

# THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

December 24, 2021 – 11:00 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.*

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**PRELUDE:** “Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel” – arr. John Behnke  
Percussion: Amber Ringgenberg

**RINGING OF THE BELL**

**INVOCATION:**

P: 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.**

**PROCESSION OF LIGHT:**

*Solo:*

*Oh, come, oh, come, Emmanuel, And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here Until the Son of God appear.*

**ALL:**

**REFRAIN: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to you, O Israel!**

*Solo:*

*Oh, come, O Rod of Jesse's stem, From ev'ry foe deliver them  
That trust your mighty pow'r to save; Bring them in vict'ry through the grave.*

**ALL:**

**REFRAIN: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to you, O Israel!**

*Choir:*

*Oh, come, our Dayspring from on high, And cheer us by your drawing nigh;  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, And death's dark shadows put to flight.*

**ALL:**

**REFRAIN: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to you, O Israel!**

**OPENING SENTENCES AND PSALM OF THE DAY – Psalm 96:**

L: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;

C: **Those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.**

L: For to us a child is born,

C: **To us a son is given;**

L: And the government shall be upon His shoulder,

C: **And His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

**Embrace the Christ child, and with songs Bind up the hearts of men.  
To shepherd-healer-king let throngs Sing glorias again. Sing glorias again.**  
*("From Shepherding of Stars", text, tune and setting copyright 1969 Concordia Publishing House, used with permission, Lutheran Service Book Hymn License #100014518.)*

**POSTLUDE:** "Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow" – arr. John Leavitt

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**CANDLELIGHT CHOIR**

Bruce Blase  
Renee Chizek  
Judie Colaianni  
Ben Hugo  
Brenda Hugo  
Will Hugo  
Sydney Naber  
Amber Ringgenberg  
Deb Santillo  
Andrew Wagner

**SOLOS**

Will Hugo  
Brenda Hugo

**PERCUSSION**

Andrew Wagner  
Amber Ringgenberg  
Sydney Naber

+ + +

**WORSHIP ASSISTANTS:**

**Lay Minister:** Louise Roberts  
**Crucifer:** Ben Hugo  
**Candle Bearers:** Renee Chizek & Deb Santillo  
**Ushers:** Blase Team  
**Power Point:** Ben Kretschman

**HYMN: "Come, Your Hearts and Voices Raising" – Blue Hymnal #48**  
**Come, your hearts and voices raising,  
Christ the Lord with gladness praising;  
Loudly sing his love amazing, Worthy folk of Christendom.**

**Christ, from heav'n to us descending  
And in love our race befriending;  
In our need his help extending, Saved us from the wily foe.**

**Jacob's star in all its splendor  
Beams with comfort sweet and tender,  
Forcing Satan to surrender, Breaking all the pow'rs of hell.**

**From the bondage that oppressed us,  
From sin's fetters that possessed us,  
From the grief that sore distressed us, We, the captives, now are free.**

**Oh, the joy beyond expressing  
When by faith we grasp this blessing  
And to you we come confessing, Your great love has set us free.**

**Gracious Child, we pray, oh, hear us,  
From your lowly manger cheer us, Gently lead us and be near us  
Till we join your choir above.**

*("Come, Your Hearts and Voices Raising", setting copyright 1982 Concordia Publishing House, used with permission, Lutheran Service Book Hymn License #100014518.)*

**L:** Sing to the LORD, bless His name; tell of His salvation from day to day.  
**Choir:** *Oh sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth!*  
**ALL:** **Sing to the LORD, bless His name; tell of His salvation from day to day.**

**L:** Declare His glory among the nations, His marvelous works among all the peoples!  
**Choir:** *For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods.*

**ALL:** **For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the LORD made the heavens.**

L: Splendor and majesty are before Him; strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.

*Choir: Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength!*

**ALL: Ascribe to the LORD the glory due His name; bring an offering, and come into His courts!**

L: Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;

*Choir: Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; let the field exult, and everything in it!*

**ALL: Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before the LORD, for He comes,**

L: For He comes to judge the earth.

