

A Service of Nine Lessons and Carols

Christmas Eve

December 24, 2021, 10:00PM

St. John Lutheran Church – LCMS
Champaign, Illinois

Welcome to the Christmas Eve service. May the joy of Christ's birth into our world bring faith and forgiveness to your hearts. We invite you to join us Christmas Day at 10:00am for a service of Holy Communion. If this is your first time at our church, we invite you to visit again. Sunday services are at 8:00 and 10:45 am each week and Wednesdays at 7:15 pm.

Prelude – “O Come, All Ye Faithful”

Please stand

The Opening Carol: *Once in Royal David's City*

Hymn 376 (st. 1 Choir)

- 2 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.
- 3 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.
- 4 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.
- 5 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!

The Greeting

Beloved in Christ, at this Christmastide let it be our care and delight to hear again the message of the angels, and in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, and the Babe lying in a manger. Therefore let us read and mark in Holy Scripture the story of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our disobedience, unto the glorious redemption brought us by this holy Child.

But first let us pray for the needs of the whole world; for peace on earth and good will among all His people; for unity and brotherhood within the church He came to build, and especially in this our church.

And because this would rejoice His heart, let us remember in His name the poor and helpless; the cold, the hungry, and the oppressed; the sick and those who mourn; the lonely and forgotten, the aged; the little children and those not yet born; all those who know not the Lord Jesus or who love Him not or who by sin have grieved His heart of love.

Lastly, let us remember before God all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore, and in a greater light; that multitude which no man can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh and with whom in the Lord Jesus we are one forevermore.

These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the throne of heaven in the words which Christ Himself taught us:

People: Our Father, who art in heaven . . .

Please be seated

The First Lesson

God declares in the Garden of Eden that the woman's Seed shall bruise the serpent's head.

Genesis 3:8-15

The Carol: *Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light*

Hymn 378

- 1 Break forth, O beauteous heav'nly light, And usher in the morning.
Ye shepherds, shrink not with affright, The day of grace is dawning.
This Child, though weak in infancy, Our confidence and joy shall be,
The pow'r of Satan breaking, Our peace with God now making.
- 2 O dearest Child, whom I adore, Whose grace surpasses measure,
My Brother, whom I cherish more Than earth with all its treasure:
Haste from Thy manger to depart, O come and dwell within my heart;
With joy will I receive Thee, A cradle there will give Thee.
- 3 All blessing, thanks, and praise to Thee, Lord Jesus Christ, be given:
Thou hast my Brother deigned to be, Thou Lord of earth and heaven.
Help me throughout this day of grace To praise Thy love and seek Thy face;
And when I stand before Thee Forever to adore Thee.

The Second Lesson

God promises Abraham that in his Seed all nations of the earth shall be blessed.

Genesis 22:15-18

The Carol: *“Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming”*

Men’s Choir

The Third Lesson

The Prophet Isaiah foretells Christ’s birth and His kingdom.

Isaiah 9:2, 6, 7; 60:1-6

The Carol: *Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding*

Hymn 345

- 1 Hark! A thrilling voice is sounding! “Christ is near,” we hear it say.
“Cast away the works of darkness, All you children of the day!”
 - 2 Startled at the solemn warning, Let the earthbound soul arise;
Christ, its sun, all sloth dispelling, Shines upon the morning skies.
 - 3 See, the Lamb, so long expected, Comes with pardon down from heav’n.
Let us haste, with tears of sorrow, One and all, to be forgiv’n;
 - 4 So, when next He comes in glory And the world is wrapped in fear,
He will shield us with His mercy And with words of love draw near.
- Δ5 Honor, glory, might, dominion To the Father and the Son
With the ever-living Spirit While eternal ages run!

The Fourth Lesson

The Prophet Micah foretells the glory of little Bethlehem.

Micah 5:2-4

The Carol: *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

Hymn 361

- 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!
- 3 How silently, how silently The wondrous gift is giv’n!
So God imparts to human hearts The blessings of His heav’n.
No ear may hear His coming; But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him, still The dear Christ enters in.
- 4 O holy Child of Bethlehem, Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in, Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels The great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!

