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Trinity is a member congregation of the Church of the Lutheran Confession (www.clclutheran.org).



Christmas Eve

December 24, 2025

Serving Us Tonight

Organist: Kathy Conway

Worship Leaders:

Dennis Lux, Randall Estes, Ean Standish

Carols of Christmas to Welcome the Christchild

Hymn: 90 (1-3,8) — Come, Your Hearts and Voices Raising

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

Congregation: Amen.

L: Unto us the Christ is born:

C: Oh, come, let us worship him.

L: Let us worship with musicians and singers throughout the years as they tell the story of Christmas:

C: O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall declare your praise.

L: Let us worship with the angels and sing praise to the Lord who came to save us:

C: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill to men.

L: Let us worship with the shepherds who told everyone they met about the child, our Savior.

C: Christ the Lord, our Savior, everlasting God and Mary's son, we praise you forever.

L: O gracious Holy Spirit, enrich us as we hear the story of our Savior's birth. Open our hearts to hear and believe the story we know so well and to share the good tidings of great joy with people everywhere.

C: Hear our prayer, O Lord, for Jesus' sake, whose birth we now celebrate. Amen.

Narration

Tonight, as we remember and celebrate the birth of our Savior, we will hear the wonderful gospel truths recorded in Scripture—the good news that a Savior is born.

We will also celebrate with music and song. These Christmas songs come from many lands and many times. They have been written in and translated into many languages. Their melodies and harmonies reflect the musical tastes and traditions of many periods of history. But they all center on the same beautiful theme, the theme that the Holy Spirit inspired John to write in simple and profound words in the first chapter of his gospel account.

Scripture

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.

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. (John 1:1-5, 14)

Hymn: 98 (1-2) — Of the Father's Love Begotten

The Savior Is Foretold

Narration

"I bring you good news of great joy," the angel told the shepherds. And it is this joy—which is for all people—that provides the theme for many Christmas hymns and carols. There is a certain spirit of anticipation and delight that affects almost everyone as Christmas approaches. The joy God's people feel at Christmas is contagious.

“God rest you merry, gentlemen.” Today we would say, “God send you joy and peace; may He leave you merry and at rest, good gentlemen!” This carol sounds dark and slightly foreboding to modern ears, because we have come to associate the minor key of its melody with dark and tragic themes. But it was not always so. When this song was written, people sang it with the same sense of Christmas cheer that the prophet of ancient Israel felt when he wrote these words:

Scripture

*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.
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 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. (Isaiah 9:2,3,6)*

Christmas Carol: God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen

**God rest you merry, gentlemen, let nothing you dismay,
For Jesus Christ our Savior was born upon this day,
To save us all from Satan’s pow’r when we were gone astray:**

Refrain:

**Oh, tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy,
Oh, tidings of comfort and joy.**

From God our heav'nly Father a blessed angel came,
And unto certain shepherds brought tidings of the same,
How that in Bethlehem was born the Son of God by name:

Refrain

Now to the Lord sing praises all you within this place,
And with true love and brotherhood each other now embrace;
This holy tide of Christmas all others doth deface.

Refrain

The Savior's Coming is Announced

Scripture

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. The virgin's name was Mary.

[The angel] came to [Mary] and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus. (Luke 1:26ff)

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. 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. For nothing will be impossible with God." And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." (Luke 1:34ff)

Narration

Martin Luther wrote: "To this poor maiden marvelous things were announced: that she should be the mother of the All Highest, whose name should be the Son of God. He would be a

King and of His Kingdom there would be no end. It took a mighty reach of faith to believe that this baby would play such a role. Well might Mary have said, ‘Who am I, little worm, that I should bear a King?’ She might have doubted, but she shut her eyes and trusted in God who could bring all things to pass, even though common sense were against it.

We must both read and meditate upon the Nativity. . . . There are here three miracles: that God and man should be joined in this Child; that a mother should remain a virgin; that Mary should have such faith as to believe that this mystery would be accomplished in her. The last is not the least of the three.” May God grant us this kind of faith and trust in His Word.

Hymn: 709 — God Loves Me Dearly

The Journey to Bethlehem

Narration:

Illustrations of today that show the birth of Jesus are probably not very accurate. After all, the people were all Palestinians of the first century with dusky, olive-hued skin, dark hair, and coal-black eyes—nothing at all like the pale-skinned statues in our manger scenes.

Many of the songs of Christmas have reflected a similar desire to move the nativity into our own experience. Although the gospel of Luke never mentions the time of year, we imagine it to be in the winter because that is when we celebrate it.

We can’t know exactly how everyone looked, nor can we know the exact date of Jesus’ birth. We can’t know because the Bible doesn’t tell us which means that those things aren’t important to our salvation.

Many Christmas pictures and songs portray the people and places of Christmas as if they were in northern Europe in the winter. While this isn’t accurate, it is a reminder that Christ did

not come only as the Savior of the Jews. He was not meant only for the first century A.D. He came for all people of all times, and he invites us to his manger bed.