*Choir: He will judge the world in righteousness, and the peoples in His faithfulness.*

**ALL: Sing to the LORD, bless His name; tell of His salvation from day to day.**

*(Please be seated)*

**CHOIR: "Now Is the Time for Rejoicing" – Jacob B. Weber**

#### **PRAYER OF THE DAY:**

L: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

L: Let us pray.

**C: Lord Jesus, in the midst of all the celebration of your coming this night, in the midst of the parties and presents and gathering and feasting, let us not lose sight of the magnificent truth that you did this, not for the parties or presents or gatherings or feasts; but you did this for us. You did this to bring us your life and your hope. Amen.**

#### **GREETING TIME**

**ALL: "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."**

P: When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another,

**C: "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."**

P: 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.

**C: The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.**

#### **BENEDICTION**

#### **CLOSING HYMN: "From Shepherding of Stars"**

**From shepherding of stars that gaze Toward heav'nly fields of light,  
I come with tidings to amaze You watchers in the night,  
You watchers in the night.**

**Your shepherd King from star lit hall Bends down to weary lands,  
Lies mangered low in cattle stall. Go touch his infant hands,  
Go touch his infant hands.**

**This night your King brings from afar The virgin's lullaby,  
The Wise-Men's faith, a guiding star, And love from God Most High,  
And love from God Most High.**

**He shepherds from the thistled place The flocks by thickets torn;  
His pierced hands heal all your race Sore wounded by the thorn,  
Sore wounded by the thorn.**

L: Lift up your hearts.  
C: **We lift them to the Lord.**

L: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
C: **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

#### **PROPER PREFACE:**

L: It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, whose birth proclaims the fulfillment of Your promises and makes visible Your love for us and all people. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and singing:

**SANCTUS:** “Christmas Sanctus” – Lee Dengler  
Choir

#### **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

#### **PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

*(Please rise)*

#### **LIGHT INTO THE WORLD:**

P: We are sent out into the world equipped with the benediction of the Lord and the good news of the gospel. Now hear that gospel from Luke, chapter two:

#### **THE SENDING OF THE SHEPHERDS:**

P: 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 that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, 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,

#### **+ NURTURE +**

#### **EPISTLE LESSON: Titus 2:11-14**

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

L: The Word of the newborn King.  
C: **Thanks be to God!**

#### **HOLY GOSPEL:**

L: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, chapter one.  
C: **Glory to You, O newborn King!**

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.

L: This is the Gospel of our Lord.  
C: **Praise to You, O Christ!**

**CHORAL RESPONSE:** “A Celtic French Carol” – Bailey/Pillsbury  
Clarinet: Andrew Wagner

**MESSAGE:** “A Beautiful Mess” – Pastor Bill Hugo

**HYMN OF THE DAY: “Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful”** – Blue Hymnal #41  
**Oh, come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant!**  
**Oh, come ye, oh, come ye to Bethlehem;**

**Come and behold him Born the king of angels:**

**REFRAIN:** Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come, let us adore him,  
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Highest, most holy, Light of light eternal,  
Born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;  
Son of the Father Now in flesh appearing! **REFRAIN:**

Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation,  
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God In the highest: **REFRAIN:**

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:**

**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**

**MUSICAL OFFERING:** "On Christmas Night" – John Turner

**+ 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.

P: Wonderful Counselor,

**C:** We confess that too often we have listened to the advice of the dark  
world around us. We have let the gloom of nations and the  
difficulties of our personal lives blind us to the light of Your love.  
Forgive us.

P: Mighty God,

**C:** We confess that we have ascribed too much power to the forces of  
evil in this world of sin. We have failed to recognize You as glorious  
Lord over all. Forgive us.

P: Everlasting Father,

**C:** We confess that in our daily dilemmas we have forgotten the great  
forgiving love which prompted You to become one of us, to die for  
us. We have not always sought to live in Your light. Forgive us.

P: Prince of Peace,

**C:** We confess that we have not recognized the peace which You have  
brought to our discordant lives. We have neither let it pervade our  
hearts and minds nor our homes and communities. Forgive us.

**FORGIVENESS IS ANNOUNCED**

**PREFACE TO HOLY COMMUNION:**

L: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**