

FOR UNTO YOU IS BORN THIS DAY IN THE
CITY OF DAVID A SAVIOUR

LUKE 2:11

CHRISTMAS DAY FESTIVAL WORSHIP

St. John's Lutheran Church ~ 2024

Good Morning and Merry Christmas!

We're so thankful to celebrate Christmas with you this morning. Please take a moment to fill out a connection card and leave a record of your visit today and feel free to use the card to let us know how we can best serve you at this time.

The History of Christmas

On Christmas Day the Christian Church celebrates Jesus, the Son of God, taking on human flesh and blood. This miraculous event took place over 2,000 years ago. December 25th has long been the traditional date of Christmas in the Western Church. There are two theories for why this date was chosen:

- + Some believe the date was chosen by the Church to counter the pagan festival called *natalis solis invicti* (the birth of the invincible sun) which had been established by the Roman emperor Aurelius in 274 A.D. Christians instead used that day to celebrate the birth of the truly invincible *Son of God*.
- + Others believe that December 25th was chosen based on a belief that Jesus' conception occurred on March 25th. Thus, nine months later, Christmas Day is celebrated. While December 25th was not, most likely, the actual day of Christ's birth, it's fitting that we set aside time to marvel at the mystery of God's Son uniting himself with sinful humanity that he might bring us back to God.

The Meaning of Christmas

The truth we celebrate today has the highest importance for all of our lives. God says the meaning of Christmas is simply this:

- + God always keeps his promises. The miraculous virgin-birth of Christ had been foretold for thousands of years, and in the fullness of time, God brought this miracle about.
- + God has made us part of his family. In Jesus, God has human flesh and blood, just like you. Since he has united himself with humanity, through Jesus we can truly call God *our Father*.
- + We have the Savior we need. The greatest problem facing any of us is our *sin*. To solve this problem, God himself became a human being so that he might offer his life in our place and deliver us from sin.



+ Our Christmas Worship +

Announcement of the Birth of Christ

Today, the twenty-fifth day of December,
many ages after God created the heavens and the earth,
when man and woman were formed in his image;
long after the great flood, when God set the rainbow in the sky
as a sign of the covenant;
twenty-one centuries from the birth of Abraham,
fifteen centuries from the exodus of the people of Israel out of Egypt,
one thousand years from the enthronement of David as king,
in the six hundred and ninety-eighth Olympiad,
in the seven hundred and fifty-second year from the founding of the city of Rome,
in the forty-second year of the reign of Caesar Augustus,
in the sixth age of the earth,¹

Known as
"The Kalendar
of Christmas,"
this formal
announcement
of the Savior's
birth was
written in 1586
and has been
read in
Christian
churches at
Christmas ever
since.

at a time when the whole world was at peace,
it pleased God to send his only begotten Son and eternal Word to the world to
become man and to teach us God's love, to suffer, die, and rise from the dead for
our salvation.

Today is the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, God made flesh.

To God Incarnate, to the Infant who humbled himself and took our form, becoming
a child of man to make children of God; to the One who later walked among us
to teach us the way of salvation and who loved us so much as to give his life for it: to
him be glory, honor, and adoration forever and ever.

O come, let us adore him!

O Come, All Ye Faithful

CW 354



1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant! O
2 God from true God, and Light from Light e - ter - nal,
3 Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,
4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py morn - ing;



come ye, O come_ ye to Beth - le - hem!
born of a vir - gin, to earth he comes!
sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heav'n a - bove!
Je - sus, to thee_ be all glo - ry giv'n!

¹ The early Christians considered the world to have seven ages: 1) From Adam to the Flood; 2) From the Flood to Abraham; 3) From Abraham to David; 4) From David to the Babylonian Captivity; 5) From the Captivity to the Advent of Christ; 6) The Coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ; 7) The New Heavens and the New Earth



Come and be - hold him, born the King of an - gels:
 On - ly - be - got - ten Son of God the Fa - ther:
 Glo - ry to God, all glo - ry in the high - est:
 Word of the Fa - ther, now in flesh ap - pear - ing:



O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him,



O come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord!

