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# Christmas Eve

December 24, 2021

**OUR SAVIOR'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

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## CHRISTMAS INVOCATION

**M:** In the name of God -

**C:** **God the Father, who gave his only begotten Son,  
God the Son, who was made in human likeness, and  
God the Holy Spirit, who fills us with Christmas joy.**

**M:** Amen.

## EXHORTATION AND PRAYER

**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 Weston and for all those in our own congregation.

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.

Finally, let us remember 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.

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

**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**

#### *The Seed Of The Woman Will Crush The Serpent's Head*

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 livestock and all 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."

### **HYMN # 28 "Let the Earth Now Praise the Lord"**

1 Let the earth now praise the Lord, Who has truly kept his word  
And at last to us did send Christ, the sinner's help and friend.

2 What the fathers most desired, What the prophets' heart inspired,  
What they longed for many a year Stands fulfilled in glory here.

3 Abram's promised great reward, Zion's helper, Jacob's Lord—  
Him of twofold race behold—Truly came, as long foretold.

4 Welcome, O my Savior, now! Joyful, Lord, to you I bow.  
Come into my heart, I pray; Oh, prepare yourself a way.

5 Crush for me the serpent's head That, set free from doubt and dread,  
I may cling to you in faith, Safely kept through life and death,

6 And, when you shall come again As a glorious king to reign,  
I with joy may see your face, Freely ransomed by your grace.

Text: Heinrich Held, 1620–59, abr.; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–78, alt.

## **SECOND LESSON: Genesis 22:15-18**

### *God's promises to Abraham*

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."

## **HYMN # 35 "Of The Father's Love Begotten"**

1 Of the Father's love begotten Ere the worlds began to be,  
He is Alpha and Omega, He the source, the ending he,  
Of the things that are, that have been, And that future years shall see  
Evermore and evermore.

2 Oh, that birth forever blessed When the virgin, full of grace,  
By the Holy Ghost conceiving, Bore the Savior of our race,  
And the babe, the world's Redeemer, First revealed his sacred face  
Evermore and evermore.

3 This is he whom heav'n-taught singers Sang of old with one accord;  
Whom the Scriptures of the prophets Promised in their faithful word.  
Now he shines, the long-expected; Let creation praise its Lord  
Evermore and evermore.

4 Let the heights of heav'n adore him, Angel hosts his praises sing,  
Pow'rs, dominions bow before him And extol our God and King.  
Let no tongue on earth be silent, Ev'ry voice in concert ring  
Evermore and evermore.

5 Christ, to you, with God the Father, And the Spirit ceaselessly  
Hymn and chant and high thanksgiving And unending praises be,  
Honor, glory, and dominion And eternal victory  
Evermore and evermore.

Text: Aurelius Clemens Prudentius, 348–c. 413, abr.; tr. John M. Neale, 1818–66, st. 1-4, alt.; Henry W. Baker, 1821–77, st. 5, alt.

### **THIRD LESSON: Isaiah 9:2,6,7**

*The people who walked in darkness have seen a great Light*

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.

### **HYMN # 61 "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"**

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 th' angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"  
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 th' incarnate Deity!  
Pleased as man with us to dwell, Jesus, our Immanuel!  
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

3 Hail, the heav'nly 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 us from the earth, Born to give us second birth.  
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707–88, abr., alt.

#### **FOURTH LESSON: Isaiah 11:1-9**

*A Branch from the stem of Jesse*

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him— the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD—and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist. The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

#### **HYMN #47 "Behold, a Branch Is Growing"**

1 Behold, a Branch is growing Of loveliest form and grace,  
As prophets sang, foreknowing; It springs from Jesse's race  
And bears one little flow'r In midst of coldest winter,  
At deepest midnight hour.

2 Isaiah had foretold it In words of promise sure,  
And Mary's arms enfold it, A virgin meek and pure.  
Through God's eternal will This child to her is given  
At midnight calm and still.

3 The shepherds heard the story Proclaimed by angels bright,  
How Christ, the Lord of glory, Was born on earth this night.  
To Bethlehem they sped And in the manger found him,  
As angel heralds said.

4 This flow'r, so small and tender, With fragrance fills the air;  
His brightness ends the darkness That kept the earth in fear.  
True God and yet true man, He came to save his people  
From earth's dark night of sin.

5 O Savior, Child of Mary, Who felt our human woes,  
O Savior, King of glory, Who conquered all our foes,  
Bring us at last, we pray, To the bright courts of heaven  
And to the endless day.

Text: *Alte Catholische Geistliche Kirchengeseng*, Köln, 1599, abr.; tr. composite.

