- 2 Not by human flesh and blood,
By the Spirit of our God,
Was the Word of God made flesh—
Woman's offspring, pure and fresh.

- 3 Here a maid was found with child,
 Yet remained a virgin mild.
 In her womb this truth was shown:
 God was there upon His throne.
- 4 Then stepped forth the Lord of all
 From His pure and kingly hall;
 God of God, yet fully man,
 His heroic course began.

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THE EIGHTH LESSON – LUKE 2:1-14

The eighth lesson comes from the Gospel according to St. Luke, the second chapter. Here, the evangelist writes of the blessed nativity of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

¹ In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.

² This was the first registration when 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, 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.

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!”

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

HYMN: Angels We Have Heard on High (LSB 368, Stz. 1, 3)

- 1 Angels we have heard on high,
 Sweetly singing o’er the plains,
 And the mountains in reply,
 Echoing their joyous strains. Refrain

ref Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

- 3 Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn King. Refrain

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The congregation stands.

THE 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.

The congregation is seated.

HYMN OF THE DAY: From Heaven Above to Earth I Come (LSB 358, Stz. 1-3, 8, 13, 15)

- 1 "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:
- 2 "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.
- 3 "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.
- 8 Welcome to earth, O noble Guest,
Through whom the sinful world is blest!
You came to share my misery
That You might share Your joy with me.

13 Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child,
Prepare a bed, soft, undefiled,
A quiet chamber set apart
For You to dwell within my heart.

15 Glory to God in highest heav'n,
Who unto us His Son has giv'n!
While angels sing with pious mirth
A glad new year to all the earth.

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SERMON

The congregation stands.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

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 congregation is seated.

THE NINTH LESSON – LUKE 2:15-20

The ninth lesson comes from the Gospel according to St. Luke, the second chapter. Here, the evangelist writes of the shepherds going to the Savior's manger with haste. Having seen the promised Messiah in the person of Jesus, the shepherds go forth to announce the Good News of the savior's birth to others.

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.

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

*Please stand as an elder comes down the aisles to light candles.
Please keep candles upright, tipping them only to light.*

HYMN: Silent 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.

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Please extinguish your candle.

BENEDICTION

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: Amen.

HYMN: Joy to the World (LSB 387)

- 1 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.

- 2 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.
- 3 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.
- 4 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.

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