

# THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD: Christmas Eve

**December 24, 2021 – 4:30 p.m.**  
**St. Matthew Lutheran Church**  
**4101 Washington Street NE**  
**Columbia Heights, MN 55421**

***Welcome to worship at St. Matthew!** To friends who know us, we renew our welcome; to visitors, we extend it sincerely; and to those seeking a church home, we offer fellowship with a living Redeemer. Come again!*

***We ask that all guests** sign a yellow attendance card located in the pew rack, and then please hand the card to the pastor as you leave the worship service.*

***Assisted hearing devices and large print hymnals and orders of service** are available from the ushers.*

***If you have a prayer request**, please write it out on one of the green prayer cards located in the pew rack, and then submit it to Pastor Hugo or the lay minister before the service begins. Other prayer requests can be made by calling the church office at 763-788-9427.*

***Parents with small children** are encouraged to sit near the front in order to better see and participate during the service. If you desire other facilities, a cry room is located in the back of the worship area and bathrooms with changing tables (including back-up supplies) and infant seats are located behind the worship area (two right turns as you pass the double doors out of the worship area – just past the water fountain).*

***Thank you** for turning off all electronic equipment (cell phones, items that receive internet signal, etc.). These items interfere with our sound system.*

**+ CONNECT +**

**RINGING OF THE BELL**

**PROCESSIONAL HYMN:**

**“I Am So Glad When Christmas Comes”** – Blue Hymnal #56

**I am so glad when Christmas comes, the night of Jesus’ birth,  
When Beth’em’s star shone as the sun and angels sang with mirth.**

**The little child of Bethlehem, the King of heav'nly grace,  
Came down from his exalted throne to save our fallen race.**

**He's now returned to heav'n above, God's Son he is alway;  
He ne'er forgets his little ones but hears them when they pray.**

**I too would sing my Savior's praise, my joy, my crown, my Lord;  
For he has made me his own child by Water and the Word.**

**I love this precious Christmas Eve and my dear Savior mild,  
And I shall not forget the truth: He loves me as his child.**

**I am so glad when Christmas comes: Let anthems fill the air!  
He opens wide for every child His paradise so fair.**

*("I Am So Glad When Christmas Comes", text copyright 1982 Concordia Publishing House, used with permission, Lutheran Service Book Hymn License #100014518.)*

**CHRISTMAS CAROL SING, Part 1:**

**"Gentle Mary Laid Her Child" – Blue Hymnal #57**

**Gentle Mary laid her child Lowly in a manger;  
There he lay, the Undefined, To the world a stranger.  
Such a babe in such a place, Can he be the Savior?  
Ask the saved of all the race Who have found his favor.**

**Angels sang about his birth, Wise Men sought and found him;  
Heaven's star shone brightly forth Glory all around him.  
Shepherds saw the wondrous sight, Heard the angels singing;  
All the plains were lit that night, All the hills were ringing.**

**Gentle Mary laid her child Lowly in a manger;  
He is still the Undefined But no more a stranger.  
Son of God of humble birth, Beautiful the story;  
Praise his name in all the earth; Hail the King of glory!**

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**"From Heaven Above to Earth I Come" – Blue Hymnal #37  
From heav'n above to earth I come To bring good news to ev'ryone!**

Glad tidings of great joy I bring To all the world and gladly sing:

To you this night is born a child Of Mary, chosen virgin mild;  
This new-born child of lowly birth Shall be the joy of all the earth.

This is the Christ, God's Son most high, Who hears your sad and bitter cry;  
He will himself your Savior be And from all sin will set you free.

O dearest Jesus, holy child, Prepare a bed, soft, undefiled,  
A holy shrine, within my heart, That you and I need never part.

*("From Heaven Above to Earth I Come", text copyright 1978 Lutheran Book of Worship, setting copyright 1982 Concordia Publishing House, used with permission Lutheran Service Book Hymn License #100014518)*

### "While By My Sheep"



1. While by my sheep I watched at night, Glad ti - dings  
2. There shall be born, so he did say, In Beth - le -  
3. There shall he lie in man - ger mean, Who shall re -  
4. Lord, ev - er - more to me be nigh, Then shall my



brought an an - gel bright:  
hem a child to - day: How great my joy, great my  
deem the world from sin: heart be filled with joy!



joy, joy, joy, joy, joy, joy, joy! Praise we the Lord in



### INVOCATION:

L: Our worship begins the way our lives in Christ begin in baptism: In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

### INVITATION AND OPENING SENTENCES:

L: When the eternal God decided to enter human history in the person of His Son, He revealed that His plans turn the world's ways upside down. The Son of royal David, the One who fulfilled the promises to Abraham, the One who welcomes scandal-ridden sinners into His family, the One who remembers common people but forgets their sins, is born as the Son of Mary, laid in a manger, a borrowed feeding trough. Come and adore Him. The Christ Child was born for you!

