

First Sunday After Christmas

December 26, 2021

HYMN #224

“God Himself is Present”

Please Stand

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the Son (+) and of the Holy Spirit.
(spoken) **Amen.**

Oh, how I love your law!

I meditate on it all day long.

Your commands make me wiser than my enemies,
for they are ever with me.

I have more insight than all my teachers,
for I meditate on your statutes.

How sweet are your words to my taste,
sweeter than honey to my mouth!

CONFESSION OF SIN

This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you:
God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.

If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness,
we lie and do not live by the truth.

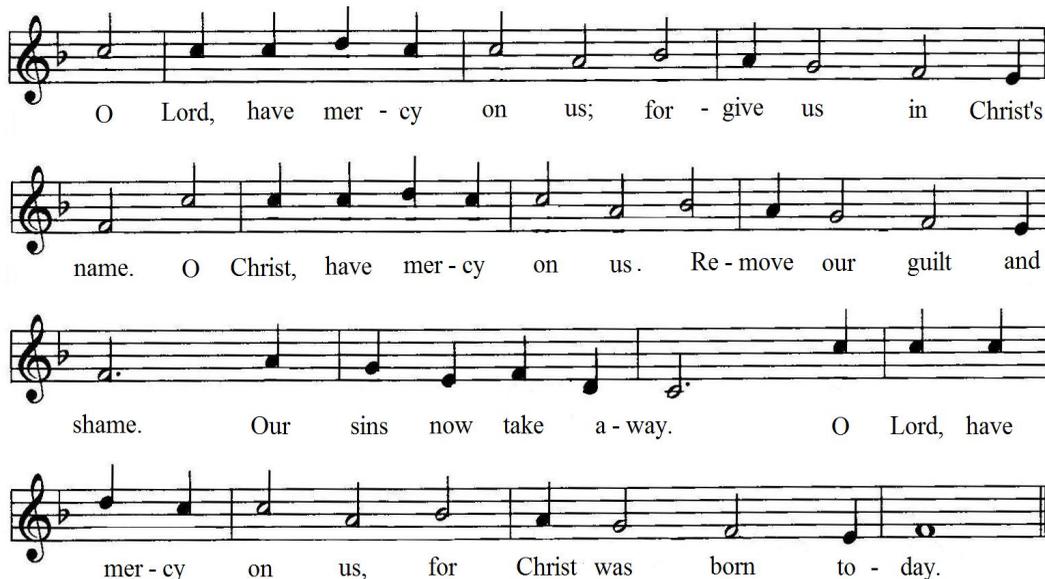
If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not
in us.

1 John 1:5-8

**Father, I have sinned against you and am no longer worthy to be
called your child. Yet in mercy you sacrificed your only Son to purge
away my guilt. For his sake, O God, be merciful to me, a sinner, and
in the joy of your Holy Spirit let me serve you all my days.**

KYRIE ELEISON

"Behold a Branch is Growing"



O Lord, have mer - cy on us; for - give us in Christ's
name. O Christ, have mer - cy on us. Re - move our guilt and
shame. Our sins now take a - way. O Lord, have
mer - cy on us, for Christ was born to - day.

ABSOLUTION

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. Upon this, your confession, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son (+) and of the Holy Spirit. *1 John 1:9*
Thanks be to God. Amen.

LUTHER'S MORNING PRAYER

Let us pray together:

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, your dear Son, that you have kept me this night from all harm and danger. Keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please you. Into your hands I commend my body and soul and all things. Let your holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Please be seated

HYMN # 67 vs 1

“What Child is This”

**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!**

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

1 Samuel 2:18–20, 26 EHV

¹⁸ But Samuel ministered before the LORD while he was still a young boy, dressed in a special vest made of linen. ¹⁹ His mother would make a little robe for him and bring it to him whenever she came up with her husband to offer the annual sacrifice. ²⁰ Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, “May the LORD give you offspring from this woman in place of the son she asked for, whom she loaned to the LORD.” Then they would go back to their home. ²⁶ The young man Samuel continued to grow, and he increased in favor with both the LORD and with men.

