

# A Service of Nine Lessons and Carols

Christmas Eve

December 24, 2023, 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 – “Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming”

*Organ & Piano*

*Please stand*

**The Opening Carol:** *O Come, All Ye Faithful*

**Hymn 379**

- 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: 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.*
- 4 Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, Born this happy morning;  
Jesus, to Thee — be — glory giv'n!  
Word of the Father Now in flesh appearing! *Refrain.*

## 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: *"Comfort, Comfort, Ye My People"*

*Choir*

### **The Second Lesson**

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

Genesis 22:15–18

The Carol: *"A Great and Mighty Wonder"*

**Hymn 383**

- 1 A great and mighty wonder, A full and holy cure:  
The virgin bears the infant With virgin honor pure!

*Refrain: Proclaim the Savior's birth: "To God on high be glory  
And peace to all the earth!"*

- 2 The Word becomes incarnate And yet remains on high,  
And cherubim sing anthems To shepherds from the sky. *Refrain.*
- 3 While thus they sing your Monarch, Those bright angelic bands,  
Rejoice, O vales and mountains, And oceans, clap your hands. *Refrain.*
- 4 Since all He comes to ransom, By all be He adored,  
The infant born in Bethl'em, The Savior and the Lord. *Refrain.*
- 5 All idols then shall perish And Satan's lying cease,  
And Christ shall raise His scepter, Decreeing endless peace. *Refrain.*

### **The Third Lesson**

*The Prophet Isaiah foretells Christ's birth and His kingdom.*

Isaiah 9:2, 6, 7; 60:1–6

The Carol: *“The Holy Boy”*

*Organ*

### **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”*

*Choir*

### **The Sixth Lesson**

*St. Matthew tells of Christ's nativity.*

Matthew 1:18–25

The Carol: *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

**Hymn 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: 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.*

### **The Seventh Lesson**

*The shepherds go to the manger.*

Luke 2:8–16

The Carol: “*See In Yonder Manger Low*”

*Choir*

### **The Eighth Lesson**

*The Magi are led by the star to Jesus.*

Matthew 2:1–12

The Carol: *What Child Is This* (st. 2 – *Choir*)

**Hymn 370**

- 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!

### **The Ninth Lesson**

*St. John unfolds the mystery of the incarnation.*

John 1:1–14

The Carol: “*Jesus, Hail! O God Most Holy*”

*Choir*

**The Christmas Homily** “*The Most Sacred Act of Incarnation*”

**The Tithes and Offerings are brought forward.**

*“In dulci jubilo”*

M. Dupre

*(At this time the people will light their candles from the torches, 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.)*

*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**

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.

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: Keith Williams

Pianist: Randy

Elders: Kurt, Mike, Jim

Ushers: Peter, Eli

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