L: Gracious, generous God:

C: **On this night we celebrate the coming of Jesus Christ, your Son, your Self in human form.**

ALL: **We celebrate the Son of God.**

L: We are transfixed by the story of Jesus. We looked for a warrior;

C: **You sent a baby.**

L: We looked for royalty;

C: **You were born to peasants.**

L: We looked for power;

C: **You showed meekness.**

L: We looked among rulers and politicians;

C: **You were found among cattle and shepherds.**

L: We looked for military victory;  
C: **You gave us resurrection.**

L: We looked for riches;  
C: **You gave us selflessness.**

L: We looked for a king;  
C: **You gave us a servant.**

L: We worship you, Jesus,  
C: **The Servant-King of God's redemption plan.**

L: May we live out our lives as you did:  
C: **Seeking peace, humbling ourselves, embracing the vulnerable,  
letting your glory shine in the lowliest of places.**

**ALL: May we take our places as Christ-followers, our calling to gentleness  
and humility, our opportunities to give our most profound gifts.  
Amen.**

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**RESPONSE: "From Heaven Above to Earth I Come"**

**Look, look, dear friends, look over there!**

**What lies within that manger bare?**

**Who is the lovely little one? The baby Jesus, God's dear Son.**

**My heart for very joy now leaps; My voice no longer silence keeps;  
I too must join the angel throng To sing with joy his cradlesong:**

**"Glory to God in highest heav'n, Who unto us his son has giv'n."  
With angels sing in pious mirth; A glad new year to all the earth!**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY:**

L: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

L: Let us pray.

C: **Convince us and assure us, Lord, that Christmas is real life--an  
accomplished reality that cannot be wrecked, ruined or undone. In**

**whatever circumstances we find ourselves, let us also find the peace and joy of the salvation our Savior brings us. In the name of Jesus, Amen.**

## **GREETING TIME**

**+ NURTURE +**

## **CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**

### **OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: Isaiah 7:10-14**

Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, "Ask the LORD your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights." But Ahaz said, "I will not ask; I will not put the LORD to the test." Then Isaiah said, "Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of humans? Will you try the patience of my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

**L:** The Word of the newborn King.

**C:** **Thanks be to God!**

### **EPISTLE LESSON: I John 4:7-16**

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.

**L:** The Word of the newborn King.

**C:** **Thanks be to God!**

### **HOLY GOSPEL:**

**L:** The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, chapter two.

**C:** **Glory to You, O Lord!**

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

**L:** This is the Gospel of our Lord.

**C:** Praise to You, O Christ!

**CHORAL RESPONSE:** “Adore” – Matthews/Hamby  
2021 Cantata Choir

**MESSAGE:** “Christmas and the Real World” – Pastor Bill Hugo

**HYMN OF THE DAY:** “Love Came Down at Christmas” – Blue Hymnal #46  
**Love came down at Christmas, Love all lovely, Love divine;  
Love was born at Christmas, Star and angels gave the sign.**

**Worship we the Godhead, Love incarnate, Love divine;  
Worship we our Jesus: But wherewith for sacred sign?**

**Love shall be our token, Love be yours and love be mine,  
Love to God and all men, Love for plea and gift and sign**

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## **CONFESSION OF FAITH: Apostles' Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## **GATHERING OF THE OFFERINGS**

**+ EMPOWER +**

## **PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH:**

*(Prayer response – P: Lord, in your mercy, C: Hear our prayer.)*

**P:** Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**C:** **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.**

## **CONFESSION OF OUR SINS:**

**P:** As we prepare to celebrate our Lord's birth, let us also remember the reason this little Baby was born: To do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself on the cross.

**C:** **Lord Jesus, our minutes and hours have been swallowed up in preparation for this night and for the coming day. We have been so caught up in the distractions and circumstances this this year brought that we have pushed aside the wonder of what you have done for all creation. Forgive us when we so easily get entangled in our own plans and forget to pay attention to the true event. Help us to relax and listen, instead of rush and shout. May the songs of the angels, the surprise of the shepherds, and the joy of the Holy Family**

become part of our preparations and our lives. Open our ears, our eyes, our hearts and our spirits to again hear the old, old story, spoken by new voices in new ways. Remind us again of your never-changing love for us. Prepare us to serve you by serving others. This night we offer this prayer of our hearts to you, gracious God. Amen.

## **FORGIVENESS IS ANNOUNCED**

## **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

## **PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND BENEDICTION**

**CLOSING HYMN: “Silent Night” – Blue Hymnal #68**

**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.**

**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!**

**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.**

**CHRISTMAS CAROL SING, Part 2:**

**“Away in a Manger”**

**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.**

**The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,  
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes,  
I love thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,  
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.**

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

**“The First Noel”**

**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.**

**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:**

**“On Christmas Night” – Blue Hymnal #65**

**On Christmas night all Christians sing  
To hear the news the angels bring  
On Christmas night all Christians sing  
To hear the news the angels bring,  
News of great joy, news of great mirth  
News of our merciful King’s birth.**

**When sin departs before thy grace,  
Then life and health come in its place,  
When sin departs before thy grace,  
Then life and health come in its place;  
Angels and men with joy may sing,  
All for to see the newborn King.**

**From out of darkness we have light,  
Which made the angels sing this night,  
From out of darkness we have light,  
Which made the angels sing this night:**

**“Glory to God and peace to all  
Now and forevermore. Amen.”**

*(“On Christmas Night All Christians Sing”, text, tune and setting copyright Stainer & Bell Ltd., used with permission, Lutheran Service Book Hymn License #100014518.)*

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**WORSHIP ASSISTANTS:**

**Lay Minister:** Jim Geslin

**Ushers:** Nelson Team

**Power Point:** Will Hugo

**Acolyte:** Parker Kyseth

**Lector:** Bob Lundholm