

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD – Christmas Eve

December 24, 2020 – 4:30 p.m.
St. Matthew Lutheran Church
4101 Washington Street NE
Columbia Heights, MN 55421

+ CONNECT +

(Please rise and face the processional cross)

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.

INVITATION:

P: 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!

PROCESSIONAL HYMN: "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly"

**Infant holy, infant lowly, For his bed a cattle stall;
Oxen lowing, little knowing Christ the babe is Lord of all.
Swiftly winging, angels singing, Bells are ringing, tidings bringing:
Christ the babe is Lord of all! Christ the babe is Lord of all!**

**Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping Vigil till the morning new
Saw the glory, heard the story, tidings of a Gospel true.
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow, Praises voicing, greet the morrow:
Christ the babe was born for you! Christ the babe was born for you!**

("Infant Holy, Infant Lowly", setting copyright 2006 Concordia Publishing House, used with permission, Lutheran Service Book Hymn License #100014518.)

**CHRISTMAS CAROL SING, Part 1:
"It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"**

**It came upon the midnight clear, That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth To touch their harps of gold;
"Peace on the earth, goodwill to all, From heav'n's all gracious king."
The world in solemn stillness lay To hear the angels sing.**

**All you, beneath your heavy load, By care and guilt bent low,
Who toil along a dreary way With painful steps and slow:
Look up, for golden is the hour, Come swiftly on the wing,
The Prince was born to bring you peace; Of him the angels sing.**

SOLO: "O Holy Night"

*O holy night! The stars are brightly shining,
It is the night of the dear Savior's birth;
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope the weary soul rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn;
Fall on your knees, Oh, hear the angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born!
O night, O holy night, O night divine!*

*Truly He taught us to love one another,
His law is love, and His gospel is peace;
Chains shall He break for the slave is our brother,
And in His name all oppression shall cease.
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we,
Let all within us praise His holy name;
Christ is the Lord, Oh, praise His name forever!
His pow'r and glory evermore proclaim!
His pow'r and glory evermore proclaim!*

"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

**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!"

**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 God-head see! Hail, incarnate deity!
Pleased as man with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel! REFRAIN:**

**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:**

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 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 Lord.

C: Thanks be to God! Glory to the newborn King!

THE LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE:

We light the Christmas candle And sing with peace and joy.

Our hope is now begotten In Christ, the infant boy.

God's love with us is dwelling, All darkness now dispelling.

We celebrate with light, For God makes all things right!

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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 Lord.

C: Thanks be to God! Glory to the newborn King!

HOLY GOSPEL:

L: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, chapter 2.

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! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

CHORAL RESPONSE: “Still, Still, Still” – arr. Joel Raney
Cantata Choir; Ben Hugo, solo

Still, still, still, he sleeps this night so chill.

His mother’s arms the Christ child holding safe and warm with love enfolding.

Still, still, still, he sleeps this night so chill.

Sleep, sleep, sleep, midst oxen and the sheep.

The angels come down to tell his story. Shepherds come round to see his glory

Still, still, still, he sleeps this night so chill.

Still, still, still, to do the father’s will.

To thee, great God, our voice we raise, with worship and wonder, sing thy praise.

Still, still, still to do the Father’s will.

(“Peace” composed and arranged by Joel Raney, copyright 2020 Hope Publishing Company, OneLicense.Net #A-704112)

MESSAGE: “The Christmas that Wrecked Everything” – Pastor Bill Hugo

HYMN OF THE DAY: “A Great and Mighty Wonder”

A great and mighty wonder, a full and holy cure;

The virgin bears the infant with virgin honor pure!

Refrain: Repeat the hymn again:

“To God on high be glory

And peace on earth to men!”

The Word becomes incarnate and yet remains on high,

And cherubim sing anthems to shepherds from the sky. Refrain:

**While thus they sing your monarch, those bright angelic bands,
Rejoice, O vales and mountains, and oceans clap your hands. Refrain:**

**Since all he comes to ransom, by all he be adored,
The infant born in Bethl'em, the Savior and the Lord. Refrain:**

**All idol forms shall perish, and error's arguing,
And Christ shall wield his scepter, Our Lord, our God, our King! 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.

+ 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 that COVID-19 brought us this year 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"

**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:

"What Child is This?"

**What child is this, who, laid to rest, On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
While shepherds watch are keeping?**

**This, this is Christ the king, Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring him laud, The babe, the son of Mary!**

**Why lies he in such mean estate Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here The silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, The cross be borne for me, for you;
Hail, hail the Word made flesh, The babe, the son of Mary!**

**So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; Come, peasant, king, to own him.
The King of kings salvation brings; Let loving hearts enthrone him.
Raise, raise the song on high, The virgin sings her lullaby;
Joy, joy, for Christ is born, The babe, the son of Mary!**

“Now Sing We, Now Rejoice”

**Now sing we, now rejoice, Now raise to heav’n our voice;
He from whom joy streameth Poor in a manger lies;
Not so brightly beameth The sun in yonder skies.
Thou my Savior art! Thou my Savior art!**

**Come from on high to me; I cannot rise to Thee.
Cheer my wearied spirit, O pure and holy Child;
Thro Thy grace and merit, Blest Jesus, Lord most mild,
Draw me unto Thee! Draw me unto Thee!**

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“Angels From the Realms of Glory”

**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.**

**All creation, join in praising God the Father, Spirit, Son,
Ever-more your voices raising To th’eternal Three in One.
Come and worship, come and worship, Worship Christ, the newborn king.**

(“Angels From the Realms of Glory”, setting copyright 1982 Concordia Publishing House, used with permission, Lutheran Service Book Hymn License #100014518.)

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WORSHIP ASSISTANTS:

Lay Minister: Faustina Allen

Soloists: Ben Hugo, Brenda Hugo

Ushers: Neaderhiser Team

Altar Guild: Pat & Duane Rosenberg

Power Point: Ben Kretschman

Acolyte: Aubree Allen

Lector: Bob Lundholm

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THE CELEBRATION CONTINUES!

- **Tonight , December 24, Christmas Candlelight Service 11:00 pm with Holy Communion (in person)**
- **Tomorrow, December 25, Christmas Day Service 10:00 am with Holy Communion (in person and online)**
- **Saturday, December 26, First Sunday after Christmas, 5:30 p.m. with Holy Communion (in person only)**
- **Sunday, December 27, First Sunday after Christmas, 10:00 a.m., with Holy Communion (in person and on line)**