Scripture

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. (Luke 2:1-7)

Hymn: Away in a Manger

**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.**

Narration

Martin Luther wrote: “Behold Christ lying in the lap of His young mother. What can be sweeter than the Bab, what more lovely than the mother! Look at the Child, knowing nothing. Yet all that is belongs to Him, that your conscience should not fear but take comfort in Him. Doubt nothing. Watch Him springing in the lap of the maiden. Laugh with Him. Look upon this Lord of PEcae and your spirit will be at peace. See how God invites you in many ways. He places before you a Bab with whom you may take refuge. You cannot fear Him, for nothing is more appealing than a baby. Are you afraid? Then come to Him, lying in the lap of the fairest and sweetest maid. You will see how great is the divine goodness, which seeks above all else that you should not despair. Trust Him! Trust Him! Here is the Child in whom is salvation. To me there is no greater consolation.”

Hymn: 712 (1-2) — What Child is This?

The Angels and the Shepherds

Narration

The birth of God’s Son to a peasant woman was bound to have repercussions. You have to understand what the ancient way of looking at humanity was. Some of the people were on the top—the great ones, the movers and shakers, noblemen and kings and emperors. And the rest were below them—the slaves and merchants and laborers, farmers and carpenters and shepherds.

And yet no less than the heavenly host came to deliver the first song of Christmas to the lowest of the classes. At the coming of Christ, all these differences between classes were shown to be nothing in God’s sight. The shepherd is as precious to God as is a king, and Jesus was born to save them all!

Scripture

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, goodwill among men!"

(Luke 2:8-14)

Christmas Carol: The First Noel

**The first Noel the angel did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Noel, noel, noel, noel. Born is the King of Israel.**

**Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heavenly Lord;
Who hath made heav'n and earth of naught,
And with his blood our life hath bought.
Noel, noel, noel, noel. Born is the King of Israel.**

The Adoration of the Shepherds

Narration

What must that night have been like for those shepherds? Who could imagine such a thing?

Perhaps it was difficult to find the right words, but the

shepherds found no difficulty in telling others about the child who was wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

If they had been musicians, they might have composed any of the great number of songs that have been put into their mouths by people of later ages. For the shepherds, it was not enough just to say their piece and go on their way. They expected it to echo throughout the world!

Scripture

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. (Luke 2:15-20)

Narration

Martin Luther wrote: "Why did Mary ponder these things in her heart? Because she too was in need of preaching. Even though she was the mother and had borne the Child, she had need to ponder these words in her heart, in order to strengthen her faith and increase her assurance. If anyone has faith and thinks he knows enough, let him take a lesson from this mother and let him assemble the passage of Scripture in order to confirm his faith. If he has one passage good, but if he has eight or ten, that is better.

Hymn: 647 (1-2) — Oh, Little Town of Bethlehem

The Adoration of the Magi

Narration

The wise men did not reach the manger of Christ when the shepherds did. Matthew's inspired account indicates that they may have arrived a year or two later.

Scripture does not record their names. They were not kings -- their crowns were added by ancient and medieval storytellers. The magi were probably stargazers, scientists.

The magi brought their gifts of love and devotion to their newborn King. The next carol tells of the magi gifts and relates them to scriptural truth about Jesus and makes the gifts a confession of faith.

Gold for the King of kings. Incense for the Son of God. Myrrh for the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, who came to take away the sins of the world. It is divine glory that is confessed here, the glory of the saving love of God, which outshines even that star of long ago.

Scripture

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."

When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:

*"And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;*

for from you shall come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel.”

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.

And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. (Matthew 2:1-11)

Christmas Carol: We the Kings of Orient Are

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

Refrain

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. Refrain

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

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

Glorious now behold him arise, King and God and sacrifice; Alleluia! Alleluia! Sounds through the earth and skies. Refrain

The Glory Yet to Come

Narration

And so, with alleluias sounding through earth and heaven, carolers return from the manger like the shepherds and the wise men, with a childlike joy at the birth of the Savior.

But the world can drain the joy from our lives and the song from our hearts very quickly. Trouble and strife, war and destruction, hatred, rejection of the true God and so much more are the ways of the world.

Christmas may sometimes seem like an all-too-short rest from a world of sorrow and hatred and death.

Good News! The true gospel message of Christmas cannot be drowned out by the sins of the world.

Good News! Jesus, your Savior, has redeemed you from sin and makes you God's children and heirs of eternal life.

Good News! The same Christ Jesus who came in weakness as a baby laid in a manger will come again in heavenly glory and bring us to a new world without the sinfulness and darkness of this one. To this the words of the angels continue to point our faith.

Scripture

I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.

And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true. (Revelation 21:3-5)

*And a highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Way of Holiness;
the unclean shall not pass over it. No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.*

*And the ransomed of the LORD shall return
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain gladness and joy,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away (Isaiah 35:8a,9,10)*

"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.

In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. (John 14:1-3)

Christmas Carol: It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

**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 men,
From heaven's all gracious King."
The world in solemn stillness lay / To hear the angels sing.**

**And you, beneath life's crushing load,
Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way
With painful steps and slow,
Look now! for glad and golden hours
Come swiftly on the wing.
Oh, rest beside the weary road, / And hear the angels sing!**

**For lo! the days are hast'ning on,
By prophets seen of old,
When with the ever circling years
Shall come the time foretold;
When the new heaven and earth shall own
The Prince of Peace, their King,
And the whole world sends back the song
Which now the angels sing.**

Christmas Prayer & Lord's Prayer

The Benediction

C: Amen.

Hymn: 646 — Silent Night, Holy Night



Our Christmas celebration continues tomorrow in a
Christmas Day Worship Service at 10:30 a.m.
We invite everyone to return.