

*Grace Lutheran Church
~ The Nativity of Our Lord ~
Christmas Eve, December 24, 2022*



In winter's deepest night, we welcome the light of the Christ child.

Isaiah declares that the light of the long-promised king will illumine the world and bring endless peace and justice. Paul reminds us that the grace of God through Jesus Christ brings salvation to all people. The angels declare that Jesus' birth is good and joyful news for everyone, including lowly shepherds. Filled with the light that shines in our lives, we go forth to share the light of Christ with the whole world.

PRELUDE

Welcome and Announcements

ADVENT WREATH AND LIGHTING

Lord our God, we praise you for your Son, Jesus Christ.

He is Emmanuel, the hope of all peoples;

He is the wisdom that teaches and guides us;

He is the Savior of every nation. O God, let your blessing come upon this community gathered here before you.

Bless us (+) and our advent wreath (+)

May the light that shines forth from these candles illumine our way as we journey towards Christmas; may the light that shines forth from them illumine our lives as we wait and watch in hope for the birth of the Christ-child.

Awake! For on this day – Christ chose to come to us!

Let us worship together.

GATHERING HYMN:

“Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

ELW 254 vs 1 & 2

1 Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us;
let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art,
dear desire of ev'ry nation,
joy of ev'ry longing heart.

2 Born thy people to deliver,
born a child, and yet a king;
born to reign in us forever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit
raise us to thy glorious throne

CHRISTMAS EVE PRAYER

O God of love, **you have brought us together tonight and blessed us with your very self. Open our eyes to the light of Christ which glows in the darkness of a world engulfed in apathy, pain and loss; a world separated from you. Speak to us now that we may hear the good news of your salvation. Bring us into the wonder of your presence. Fill us with that light and carry it out with us into our lives. Amen.**

NARRATIVE: As we look at the nativity scene tonight, we focus on God coming to us in Christ. This is not just a story of a baby in a manger, but our ability to see... to recognize the hope that has come to us. God didn't wait for us to be good enough, to search for Him... or even turn to Him in shame and sorrow. But God came to us in our brokenness, our hatred, and our doubt. He came to us to show us love and grant to each of us, grace beyond our human understanding.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 9:2-7

Pew Bible p 555

²The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined.

³You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when
dividing plunder.

⁴For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in
blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

⁶For a child has been born for us, a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and
forevermore.

The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

NARRATIVE: Approximately 700 years before Jesus was born, in a dark world, the prophet Isaiah wrote that poem. There was massive destruction with the fall of Israel, a people who did not hear... and would not listen to the prophets warning... The oppressed were broken down... as judgement was handed down to those who refuse to accept God's word of promise... only a tenth of the descendants of the House of David survived the brutal attacks. Jesus was born... into this darkness...into this world ruled by tyrants who force a census to gain sociopolitical control. A world where soldiers killed because of culture or race, where people were persecuted for their beliefs and thrown into slavery by corrupt courts. Greed, corruption, and oppression by the powerful caused everyone to live in debt, fear,

and uncertainty. Into this world... to the lowly, weak, and afflicted, God came... to the most unlikely people while those who were wrapped up in themselves and their own way of life, those who should have expected it, missed it completely.

HYMN: "Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn" ELW 242 Vs 1 & 3

1 Awake! Awake, and greet the new morn, for angels herald its dawning. Sing out your joy, for soon he is born, behold! the Child of our longing. Come as a baby weak and poor, to bring all hearts together, he opens wide the heav'nly door and lives now inside us forever.	3 In darkest night his coming shall be, when all the world is despairing, as morning light so quiet and free, so warm and gentle and caring. Then shall the mute break forth in song, the lame shall leap in wonder, the weak be raised above the strong, and weapons be broken asunder
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NARRATIVE: A significant part of the teachings of Jesus was of justice, to restore us to righteousness. It is a commitment to seeing – as clearly and truly as possible – both the realities of our world, and the injustices in it so that we His people, can address change, improvement, and God’s emerging reign in it. It is only when we see that clearly, that we can encourage, support, and strengthen the good and effectively challenge the darkness.