Our Christmas Confession and Joy

Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.

His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him. *Psalm 98:1*

The Lord has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations.

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. *Psalm 98:2-3*

But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? *Malachi 3:2*

If you, o Lord, kept a record of sins, o Lord, who could stand? *Psalm 130:3*

Restore us again, o God our Savior, and put away your displeasure toward us.

Show us your unfailing love, o Lord, and grant us your salvation. *Psalm 85:4,5*

Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come and has redeemed his people. *Luke 1:68*

My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. *Luke 1:46-47*

When the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. *Galatians 4:4-5*

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. *John 1:14*

I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord.

Glorify to God in the highest! *Luke 2:11,14*

Angels We Have Heard on High

CW 346



1 An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,
2 Shep - herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?
3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;



and the moun - tains in re - ply, ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.
What the glad - some ti - dings be which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?
come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born King.



Glo - - - - ri - a



in ex - cel - sis De - o; glo - - -



- - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

after our confession, the Church traditionally sings the Gloria in Excelsis (Glory to God in the highest), named after the song the angels sang on the night of Jesus' birth.

Immanuel is with you.
And also with you.

Let us Pray.

Almighty God, grant that the birth of your one and only Son in the flesh may set us free from our old bondage under the yoke of sin; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

God's Word for Christmas – First Reading

Exodus 33:18–23; 34:5–7

¹⁸Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory."

¹⁹And the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. ²⁰But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live."

²¹Then the LORD said, "There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. ²²When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. ²³Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen."

⁵Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD.

⁶And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, ⁷maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation."

Our Christmas Psalm – 98

Joy to the World CW 353

In Psalm 98, God's people are invited to sing a new song for the marvelous things the Lord has done



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -
2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let men their
3 No more let sins and sor - rows grow nor thorns in -
4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the



ceive her King; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him
songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings
na - tions prove the glo - ries of his right - eous -



room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture
plains re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing
flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is
ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his



sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
found, far as, far as the curse is found.
love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

God's Word for Christmas – Second Reading

Romans 8:31–32

³¹What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³²He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

O Little Town of Bethlehem

CW 333



1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!
2 For Christ is born of Mar - y, and, gath - ered all a - bove
3 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is giv'n!
4 O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;



A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by;
while mor-tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won-d'ring love.
So God im-parts to hu - man hearts the bless-ings of his heav'n.
cast out our sin and en - ter in, be born in us to - day.



yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light.
O morn-ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth,
No ear may hear his com - ing, but in this world of sin,
We hear the Christ-mas an - gels the great glad ti - dings tell;



The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.
and prais - es sing to God the King and peace to all the earth.
where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.
O come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Im - man - u - el!

The Christmas Day Gospel

John 1:1-18

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was with God in the beginning. ³Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. ⁸He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

⁹The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹²Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— ¹³children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

¹⁴The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

¹⁵(John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, "This is the one I spoke about when I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'") ¹⁶Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. ¹⁷For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

Of the Father's Love Begotten

CW 358 sts. 1-4



1 Of the Fa - ther's love be - got - ten ere the worlds be -
2 Oh, that birth for - ev - er bless - ed when the vir - gin,
3 This is he whom seers and sa - ges sang of old with
4 Let the heights of heav'n a - dore him, an - gel hosts his



gan to be, he is Al - pha and O - me - ga,
full of grace, by the Ho - ly Ghost con - ceiv - ing,
one ac - cord, whom the voic - es of the proph - ets
prais - es sing, pow'rs, do - min - ions bow be - fore him



he the source, the end - ing he,
bore the Sav - ior of our race,
prom - ised in their faith - ful word.
and ex - tol our God and King.



of the things that are, that have been,
and the babe, the world's Re - deem - er,
Now he shines, the long - ex - spect - ed;
Let no tongue on earth be si - lent,



and that fu - ture years shall see ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
first re - vealed his sa - cred face ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
let cre - a - tion praise its Lord ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
ev - 'ry voice in con - cert ring ev - er - more and ev - er - more.