The Fifth Lesson

The Angel Gabriel visits the blessed Virgin Mary.

Luke 1:26-35, 38

The Carol: *The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came*

Hymn 356

- 1 The angel Gabriel from heaven came, With wings as drifted snow, with eyes as flame:
“All hail to thee, O lowly maiden Mary, Most highly favored lady.” Gloria!
- 2 “For know a blessed mother thou shalt be, All generations laud and honor thee;
Thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold, Most highly favored lady.” Gloria!
- 3 Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head; “To me be as it pleaseth God,” she said.
“My soul shall laud and magnify God’s holy name.” Most highly favored lady, Gloria!
- 4 Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born In Bethlehem all on a Christmas morn,
And Christian folk throughout the world will ever say: “Most highly favored lady.”
Gloria!

The Sixth Lesson

St. Matthew tells of Christ’s nativity.

Matthew 1:18-25

The Carol: *“It Came Upon the Midnight Clear”*

Men’s Choir

The Seventh Lesson

The shepherds go to the manger.

Luke 2:8-16

The Carol: *“What Child Is This”*

Men’s Choir

The Eighth Lesson

The Wise Men are led by the star to Jesus.

Matthew 2:1-12

The Carol: *“Angels from the Realms of Glory”*

Men’s Choir

The Ninth Lesson

St. John unfolds the mystery of the incarnation.

John 1:1-14

The Carol: *Of the Father’s Love Begotten*

Hymn 384

- 1 Of the Father’s love begotten Ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega, He the source, the ending He,
Of the things that are, that have been, And that future years shall see
Evermore and evermore.

- 2 Oh, that birth forever blessed, When the virgin full of grace,
By the Holy Ghost conceiving, Bore the Savior of our race,
And the babe, the world's Redeemer, First revealed His sacred face
Evermore and evermore.
- 3 This is He whom seers in old time Chanted of with one accord,
Whom the voices of the prophets Promised in their faithful word.
Now He shines, the long expected; Let creation praise its Lord
Evermore and evermore.
- 4 O ye heights of heav'n, adore Him; Angel hosts, His praises sing.
Pow'rs, dominions, bow before Him And extol our God and King.
Let no tongue on earth be silent, Ev'ry voice in concert ring
Evermore and evermore.
- Δ5 Christ, to Thee, with God the Father, And, O Holy Ghost, to Thee
Hymn and chant and high thanksgiving And unending praises be,
Honor, glory, and dominion, And eternal victory
Evermore and evermore. Amen.

The Christmas Homily *“The King’s Arrival”* Luke 2:1-7

The Tithes and Offerings are brought forward.

“Now Sing We, Now Rejoice”

Men’s Choir

Please stand

The Blessing

May God who came down to earth as love incarnate, fill your hearts with faith, hope, and love as you celebrate his birth to be our Savior and his return to gather to himself all who love him and long for his reappearing. May the joy of his birth be yours this Christmas and may you continue to believe in him and belong to him through baptism throughout the New Year.

The Closing Carol: *Silent Night, Holy Night*

Hymn 363

(During the singing of this hymn the people light their candles from the pastor’s candle, passing the light to the person beside. Please do not tilt a lighted candle. Be careful with hot wax. Parents must supervise children with lighted candles. Return the candles to the ushers after the service.)

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.

Postlude – *“Oh How Joyfully”*

The pastor and staff of St. John Lutheran Church and School thank the congregation for their gifts of love and encouragement and wish all of God's people a blessed Christmas and peace in the New Year.

Preaching & Presiding: Rev. Jeff Caithamer

Organist: Tony

Choir Director: Dan

Elders: Nick, Bob, Matt

Ushers: Noah, Kai

Instrumentalists: Eli, Terry, Randy

POINSETTIAS

Thank you to all who donated poinsettias this Christmas. Please take your flower(s) home with you any time after the Christmas Day service.