



Welcome to worship at Spirit of Christ!

We are a member congregation of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. We gather here as the living body of Jesus Christ to be nourished and empowered by the Holy Spirit in what we call the “Means of Grace” — God’s gifts of Word and Sacrament. Through these Means of Grace, we receive the promise of the Gospel: that in the Spirit of Christ God forgives us, remakes us, and reigns in us. May the Lord bless your worship today!

Christmas Eve Worship

December 24th, 2023

Welcome

Invocation

P In the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P 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. (*Isa. 9:2*)

C **The Light of God shines on us tonight.**

P You have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor. (*Isa. 9:4b*)

C **The Light of God shines on us tonight.**

P 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. (*Isa. 9:6*)

C **The Light of God shines on us tonight.**

Holy Gospel

Matthew 1:18-25

¹⁸ 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. ¹⁹ 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.

²⁰ 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. ²¹ 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.”

²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³“The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).

²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵ 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.

“O” Antiphons/ O Come, O Come Emmanuel

P O Wisdom, proceeding from the mouth of the Most High, pervading and permeating all creation, mightily ordering all things:

C Come teach us the way of prudence.

Homiletic Comment

2 O come, thou Wisdom from on high,
Who ord’rest all things mightily;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And teach us in her ways to go. *Refrain*

*Ref Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel*

P O Adonai and ruler of the house of Israel who appeared to Moses in the burning bush and gave him the Law on Siani:

C Come with outstretched arm and redeem us.

Homiletic Comment

3 O come, O come, thou Lord of might,
Who to thy tribes on Sinai’s height
In ancient times didst give the Law
In cloud and majesty and awe. *Refrain*

P O Root of Jesse, standing as an ensign before the peoples, before whom all kings are mute, to whom all nations will do homage:

C Come quickly to deliver us.

Homiletic Comment

4 O come, thou Branch of Jesse's tree,
Free them from Satan's tyranny
That trust thy mighty pow'r to save,
And give them vict'ry o'er the grave. *Refrain*

P O Key of David and scepter of the house of Israel, you open and no one can close, you close and no one can open:

C Come and rescue the prisoners who are in darkness and the shadow of death.

Homiletic Comment

5 O come, thou Key of David, come,
And open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery. *Refrain*

P O Dayspring, splendor of light everlasting:

C Come and enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.

Homiletic Comment

6 O come, thou Dayspring from on high,
And cheer us by thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight. *Refrain*

P O King of nations, the ruler they long for, the cornerstone of uniting all people:

C Come and save us all, whom you formed out of clay.

Homiletic Comment

7 O come, Desire of nations, bind
In one the hearts of all mankind;
Bid thou our sad divisions cease,
And be thyself our King of Peace. *Refrain*

P O Emmanuel, our king and our Lord, the anointed for the nations and their Savior:

C Come and save us, O Lord our God.

Homiletic Comment

- 1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear. *Refrain*

Lighting of the Christ Candle

- P** Advent is past, Christmas is come. We light the Christ Candle to remind us that Jesus said,
- C** **“I am the light of the world; whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”**
- P** We also remember that Simeon called the Christ Child “a light to lighten the Gentiles.”
- C** **With this candle burning to symbolize the Lord’s presence, we worship him, who is our newborn King.**
- P** Jesus is born!
- C** Let us rejoice!

Angels We Have Heard on High

LSB 368

- 1 Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o’er the plains,
And the mountains in reply,
Echoing their joyous strains. *Refrain*

ref Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

- 2 Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heav’nly song? *Refrain*
- 3 Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn King. *Refrain*

Service of the Word

Confession of Sins

- P** This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but we love darkness instead of light because our deeds are evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. (*John 3:19-20*)
- C** **Lord, have mercy upon us.**
- P** He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came into that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. (*John 1:10-11*)
- C** **Christ, have mercy upon us.**
- P** “I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.” (*John 12:46*)
- C** **Lord, have mercy upon us.**

We take time in silence to confess our personal and communal sin before God, confident that we will receive forgiveness.