In the growing concern about our world and its resources, there is a light shining in the darkness when we seek God’s guidance. In the growing groups within faith communities who seek faithful dialogue and understanding rather than conflict and dominance, there is a sign of God’s coming. In the rise of social entrepreneurship, we see God’s grace at work to lift up good rather than self-serving interest. In the growth of justice and ethical behaviors, there is light in our world. These signs free us to unite in what God is doing in our world. To love our neighbor and treat others with truth and justice. This offers the challenge to see our lives against Christ’s standard, and be changed to embody the Gospel for... Love is action, doing what is good for others to restore light into a dark world.

GOSPEL LEAD-IN: “Blessed be the God of Israel” ELW 250 vs 1

1 Blessed be the God of Israel who comes to set us free	and raises up new hope for us: a Branch from David’s tree.
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So have the prophets long declared
that with a mighty arm

God would turn back our enemies
and all who wish us harm.

GOSPEL OF ST. LUKE 2:1-20

Pew Bible p 832

¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

HYMN: "The First Noel" ELW 300 vs 1 & 2

1 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.

Refrain

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.

2 They looked up and saw a star shining in the east beyond them far;
and to the earth it gave great light, and so it continued both day and night. *Refrain*
NARRATIVE: God's miraculous coming down to us, is for more than communities and nations, but to individuals, the marginalized and oppressed beginning with Mary and Joseph and the shepherds. They physically saw God's coming as a baby.

We see God's coming in our lives when we open our eyes and see again, for the first time, the power of the incarnation for us. We see this when we acknowledge we have resisted or ignored God's desire in our lives. Where we find ourselves growing more aware of God's presence and purpose in our daily routines. Where we discover new capacities for compassion, humility, simplicity and joy. Where we find ourselves becoming more whole in spite of the struggles of living in this world. That is when we see God's coming to us. If we remain stuck in destructive attitudes and habits or continue to allow selfishness and fear to break down relationships, we fail to allow our eyes to be opened to God's image in others, and we fail to welcome the Christ Child into our lives. Ultimately, what the incarnation tells us, dramatically and powerfully, is that Christ came not just to get us into heaven, but to bring heaven to earth. To the extent that our lives reflect heaven – to the extent that we become more Christ-like. And in our own daily lives – we see... we... are the blessed ones to whom God has once again come.

GOSPEL OF LUKE 2 *Continues*: Pew Bible p 833

¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Here ends the good news of the Lord.

Praise to you O Christ.

CHILDREN'S TIME

Away in the Manger ELW 277 vs 1 & 2

1 Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
 the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;
the stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
 the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

2 The cattle are lowing; the baby awakes,

2 You sent your Son to die for all, oh, hear us lest we stray and fall!
that our lost world might hear your call; We rest our hope in you.

DEDICATION PRAYER OF THE CHRISTMAS OFFERINGS:

Let us pray... **Holy God, your beauty shines forth from the manger and your love flows from the cross. As you gather us around these signs of your love come among us, open our eyes to see, to extend your care among the hungry and all in need. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION FOR CHRISTMAS EVE Good and gracious God, on this holy night you gave us your Son, the Lord of the universe, wrapped in swaddling clothes, the Savior of all, lying in a manger. We offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all those in need. We pray for all who govern. Bestow your wisdom on them to honor the earth and its diverse races, cultures, and religion serving them in justice and mercy. Grant reconciliation to those surrounded with conflict and violence, that they may live in the peace of this holy night as also our service men and women and their families. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Give us a place among the shepherd as we pray this night for all who are cold, hungry, or alone. Embrace with your tender care all who wander or have no place to lay their head, that they may experience hope. Draw near to those who feel pain, suffering or sickness, especially those we lift up from our hearts... Grant that they may feel your presence. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Bless parents, families, newborn infants, and our elderly, that seeing you came to us in Jesus your Son, we may delight in joy and sing your glory on high, strengthened and renewed by the peace that comes to us beyond all understanding. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Comfort those who grief. Gather our hearts together in thankfulness for all the faithful who have been bearers of the Word. Give us grace to follow your holy ones in confidence, knowing we shall see them again and join with the host of heaven in singing the praises of this holy night. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