Our Christmas Message – Luke 2:4-7

⁴So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. ⁵He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

Christmas Confession: Athanasian Creed

We believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son, is both God and man.

He is God, eternally begotten from the nature of the Father, and he is man, born in time from the nature of his mother, fully God, fully man, with a rational soul and human flesh, equal to the Father as to his deity, less than the Father as to his humanity.

And though he is both God and man, Christ is not two persons but one: one, not by changing the deity into flesh, but by taking the humanity into God; one, indeed, not by a mixture of the natures, but by unity in one person. For just as the rational soul and flesh are one human being, so God and man are one Christ.

He suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose the third day from the dead. He ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty, and from there will come to judge the living and the dead. At his coming all people will rise with their own bodies.

This is the true Christian faith.

Offering

Our offerings serve to express our thanks to God for the great gift of salvation through his Son; they also are used in support of our ministry to spread his saving Word to others. If you are a guest or visitor with us for our Christmas celebration, we consider it our joy to share God's Word with you; please feel no obligation to give an offering.

Prayer of the Church for Christmas Day

Eternal Father, we give you thanks and praise on this holy day for sending your one and only Son to share our humanity, carry our guilt, and become for us the perfect Lamb who takes away the sin of the world.
Lord, we praise you.

Keep our faith in your Son alive and strong. Nourish us with your Word and sacraments and by your Holy Spirit give us strength to overcome Satan's power and empty promises. Help us to withstand the temptations the world and our sinful nature put on our path.
Give us faith and courage.

We pray for our city and countryside, for our neighborhoods and community, and for all who live and work and find delight here. Give to the leaders of government wisdom to make and uphold laws that promote the good of society. Grant our nation peace, health, and prosperity that we may have the opportunity and resources to spread the good news to all people.
Govern and prosper your people.

The Athanasian Creed was composed to combat two errors. One denied that the Son and the Spirit were one being with the Father. The other denied that Jesus is God and man in one person. On Christmas Day we use a portion of this ancient Creed that confesses the truth about Jesus Christ.

Fill us with kindness and arouse us to do good to all people, especially those who are less fortunate than we. Bring your healing to those who are sick or diseased in body or mind and comfort those who are mourning the death of someone they love. We especially pray for brothers and sisters who are setting aside their celebration today to care for the sick and stand at the side of the dying.

Sustain those who endure the troubles of life.

As you sent your Son to bring peace to all people on earth, so we pray for all people, those known and those unknown to us.

We pray through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

sung to the tune of "Away in a Manger"

**All (♪) Our Father in heaven, All praise to Your name!
Your kingdom among us, Your will done the same
By mortals and angels. Come, Lord, reign alone:
Oh, hear us and bless us from heaven's high throne.**

**The bread that we yearn for provide us each day;
As we forgive others, our sins take away;
In times of temptation to lead us, be near;
From evil deliver Your children most dear.**

**For yours is the kingdom; o'er all things you reign.
And yours is the power; all things you maintain.
To you be the glory, resounding again
From all of creation, forever! Amen.**

The Sacrament

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, by whose wonderful and mysterious birth you have opened our eyes to the glory of your grace and renewed in our hearts the fervor of your love. Therefore with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

Now Sing We, Now Rejoice

CW 363 sts. 1-2, 4



1 Now sing we, now re - joice, now raise to heav'n our voice;
2 Come from on high to me; I can - not rise to thee.
4 Oh, where shall joy be found? Where but on heav'n - ly ground,



he from whom joy stream - eth poor in a man - ger lies;
Cheer my wea - ried spir - it, O pure and ho - ly Child;
where the an - gels sing - ing with all his saints u - nite,



not so bright - ly beam - eth the sun in yon - der skies.
thro' thy grace and mer - it, blest Je - sus, Lord most mild,
sweet - est prais - es bring - ing in heav'n - ly joy and light.