Absolution

- P** Jesus said that he, “did not come to judge the world, but to save it.” We have brought judgement on ourselves with our thoughts, words, and deeds, but God has given us the gifts of forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life, God loved the world by giving his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him will not die, but have eternal life. God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world but to save the world through him. Two thousand years ago, the messengers of God announced peace to human beings on whom God’s favor rests. Tonight, as we celebrate the coming of God in the flesh, it is my joy to announce the same to you: God has made peace with you. In the stead and by the command of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Worship the baby King in peace, confident that you are God’s blessed child.
- C** **Amen! Thanks be to God!**

Stand

Prayer of the Day

P Let us pray. Father of all, on this silent, holy night you have given to all people the gift of infinite worth, your only-begotten Son, Jesus. Grant that he who was heralded by angels and welcomed by shepherds may be born in our hearts by faith, and that we may grow in your grace as we follow him with all humility; through the same Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Sit

What Child Is This

LSB 370

- 1 **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!**

- 2 **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!**

Holy Gospel

Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

L This is the Gospel of our Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

Away in a Manger

LSB 365

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.

Stand

Holy Gospel

Luke 2:8-20

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and 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 among those with whom he is pleased!"

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

L This is the Gospel of our Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

Sit

Angels from the Realms of Glory

LSB 367

1 Angels from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Ye who sang creation's story,
Now proclaim Messiah's birth. *Refrain*

*ref Come and worship, come and worship;
Worship Christ, the newborn King.*

2 **Shepherds in the field abiding,
Watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing,
Yonder shines the Infant Light. Refrain**

4 **Saints before the altar bending,
Watching long in hope and fear,
Suddenly the Lord, descending,
In His temple shall appear. Refrain**

Sit

Homily

Presentation of the Offering / Offertory Prayer

- P** Let us pray. Lord of Christmas,
- C** **We are mindful of the supreme gift that you gave us in the manger at Bethlehem. Humbly we offer our gifts of service and possessions in joyful thanksgiving for the love you have shown us. Accept these gifts for the sake of your son who was born to us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Prayer of the Church

- P** To us a child is born, to us a son is given; let us pray for the people he came to save. Wonderful Counselor, you order all things with your wisdom: help the Church to reveal the mystery of your love and fill her with the Spirit of truth:
- C** **Word made flesh, be born in us again.**
- P** Mighty God, the government is on your shoulders: guide the leaders of the nations and bring in your kingdom of justice and righteousness:
- C** **Word made flesh, be born in us again.**
- P** Everlasting Father, you call us to live together in unity: protect by your mercy all your children, bless our families, and renew our communities:
- C** **Word made flesh, be born in us again.**
- P** Prince of Peace, you bring reconciliation through the cross: by your healing power give to all who suffer your gift of wholeness and peace:
- C** **Word made flesh, be born in us again.**

- P** Let us commend the world, to which Christ came, to the mercy and protection of God.
- C** Amen.

Stand

Creedal Statement

- P** We confess together the first creedal statement of the Christian church:
- C** Jesus is Lord!

Service of the Sacrament

Eucharistic Liturgy

- P** Lord God, Heavenly King, we give you thanks and praise on this holy eve when, in your goodness, you showed your supreme love for us by sending forth your only begotten Son, our Savior, to be born of a virgin, to save us all from sin.
- Before you formed the heavens and the earth, he was your Word. In him you made all things. In him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.
- Yet he did not count equality with God as a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself to take the form of a servant, being born in our own likeness, even as a baby, lying in a manger.
- For all these things, we give you thanks and herald his coming with the song of the angels:
- C** **Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace and goodwill to all people.**
- P** Eternal God, your Son, Jesus Christ, came to us in your name and showed your steadfast love for us. All that he did was by your will. All that he did was in your name. When we saw him, we saw the Father, for he was the image of the invisible God.
- C** **Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**
- P** For love of you, O Lord, and for love of us, he offered himself up to death on a cross, that we might be saved from sin and death. Yet you did not let the powers of darkness prevail over him, but raised him from the dead to sit at your right hand in glory. And now you have given to us who believe in him the promise of resurrection and eternal life.
- C** **Hosanna in the highest!**
- P** On the night before he died, our Lord Jesus took bread and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: "Take and eat;

this is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” After supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: “This is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this in remembrance of me.”