HYMN # 67 vs 2

“What Child is This”

**Why lies he in such mean estate
Where oxen now are feeding?
Good Christians, fear; For sinners here
The silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce him through;
The cross he’ll bear for me, for you.
Hail, hail the Word made flesh,
The babe, the Son of Mary!**

EPISTLE LESSON

Hebrews 2:14-18 EHV

¹⁴ Therefore, since the children share flesh and blood, he also shared the same flesh and blood, so that through death he could destroy the one who had the power of death (that is, the Devil) ¹⁵ and free those who were held in slavery all their lives by the fear of death. ¹⁶ For surely he was not concerned with helping angels but with helping Abraham's offspring. ¹⁷ For this reason, he had to become like his brothers in every way, in order that he would be a merciful and faithful high priest in the things pertaining to God, so that he could pay for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Indeed, because he suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

HYMN # 67 vs 3

"What Child is This"

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!

VERSE OF THE DAY

Luke 2:10-11 EHV

(Spoken Together)

Allelulia, "The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. For behold, I bring you good news of great joy, which will be for all people: ¹¹ Today in the town of David, a Savior was born for you. He is Christ the Lord." Allelulia.

C: Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

These words are writ - ten that we may be - lieve that

Je - sus is the Christ, the Son of God.

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

Please stand

GOSPEL

Luke 2:41-52 EHV

⁴¹ Every year his parents traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival. ⁴² When he was twelve years old, they went up according to the custom of the Festival. ⁴³ When the days had ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it. ⁴⁴ Since they thought he was in their group, they went a day's journey. Then they began to look for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵ When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him. ⁴⁶ After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸ When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us this way? See, your father and I have been anxiously looking for you." ⁴⁹ He said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be taking care of my Father's business?" ⁵⁰ They did not understand what he was telling them. ⁵¹

He went down with them and came to Nazareth. He was always obedient to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart. ⁵² Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and with people.

Please be seated

Hymn # 46

“Your Little Ones Dear Lord, Are We”

Sermon

Luke 2:41-52

Why Are We Still Here?

Please Stand

CONFESSION OF FAITH

melody – “O Little Town of Bethlehem”

(Offering will also be brought forward at this time)

**In God the Father we believe,
The Lord of hosts his name.
All things from him their form receive;
By his strong Word they came.
By him was all created
In earth and heav’n above.
He made them all, things great and small,
By his great pow’r and love.**

**In God’s Son Jesus we believe,
Who came at God’s own hour,
Whom virgin Mary did conceive
All by the Spirit’s pow’r.
He suffered, died, was buried,
Was raised at God’s own call**

To reign on high, and to draw nigh
At last as Judge of all.

In God the Spirit we believe
And in Christ's church on earth.
The saints, united, faith receive,
A gift of precious worth.
He sanctifies and keeps us
By his empow'ring love.
Forgiven, from the grave we'll rise
To live with God above.

Please be seated

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

O Lord, you have revealed your good and gracious will to your people on earth. Forgive us for pursuing that knowledge that serves only our selfish desires and for using what we have learned to exploit and hurt others. Cleanse our guilty hearts of the apathy we feel for searching out the deeper truths of your Word.

Holy Spirit, hear our prayer that we may put self aside and rejoice in the truth that builds up.

Heavenly Father, send the Spirit of Jesus into our hearts so that like the Bereans of old we eagerly learn of you. As the deer pants for streams of water, may we be instilled with a longing to explore the mysteries of your grace.

Holy Spirit, increase in us the knowledge of your truth.

As you sent your Son among us as the Word made flesh, so bless the efforts of schools, colleges, and seminaries to train those who proclaim your presence among us in Word and sacrament.

Holy Spirit, instill in us a desire to teach others the wisdom of your ways.

God of light, give to the Church renewed wisdom and fresh understanding that the message of your salvation may shine ever brighter in this dark age.

Holy Spirit, kindle in us the fire of your love so that others may see our good deeds and praise our Father in heaven.

Intercessory Prayers

Holy Spirit, renew the face of the earth so that at the name of Jesus every knee may bow.

