

Festival *of* LESSONS *and* CAROLS

Abiding Word Evangelical Lutheran Church
Maineville, Ohio
December 24, 2023

INVOCATION

M: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

M: Dear people of God, in this Christmas season, it is our duty and delight to hear again the message of the angels and, in heart and mind, to go to Bethlehem and see this thing which has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us—the Christ Child lying in a manger.

Let us read and learn in Holy Scripture the story of the loving purposes of God from the first days after our fall into sin to the glorious redemption brought to us by this holy child.

But first, let us pray for people all over the world who would delight with us to know the good news of Jesus Christ and who would join with us in singing his praises. Let us pray for the people of our community and for all those in our own congregation.

Silent prayer

And, because this would please our Lord, let us remember in his name the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry and the oppressed, the sick and those who are sad, the lonely and the unloved, and the elderly and the little children. We especially remember all those who do not know the Lord Jesus, those who do not love him, and those who by sin have grieved his heart of love.

Silent prayer

Finally, let us remember with thanksgiving before God all those who rejoice with us in heaven, who live in greater light than we, that multitude which no one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, who died in faith, and who live before the throne of God and praise him each day in his temple. We confess that we are united with them as we are united with one another.

Silent prayer

To sum up all these petitions, let us pray as Christ himself taught us.

The 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.

FIRST LESSON

GENESIS 3:8-15

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, 'Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.'"

M: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God!**

SECOND LESSON

GENESIS 22:15-18

Abraham was obedient to the command of God and had not withheld his son Isaac. Abraham had trusted that God would keep his promise to send a Savior through Isaac's offspring, even if that meant that God would raise Isaac from the dead. In his grace God renews his promise to Abraham to give him a descendant who would bless all nations.

The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."

M: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God!**

O JESUS CHRIST, YOUR MANGER IS

342

THIRD LESSON

ISAIAH 9:2, 6-7

Isaiah the prophet foretells the coming of the Savior, who will bring light and peace.

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

M: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God!**

ON CHRISTMAS NIGHT ALL CHRISTIANS SING

338

FOURTH LESSON

MICAH 5:2-5

The prophet Micah foretells that the Christ would come from the royal family of David.

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.”

Therefore Israel will be abandoned until the time when she who is in labor gives birth and the rest of his brothers return to join the Israelites. He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth. And he will be their peace.

M: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God!

JOY HAS DAWNED

352

FIFTH LESSON

LUKE 1:26-38

The angel Gabriel announces the coming birth of the Savior to his mother, Mary.

In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.

But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God."

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

M: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God!**

O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL

354

SIXTH LESSON

LUKE 2:1-7

Luke records the birth of our Savior.

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register.

So 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. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

M: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God!

AWAY IN A MANGER

341

SEVENTH LESSON

LUKE 2:8-20

An angel announces the birth of Christ to shepherds near Bethlehem. The angels praise God for his gift of peace, and the shepherds tell of the Savior they have seen.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. 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. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

M: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God!

EIGHTH LESSON

MATTHEW 2:1-12

The Magi worship the newborn King.

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.”

When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:

“‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.’”

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

M: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God!**

BEHOLD, A BRANCH IS GROWING

360

NINTH LESSON

JOHN 1:1-14

Saint John unfolds the mystery of our Lord's incarnation.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.

Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

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.

M: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God!**

Stand

CLOSING PRAYER

M: O God, who makes us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of your only Son, Jesus Christ, grant that as we joyfully receive him as our Redeemer, so we may with sure confidence behold him when he comes to be our judge, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

The conclusion of the service is by candlelight.

THE BLESSING

M: Jesus is the light of the world.

C: **The light no darkness can overcome.**

M: The light that gives life has come.

C: **May he shine in our hearts and lives.**

M: The blessing of God Almighty—the Father, the Son, + and the Holy Spirit—
be upon you and remain with you always.

C: **Amen.**

337 SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT

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.

Thank you for worshipping with us on this holy night.

Please join us tomorrow morning at 10:30am for our Christmas Day Service.