Thou my Sav - ior art! Thou my Sav - ior art!
draw me un - to thee! Draw me un - to thee!
Oh, that we were there! Oh, that we were there!

Words of Institution

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my \dagger body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my \dagger blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

Amen.

A note to our guests: God's Word speaks of the spiritual blessings of this Sacrament (Matthew 26:28). God's Word also warns us against the spiritual danger in sharing this Holy meal (1 Corinthians 11:27-29). Because we deeply care about you and don't want to see anyone's faith harmed, we ask that only those persons who are members of our church or fellowship join us in this intimate expression of oneness (1 Corinthians 10:17; Amos 3:3). We are not judging your love for Jesus; we are showing our love for Jesus by obeying his commands (John 14:15,21). Please feel free to ask one of our pastors for more information. We are eager to listen and share over an open Bible. Thanks!

Distribution Hymn: From Heaven Above to Earth I Come

CW 331 sts. 1–10, 13



1 "From heav'n a - bove to earth I come to bear good
 2 "To you this night is born a child of Mar - y,
 3 "This is the Christ, our God most high, who hears your
 4 "He will on you the gifts be - stow pre - pared by
 5 "These are the signs which you shall mark: the swad - dling



news to ev - 'ry home; glad ti - dings of great
 cho - sen vir - gin mild; this lit - tle child of
 sad and bit - ter cry; he will him - self your
 God for all be - low, that in his king - dom,
 clothes and man - ger dark. There you will find the



joy I bring, where - of I now will say and sing:
 low - ly birth shall be the joy of all the earth.
 Sav - ior be from all your sins to set you free.
 bright and fair, you may with us his glo - ry share.
 in - fant laid by whom the heav'ns and earth were made."

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>6 How glad we'll be to find it so!
 Then with the shepherds let us go
 to see what God for us has done
 in sending us his own dear Son.</p> <p>7 Come here, my friends, lift up your eyes,
 and see what in the manger lies.
 Who is this child, so young and fair?
 It is the Christ Child lying there.</p> <p>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.</p> | <p>9 Ah, Lord, though you created all,
 how weak you are, so poor and small,
 that you should choose to lay your head
 where lowly cattle lately fed!</p> <p>10 Were earth a thousand times as fair
 and set with gold and jewels rare,
 it would be far too poor and small
 a cradle for the Lord of all.</p> <p>13 Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child,
 prepare a bed, soft, undefiled
 within my heart, made clean and new,
 a quiet chamber kept for you.</p> |
|--|--|

Prayer

We give you thanks, O Lord, for the foretaste of the heavenly banquet that you have given us to eat and to drink in this sacrament. Through this gift you have fed our faith, nourished our hope, and strengthened our love. By your Spirit help us to live as your holy people until that day when you will receive us as your guests at the wedding supper of the Lamb, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.,
The Lord look on you with favor and + give you peace.

Amen.

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

CW 361



Go, tell it on the moun-tain, o-ver the hills, and ev - 'ry - where;



go, tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born.

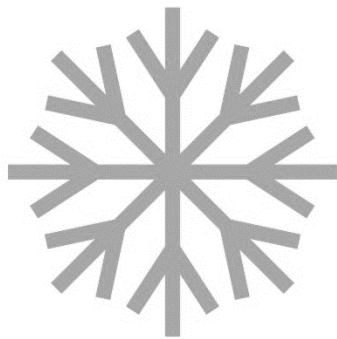


- 1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,
- 2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when lo, a - bove the earth
- 3 Down in a low - ly man - ger the hum-ble Christ was born,



be-hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.
rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless - ed Christ-mas morn.

*May the love of God and the peace of Christmastime fill your hearts and homes!
Merry Christmas from Pastor Harbach, Pastor Zimpelmann and their families!*



EVERY GOOD GIFT AND EVERY PERFECT GIFT
IS FROM ABOVE AND COMETH DOWN FROM THE FATHER
OF LIGHTS WITH WHOM IS NO VARIABLENESS
NEITHER SHADOW OF TURNING

JAMES 1:17