C **On this holy evening, O Lord, we remember your humble birth in a manger. We proclaim your death and resurrection. We await your coming in glory.**

P Send now your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts of bread and wine. As Christ is Emmanuel, God with us, so fill our communion with his eternal presence, that we might know the joy and peace of his coming, have our faith renewed, and be strengthened in our hope for his return.

C **O Word made flesh, be born in us again.**

P Accept our prayers and praises, O Father, through your Son, our Savior, who was born this night, to whom with you and the Holy Spirit, we give all honor and glory from generation to generation.

C **Amen.**

P As our Savior has taught us, we are bold to say:

Lord's Prayer

Distribution

We believe that as we partake of the bread and wine in Holy Communion, Jesus the Messiah is feeding us with his own true body and blood. In eating his body and drinking his blood we receive the promise that our sins are forgiven, and that we will therefore live eternally with God.

We also believe that this eating and drinking is a confession of our faith. If you share our faith, and particularly if you share our understanding of Christ's Real Presence in this meal, you are welcome to receive Christ's body and blood for your benefit. If you do not confess the understanding of the Christian Faith as expressed by the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, you may still come to the altar to receive a blessing. Please fold your hands to indicate that you will not be receiving the sacrament.

Gentle Mary Laid Her Child

LSB 374

1 **Gentle Mary laid her child
Lowly in a manger;
There he lay, the Undeiled,
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.**

- 2 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.
- 3 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!

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

LSB 366

- 1 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.
- 2 Still through the cloven skies they come
With peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heav'nly music floats
O'er all the weary world.
Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on hov'ring wing,
And ever o'er its babel sounds
The blessèd angels sing.
- 3 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.

- 4 For lo, the days have come to pass
By prophets seen of old,
When down into the circling years
Came Christ as was foretold.
His word of peace shall to the earth
God's ancient promise bring,
And all who take this gift will hear
The song the angels sing.

O Little Town of Bethlehem

LSB 361

- 1 O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.
- 2 For Christ is born of Mary,
And, gathered all above
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together
Proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the king
And peace to all the earth!
- 3 How silently, how silently
The wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming;
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him, still
The dear Christ enters in.
- 4 O holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us, we pray;

Cast out our sin, and enter in,
Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Immanuel!

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

LSB 380

1 Hark! The herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!”
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With the_angelic host proclaim,
“Christ is born in Bethlehem!” *Refrain*

*ref 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 the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as Man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel! *Refrain*

3 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 man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth. *Refrain*

Dismissal

Sharing of the Light

At this time, we light our candles to symbolize the sharing of God's light through Christ. Ushers will light the candles of those seated on the center aisle. Please pass the flame by tipping the unlit candle toward the lit candle.

Stand

Silent Night, Holy Night

LSB 363

- 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.

Benediction

- P** Lord, let your servants depart in peace, as you have promised.
Our eyes have seen the salvation you have prepared for all people.
Your Christ is a light to the world and gives glory to your people
Israel.
The light of the world lives in you.
The light of the world shines on you. The light of the world
announces God's favor to you and gives you eternal peace.
- C** **Amen. Glory to God in the highest, and to his Christ.**

Sending

P Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

C Thanks be to God!

We extinguish our candles



SPIRIT of CHRIST
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**Our Mission: To live in love for God and one another reaching out to all people,
proclaiming and sharing the love of Christ.**

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