All these things and whatever else you see we need, grant us, O God, for the sake of Our Savior, who died, rose, and now reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, forever, **Amen.**

SPECIAL MUSIC

“A Christmas Invitation”

Choir

THE MEAL

Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Preface

We thank and praise You, O God, for You are not distant and uninvolved in our lives and our world But, have come to us, humbly and gently, challengingly and powerfully. And whoever receives You, whoever believes in You receives the forgiveness of sins and life eternal.

PRAYER AT THE TABLE: CHRISTMAS

The bread and wine we're about to share joins us to the people throughout history and across the world who have come to this meal in search of life.

On the night before Jesus died, He took bread, gave thanks to you Lord, as we thank you. He broke the bread, and shared it with his disciples, saying: this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

After supper he took the wine, thanked you for it, and passed it to all, saying: This cup is the new covenant God has made with you in my blood, shed for you and all people, for the forgiveness of your sins. Each time you do this, do it for the remembrance of me.

We pray, God of love, you will send your Holy Spirit upon us and touched by your Spirit, we may be signs of life and love to each other and all the world. **Amen.**

We pray as Jesus has taught us.

LORD'S PRAYER: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day

our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

God comes to us in this table of peace. Come and be strengthened.

Distribution:

All who believe our Lord Jesus Christ is truly present in the bread and wine of Holy Communion, bringing to us the gift of forgiveness and the promise of eternal life, are welcome to gather at the Lord's Table. Children will receive a blessing.

Distribution Hymns:

"Oh Come, All Ye Faithful"

ELW 283

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:

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

Refrain

O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!

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

2 The highest, most holy,
light of light eternal,
born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;

HYMN: *"Hark the Herald Angels Sing"* **ELW 270**

1 Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king;
peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled."

Joyful, all you nations, rise; join the triumph of the skies;
with angelic hosts 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, incarnate deity!
Pleased as man with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel! 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 we no more may die,
born to raise each child of earth, born to give us second birth. Refrain

Post-Communion Blessing:

May this body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace... now and forever more. **Amen.**

Post-Communion Prayer:

Let us pray... God our redeemer, **you have fed us at this table with gifts of grace, truth, and life. As you have gathered us in joy, send us forth as messengers of your peace. Make us shine with the good news of your glory, born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

NEW TESTAMENT reading Titus, chapter 2: 11-14

Pew Bible p 969

¹¹The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, ¹² training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, ¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. ¹⁴ He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

HYMN: "Angels from the Realms of Glory" ELW 275 Vs 1 & 2

1 Angels, from the realms of glory, wing your flight o'er all the earth;
once you sang creation's story, now proclaim Messiah's birth:
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn king.

2 Shepherds, in the fields abiding, watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing, yonder shines the infant light.
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn king.

NARRATIVE:

Joy and peace come to those who have their hope in Christ... the baby born in a manger... Emmanuel... the obedient Savior of humankind. Peace comes... to all who believe... especially because of His love for you.

THE SENDING

CHRISTMAS BLESSING:

As you leave this place, may the good news shared with you, awaken you to the light of the long-promised king who illumines the world and bring endless peace and justice.

May the grace of God through Jesus Christ awaken you to the hope that is born among you tonight.

May the joyful news of the angels awaken you to share the Love of God, who did not wait, but came down to you.

And may the blessing of Almighty God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be with you and grant you peace, now and forever.

Amen.

CANDLE LIGHTING

The GOSPEL of the Incarnation: John 1: 1-5, 14

Pew Bible p 862

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

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us,

Behold the light of the world!

NARRATION The story of Christmas is a testimony to the Word made flesh... For those who see... for those who hear... are awakened to hope of Christ... on them the light will shine... on them... has been given great love...