May your peace, which transcends all understanding, guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Blessed are you, O Lord of heaven and earth. We praise and thank you for sending your Son, Jesus Christ, and we remember the great acts of love through which he has ransomed us from sin, death, and the devil's power.

By his incarnation, he became one with us.

By his perfect life, he fulfilled your holy will.

By his innocent death, he overcame hell.

By his rising from the grave, he opened heaven.

Invited by your grace and instructed by your Word, we approach your table with repentant and joyful hearts. Strengthen us through Christ's body and blood, and preserve us in the true faith until we feast with him and all his ransomed people in glory everlasting. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

(Sing to the tune of "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear")

Our Father, Lord on heav'n's high throne,	Yours is the kingdom; unto You
Most holy be your name.	In grateful love we bow;
Your kingdom come. Your will be done	And yours the pow'r; Lord, let us view
On earth - in heav'n the same.	Your mighty presence now.
Give us this day the food we need;	The glory Yours; your praise be sung
Forgiven may we be'	By angel hosts and men
Into temptation do not lead;	In ev'ry land, by ev'ry tongue
From evil set us free.	Forevermore! Amen

WORDS OF INSTITUTION *Matthew 26:26-28 & 1 Corinthians 11:24,25*

(As he speaks the Words of Institution, the minister both proclaims the words of Jesus to the congregation and sets apart the bread and wine for the Lord's use. The sign of the cross reminds us of Christ's death.)

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 (+) 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 (+) 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.

DISTRIBUTION

DISTRIBUTION HYMN #38 "From Heaven Above to Earth I Come"

Please Stand

THANKSGIVING

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.



Please be seated

Closing Hymn # 43 vs. 3-4 "To Thee My Heart I Offer"





Mysteries of Christmas

If only we could understand all of God's mysteries! The Creator is above human comprehension and just because we cannot understand God's ways does not mean that He doesn't have a reason and purpose for all that He does. Christmas is a time of joy and goodwill and delighting in the age-old story of Jesus. For many, however, it doesn't seem to make sense or fit reality.

Here are some of the mysteries of that first Christmas:

A Virgin Gave Birth.

Seven hundred years before Christ was born, the prophet Isaiah foretold: *"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: 'Behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel'"* (Is. 7:14). God chose that which was beyond human possibility to signify the coming into the world of the promised Messiah. He shortcut the normal, natural way of bringing children into the world because this baby was more than a mere man. Jesus was born both of a human and of God.

God Became a Man.

Long ago, the Holy God condescended to live in this world as a man. Although He had every right and reason to wash His hands of the world, He loved it, especially the people who lived there. He left the wonders of heaven to come to the woes of the world. What a stoop! God was big enough to become small, and strong enough to become as weak as a tiny baby. *"God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels,*

preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory” (1 Tim. 3:16).

Christ Was to Die.

To fully understand Jesus, including the Christmas story, one must look beyond the crib to the cross. The greatest act that Jesus did was not to heal the sick, raise the dead, or feed 5,000, but to die on the cross, carrying on His shoulders all our guilt and shame. Hanging on a cross, at the age of 33, Jesus cried out, *“It is finished!”* having accomplished the work He was born to do. Dying, He bore in His body the sin of us all.

Jesus Left Heaven so We Could Go There.

Christ left heaven to come to earth so that when we leave earth we may go to heaven. Although destined to die, after three days Jesus rose from the dead. Christ, born from a virgin womb, rose from a virgin tomb and conquered death, so that death is not the end of our existence. We can be sure of heaven – not because we deserve it, but because the Son came to bring us into an everlasting relationship with the Father.

The Guest of Honor Was Not Invited.

Millions exclude Jesus from His own birthday celebration. How strange to leave out the guest of honor! Surely Christ should not be excluded from the Christmas party. Yet it always has been the same. When Mary and Joseph arrived at Bethlehem, they were told there was no room in the inn. If they arrived today, the inn’s bar probably would be crowded, and the restaurant packed with excitement. However – then and now – as people banquet, drink, laugh, and celebrate, they often inadvertently squeeze out the person for whom the festivities are intended.