### **FIFTH LESSON: Luke 1:26-39**

#### *The angel Gabriel visits 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.

## HYMN # 36 "A Great and Mighty Wonder"

1 A great and mighty wonder, A glorious mystery:

A virgin bears an infant Who veils his deity.

Repeat the hymn again:

"To God on high be glory And peace on earth to men."

2 The Word becomes incarnate And yet remains on high,

And cherubim sing anthems To shepherds from the sky.

Repeat the hymn again:

"To God on high be glory And peace on earth to men."

3 While thus they sing your monarch, Those bright angelic bands,

Rejoice, O vales and mountains, And oceans, clap your hands.

Repeat the hymn again:

"To God on high be glory And peace on earth to men."

4 Since all he comes to ransom, By all be he adored,

The infant born in Bethl'em, The Savior and the Lord.

Repeat the hymn again:

"To God on high be glory And peace on earth to men."

5 All idols then shall perish And Satan's lying cease,

And Christ shall raise his scepter, Decreeing endless peace.

Repeat the hymn again:

"To God on high be glory And peace on earth to men."

Text: Germanus, c. 634–734; tr. John M. Neale, 1818–66, alt.

## SIXTH LESSON: Matthew 1:18-25

### *The birth of Jesus*

This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the



Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).

When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

### **HYMN # 68 “Away In A Manger”**

1 Away in a manger, no crib for a 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,  
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.  
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,  
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.

3 Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay  
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,  
And take us to heaven to live with you there.

Text: *Little Children's Book*, Philadelphia, 1885, st. 1-2; *Vineyard Songs*, Louisville, 1892, st. 3.

### **SEVENTH LESSON: Luke 2:8-20**

#### *The shepherds visit the manger*

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.

### **HYMN #54 "Where Shepherds Lately Knelt"**

1 Where shepherds lately knelt and kept the angel's word,  
I come in half-belief, a pilgrim strangely stirred;  
But there is room and welcome there for me,  
But there is room and welcome there for me.

2 In that unlikely place I find him as they said:  
Sweet newborn Babe, how frail! and in a manger bed,  
A still, small voice to cry one day for me,  
A still, small voice to cry one day for me.

3 How should I not have known Isaiah would be there,  
His prophecies fulfilled? With pounding heart I stare:  
A child, a son, the Prince of Peace for me,  
A child, a son, the Prince of Peace for me.

4 Can I, will I forget how Love was born, and burned  
Its way into my heart unasked, unforced, unearned,  
To die, to live, and not alone for me,  
To die, to live, and not alone for me?

**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. 4 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.

**CANDLELIGHTING**

*Our candles will be lighted as we sing the next hymn. The ushers will take their light from the pastor and give it to the person sitting closest to the aisle. That person will then pass it along. Remember, tip the unlighted candles only, not the lighted ones! After all the candles are lit, the next lesson will be read.*

## HYMN # 83 "As with Gladness Men of Old"

- 1 As with gladness men of old Did the guiding star behold,  
As with joy they hailed its light, Leading onward, beaming bright,  
So, most gracious Lord, may we Evermore your followers be.
- 2 As with joyful steps they sped, Savior, to your lowly bed,  
There to bend the knee before You whom heav'n and earth adore,  
So may we with willing feet Ever seek your mercy seat.
- 3 As they offered gifts most rare At your cradle, rude and bare,  
So may we with holy joy, Pure and free from sin's alloy,  
All our costliest treasures bring, Christ, to you, our heav'nly King.
- 4 Holy Jesus, ev'ry day Keep us in the narrow way;  
And, when earthly things are past, Bring our ransomed souls at last  
Where they need no star to guide, Where no clouds your glory hide.
- 5 In the heav'nly country bright Need they no created light;  
You its light, its joy, its crown, You its sun which goes not down.  
There forever may we sing Alleluias to our King!

Text: William C. Dix, 1837–98, alt.

## **NINTH LESSON: John 1:1-14** *The Mystery Of The 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.

### **HYMN # 60 “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.

Text: Franz Joseph Mohr, 1792–1848, abr.; tr. John F. Young, 1820–85.

### **PRAYER**

*(Spoken By All)*

When all was still and it was midnight, your eternal Word, O Lord, descended from the almighty throne to dwell among us. May we receive him in the peace of forgiven hearts and proclaim your gracious goodwill to all people on earth, for he is God with us, Emmanuel, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

### **BLESSING**



## **WELCOME TO OUR SAVIOR'S**

Welcome to worship, especially our guests! We are delighted to have you with us. If you are looking for a church home, we are happy to share ours with you. If we haven't seen you in a while, it is great to see you this evening! May God bless your time with us richly.

Please join us for Christmas Day worship at 9:00 am.

We invite you to worship with us on Sundays at 10:30 am. Bible class and Sunday School will resume on January 9 at 9:30 am.