

Christmas Day, 2020



St. Paul's Lutheran Church

1201 Main Street, Onalaska  
608.783.2552 [stpaulsonalaska.org](http://stpaulsonalaska.org)



## St. Paul's EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

**St Paul's Mission Statement:** "St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church exists to support each other with God's Word and sacraments, share Christ with our community and the world, and serve others in Christian love."

### Welcome to worship at St. Paul's!

**Welcome!** Thank you for joining us for worship today. In our service we gather before our almighty God to receive his gifts and to offer him our worship and praise. We also gather to strengthen ourselves through the study of God's holy and powerful Word.

Today the Christian Church sings its praise to God for the mystery of the Word who became flesh, the incarnate God, Jesus Christ. Our Savior Jesus is both true God and true man, the Son of God and the Son of Mary. Don't be fooled by the lowliness you see on the first Christmas day. This little baby is greater than all the angels, and is, in fact, their creator and the one whose praises they sing. This little baby is the Almighty, Eternal God who has come to defeat our wickedness and give us his holiness. Today we worship and adore him!

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#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

Preacher: Pastor Dan Olson

Musicians: Joleen Stratman, choir members and instrumentalists from St. Paul's

Cover Art: Lori Ehlke

© 2008 Northwestern Publishing House. All rights reserved. Used by permission. Lyrics and music printed in today's service folder and viewed on the screens are used by permission through CCLI #1906774 and OneLicense A-715642. "Angels We Have Heard on High" Trevor Manor. "O, Jesus Christ, Thy Manger Is" Bruce Backer. "Where Shepherds Lately Knelt" Kevin Hildebrand.

**BELLS AND WELCOME**

**OPENING HYMN: CW 55**

*“Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful”*

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.  
Oh, come, let us adore him,  
Oh, come, let us adore him,  
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

God from true God, and Light from Light eternal,  
Born of a virgin, to earth he comes,  
Only begotten Son of God the Father.  
Oh, come, let us adore him,  
Oh, come, let us adore him,  
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation;  
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above.  
Glory to God, all Glory in the highest.  
Oh, come, let us adore him,  
Oh, come, let us adore him,  
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;  
Jesus, to thee be all glory giv'n,  
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing.  
Oh, come, let us adore him,  
Oh, come, let us adore him,  
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

**GREETING**

Pastor: The grace of our Lord ( † ) Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Congregation: And also with you.

## **DIALOGUE OF PRAISE**

P: Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord, let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.

**C: O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. You have set your glory above the heavens.**

P: Give thanks to the Lord of lords, to him who alone does great wonders, who by his understanding made the heavens, who spread out the earth upon the waters, who made the great lights – the sun, to govern the day, the moon and stars to govern the night.

**C: Great is the Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit.**

P: But our iniquities have separated us from our God; our sins have hidden his face from us, so that he will not hear. We look for light, but all is darkness; for brightness, but we walk in deep shadows. We look for deliverance, but it is far away.

**C: For our offenses are many in his sight, and our sins testify against us. Our offenses are ever with us, and we acknowledge our sins.**

P: The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.

**C: From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets, the name of the Lord is to be praised.**

P: “The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord our Righteousness.”

**C: Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.**

P: 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.

**C: Let the name of the Lord be praised forever and ever. Alleluia!**

Angels we have heard on high,  
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
And the mountains in reply,  
Echo back their joyous strains.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo;  
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds, why this jubilee?  
Why your joyous strains prolong?  
Say what may our, tidings be  
Which inspire your heav'nly song?  
Gloria in excelsis Deo;  
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Come to Bethlehem and see  
Him whose birth the angels sing;  
Come, adore on bended knee  
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo;  
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

*Singers only:*  
*See within the manger laid,*  
*Jesus Lord of heav'n and earth!*  
*Mary, Joseph, lend your aid*  
*With us sing our Savior's birth*  
*With us sing:*

*Singers and Congregation:*  
Gloria in excelsis Deo;  
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

*Singers only:*  
*In excelsis Deo.*

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray. Almighty God, grant that the birth of your only Son in the flesh may set us free from our old bondage under the yoke of sin; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: *(spoken)* Amen.

## **FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 52:7-10**

<sup>7</sup> How beautiful on the mountains  
are the feet of those who bring good news,  
who proclaim peace,  
who bring good tidings,  
who proclaim salvation,  
who say to Zion,  
“Your God reigns!”

<sup>8</sup> Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices;  
together they shout for joy.  
When the LORD returns to Zion,  
they will see it with their own eyes.

<sup>9</sup> Burst into songs of joy together,  
you ruins of Jerusalem,  
for the LORD has comforted his people,  
he has redeemed Jerusalem.

<sup>10</sup> The LORD will lay bare his holy arm  
in the sight of all the nations,  
and all the ends of the earth will see  
the salvation of our God.

## **HYMN: CW 62**

## ***“Joy to the World”***

*The First Lesson is often followed by a psalm. The hymn, “Joy to the World,” is based on the words of Psalm 98, which is the psalm appointed for Christmas Day.*

**Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her King;  
Let ev’ry heart prepare him room  
And heav’n and nature sing,  
And heav’n and nature sing,  
And heav’n, and heav’n and nature sing.**

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!  
Let all their songs employ,  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow  
Nor thorns infest the ground;  
He comes to make his blessings flow  
Far as the curse is found,  
Far as the curse is found,  
Far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of his righteousness  
And wonders of his love,  
And wonders of his love,  
And wonders, wonders of his love.