SENDING CAROL:

“Silent Night”

ELW 281

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 your holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth, Jesus, Lord, at your birth.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace... for Christ the Savior is born!

Invitation to the Lord's Supper: All who believe that our Lord Jesus Christ is truly present in the bread and wine of Holy Communion, bringing to us the gift of forgiveness and the promise of eternal life, are welcome to gather at the Lord's Table.

Thanks be to God.

Thank you for worshipping with us ~ have a blessed Christmas!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Announcements for December 24th

Keep in Your Prayers those with Healthcare Issues

Rhys Arnold, Roy Arnold, Shannon Beck, Joyce Brever, Dennis Carlson, Jerry Dipprey, Dick Everson, Judy Everson, Darla Gilman, Sharlee Kjellsen. Sylvia Larson, Janelle Marx, Lavern McPeek, Elvira Moen, Becky Nelson, Ronald Newell, Rick Raml, Carolyn Ronke, Roger Rust, Tracy Schaefer, Raaf Stolp, Caden Thompson, Todd Wilson, and Robert Wittrock, those in Care Centers, Assisted Living, or who are Homebound. Pray for members of the Armed Forces and their families, our Law Enforcement personal, Fire Fighters, EMT and all First Responders.

A RADIO BROADCAST of the Sunday morning worship service can be heard at 10:05 a.m. each Sunday on KWAT (950 AM). **The RADIO BROADCAST** for this service is given in loving memory of Roy & Doris Schmeling from the Schmeling Radio Fund. The altar flowers poinsettias are given in loving memory of Roy and Doris Schmeling from Linda, Larry, Lana, and families. Gifts to sponsor the radio broadcast are important for those who are unable to attend. We appreciate your gifts to proclaim the gospel message.

ANNUAL COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS DINNER

The annual Community Christmas Luncheon for Christmas Day is tomorrow. Deliver starts at 11 am with sit-down dine in beginning at Noon. Volunteers are needed to deliver the meals, to serve the meals and to clean up after the meal. Please consider coming to help following the Christmas service at 10 am or return for cleanup beginning at 1 pm.

On the CALENDAR

For the week of December 25-January 1

Sunday 10 am Christmas Worship Service
 NO Sunday School
 11 am Christmas Luncheon delivery starts
 Noon – Sit down dine-in Christmas Luncheon
 1 pm – Clean-up
December 26 – Office Closed
December 27 – Blood Drive 11 am to 7:30 pm

December 28 – 2 pm – Baptism of Clara Ingrid Mohling

No evening activities

December 30th – Registration Due for youth for Mini Youth Gathering

January 1 10 am Worship Service (ONE SERVICE ONLY)

NO Sunday School

January 6 – 7 pm to Midnight - Mini Youth gathering for 7th thru 12th grade

January 29 – Annual Meeting

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO ASSIST IN OUR WORSHIP:

PASTOR: Cheryl Rondeau-Bassett

PIANIST: Tim Frewing

CHOIR MEMBERS: Becky Sprouse, Leigh Carstensen, Judy Everson, Kayla Mohling, Riley Sprouse, Marian Raml, Krisma DeWitt, Karen Kasperson

SOUND/VIDEO TECH TEAM: Paul Henrichs, Anthony DeHaan, Dylan Jordan, Wyatt Sprouse, Larry Picht & Gary Rukstad.

USHERS: 4 pm : Geri Mohrer & Steve Schlenner

6 pm: Clarisa Raigoza, Kimberly Raigoza & Mark Briley

GREETERS: 4 pm – Bonnie Oleteke; **READERS:** 4 pm – Ed Williams; 6 pm - Karen Kasperson

Pastoral Calls: You can reach Pastor Cheryl at 605-237-1501(cell or text) or

You are invited to worship with us again. Except for special circumstances, our worship from September to May each year is at:

8:30 am Traditional Worship Service

11 am – Contemporary Worship Service

7 pm – Wednesday night Family Worship Service

*Come and worship the Lord and be filled each week
with God's Words of Hope, to strengthen and sustain you!*