**GOSPEL LESSON: John 1:1-14**

*The Word became flesh and lived among us.*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was with God in the beginning. <sup>3</sup>Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. <sup>4</sup>In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

<sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

<sup>9</sup>The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. <sup>11</sup>He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. <sup>12</sup>Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— <sup>13</sup>children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

<sup>14</sup>The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

*Singers alone:*

*O Jesus Christ, your manger is  
My paradise where my soul is reclining.  
For there, O Lord, we find the Word  
Made flesh for us—your grace is brightly shining.*

*Dear Christian friend, on him depend;  
Be of good cheer and let no sorrow move you.  
For God’s own child in mercy mild  
Joins you to him—how greatly God must love you!*

*Singers and Congregation:*

**The world may hold her wealth and gold;  
But you, my heart, keep Christ as your true treasure.  
To him hold fast until at last  
A crown is yours and honor in full measure.**

**SERMON LESSON: Hebrews 1:1-9**

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, <sup>2</sup> but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. <sup>3</sup> The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. <sup>4</sup> So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.

<sup>5</sup> For to which of the angels did God ever say,

“You are my Son;  
today I have become your Father”?  
Or again,

“I will be his Father,  
and he will be my Son”?

<sup>6</sup> And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says,

“Let all God’s angels worship him.”

<sup>7</sup> In speaking of the angels he says,

“He makes his angels spirits,  
and his servants flames of fire.”

<sup>8</sup> But about the Son he says,

“Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever;  
a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom.  
<sup>9</sup>You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness;  
therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions  
by anointing you with the oil of joy.”

#### **CONFESSION OF FAITH:**

*Excerpts from the Athanasian Creed*

**It is necessary for eternal salvation truly to believe that our Lord Jesus Christ also took on human flesh. Now this is the true Christian faith. We believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, God’s Son, is both God and man. He is God, eternally begotten from the nature of the Father, and he is man, born in time from the nature of his mother, fully God, fully man, with rational soul and human flesh, equal to the Father as to his deity, less than the Father as to his humanity; and though he is both God and man, Christ is not two persons, but one, one, not by changing the deity into flesh, but by taking the humanity into God; one, indeed, not by mixture of the natures, but by unity in one person; for just as the rational soul and flesh are one human being, so God and man are one Christ.**

**This is the true Christian faith. Whoever does not faithfully and firmly believe this cannot be saved.**

#### **GATHER THE THANKOFFERING**

*Thank you for your continued support of our ministry!*

1. Online giving – visit our website, [www.stpaulsonalaska.org](http://www.stpaulsonalaska.org) and click “Give.”
2. Text giving – text the amount you wish to give starting with the dollar sign to [608-371-6891](tel:608-371-6891).
3. If you prefer to mail your offering envelope, please send to St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, P.O Box 128, Onalaska, WI 54650



#### **PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

P: On this holy day, dear Father, we rejoice to hear the good news of great joy that a Savior has been born for us. For fulfilling your prophecies and in the fullness of time sending your Son to be our Savior, we give you our heartfelt thanks and praise.

**C: Unto us a child is born! Unto us a Son is given!**

P: What a great mystery of our faith this is: that God has become fully human for our salvation! Even though he is the all-powerful Lord of all, he is wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger.

**C: Help us always believe that this precious child was born as our substitute to be our Savior.**

P: In the midst of our joy, we grieve for the many people in our world who do not know that Jesus has come to bring them forgiveness and healing. As the shepherds spread abroad the good news of the birth of the Savior born for all the world, may we also make use of the unique opportunities this holiday presents to tell others of what we have seen and heard concerning the child.

**C: Grant that the true peace between God and fallen mankind may comfort all people.**

*Special prayers and intercessions may follow.*

P: Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

*Silent prayer.*

P: As the angels sang out their praise, move us also to sing out our praise to you, today and every day, as the joy of Christmas remains in our hearts.

**C: Glory to God in the highest! Amen.**

#### **LORD'S PRAYER**

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**

**THE HYMN OF RESPONSE: CW 54**

*“Where Shepherds Lately Kneled”*

**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.**

**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.**

*Singers:*

*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.*

*Singers and Congregation:*

**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?**

## **THE CLOSING PRAYER**

P: Almighty God, we thank you for sending the Holy Spirit through your Word to teach us the things Jesus came into the world to do to forgive our sins and give us a new and eternal life. Help us treasure the Christmas message and strengthen us by that message to share the good news of salvation with others and to live our lives according to that message. We ask this for the sake of your Son and our Savior Jesus Christ, who was born to save us all and now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C:** *(spoken)* Amen.

## **BLESSING**

P: The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.  
The Lord look on you with favor and ( † ) give you peace.

**C:** *(spoken)* Amen!

**HYMN: CW 57**

*“Go, Tell it on the Mountain”*

**Go, tell it on the mountain,  
Over the hills, and ev’rywhere;  
Go, tell it on the mountain  
That Jesus Christ is born.**

**While shepherds kept their watching  
O’er silent flocks by night,  
Behold, throughout the heavens  
There shone a holy light.**

**Go, tell it on the mountain,  
Over the hills, and ev’rywhere;  
Go, tell it on the mountain  
That Jesus Christ is born.**

**The shepherds feared and trembled  
When lo, above the earth  
Rang out the angel chorus  
That hailed our Savior’s birth.**

**Go, tell it on the mountain,  
Over the hills, and ev'rywhere;  
Go, tell it on the mountain  
That Jesus Christ is born.**

**Down in a lowly manger  
The humble Christ was born;  
And God sent us salvation  
That blessed Christmas morn.**

**Go, tell it on the mountain,  
Over the hills, and ev'rywhere;  
Go, tell it on the mountain  
That Jesus Christ is born.**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**