

The Gifts of Christmas



St. Paul's Lutheran Church

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December 24, 2020



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.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

Preacher: Pastor Brett Ehlke

Musicians: Tricia Bain (organist), singers and instrumentalists from St. Paul's

Cover Art: Lori Ehlke

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BELLS AND WELCOME

OPENING HYMN: CW 50

“Once in Royal David’s City”

Singer alone on verse one; congregation sings verses 2-3.

Singer only:

*Once in royal David’s city stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby in a manger for his bed;
Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ her little child.*

Singer and Congregation:

**He came down to earth from heaven who is God and Lord of all,
And his shelter was a stable, and his cradle was a stall;
With the poor and mean and lowly lived on earth our Savior holy**

**But our eyes at last shall see him through his own redeeming love,
For that child, so dear and gentle, is our Lord in heav’n above,
And he leads his children on to the place where he is gone**

Pastor: We begin our Christmas Eve worship in the name of our Triune God – Father, (+) Son, and Holy Spirit!

Congregation: *(spoken)* Amen!

P: “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah,

C: Out of you will come for me, one who will be ruler over Israel,

P: Whose origins are from of old,

C: From ancient times.” *(Micah 5:2)*

P: The Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and give birth to a son,

C: And will call him “Immanuel.” *(Isaiah 7:14)*

P: “When the time had fully come,

C: God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law,

P: To redeem those under law,

C: **That we might receive the full rights of sons.”** (*Galatians 4:4-6*)

P: Dear friends, on this Christmas Eve, we remember and celebrate that God kept his promise and sent us a Savior born in Bethlehem. Let us, therefore, approach God with a true heart and confess our sins, asking him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to forgive us.

C: **Lord of life, I confess that I am by nature dead in sin. For faithless worrying and selfish pride, for sins of habit and sins of choice, for the evil I have done and the good I have failed to do, you should cast me away from your presence forever. O Lord, I am sorry for my sins. Forgive me, for Jesus’ sake.**

P: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. In his great mercy, God made us alive in Christ even when we were dead in our sins. Hear the word of Christ through his called servant: I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son (+) and of the Holy Spirit.

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

HYMN: CW 61

“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 th’angelic host proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”**

**Hail the heav’nly 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 us from the earth, born to give us second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true light. Grant that as we have known on earth the wonder of that light, we may also behold him in all glory in the life to come; through your only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

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

SPECIAL MUSIC:

“The Gift” (singers only)

Singers:

*O come, little children, O come, one and all,
O come to the cradle in Bethlehem’s stall.
Come see what has happened this holiest of nights;
Come gaze on the gift from the Father of might.*

*How sweetly He lies in His bed made of straw,
As Mary and Joseph behold Him in awe!
The shepherd’s are kneeling before His poor bed
While caroling angels are heard overhead.*

*O, come, join the shepherds, and on bended knee
Give thanks to the Father, for Jesus our King.
O, lift up your voices and join in the praise
The angels from heav’n to the Father now raise.*

*O come, little children, O come, one and all,
O come to the cradle in Bethlehem’s stall.
Come see what has happened this holiest of nights;
Come gaze on the gift from the Father of might.*

The Gifts of Christmas: Hope

Scripture Lesson: Isaiah 9: 2, 6-7

Because of our sin, we were a people walking in darkness and a hopeless situation. But 700 years before the birth of Jesus, God promised to send a Savior who would come and give us a real and certain hope.

²The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness
a light has dawned.

⁶For 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.
7 Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the LORD Almighty
will accomplish this.

HYMN:

"Joy Has Dawned"

**Joy has dawned upon the world,
Promised from creation—
God's salvation now unfurled,
Hope for ev'ry nation.
Not with fanfares from above,
Not with scenes of glory,
But a humble gift of love—
Jesus born of Mary.**

**Sounds of wonder fill the sky
With the songs of angels
As the mighty Prince of Life
Shelters in a stable.
Hands that set each star in place,
Shaped the earth in darkness,
Cling now to a mother's breast,
Vuln'erable and helpless.**

**Shepherds bow before the Lamb,
Gazing at the glory;
Gifts of men from distant lands
Prophecy the story.
Gold—a King is born today,
Incense—God is with us,
Myrrh—His death will make a way,
And by His blood He'll win us.**

Son of Adam, Son of heaven,
Given as a ransom;
Reconciling God and man,
Christ, our mighty champion!
What a Savior! What a Friend!
What a glorious myst'ry!
Once a babe in Bethlehem,
Now the Lord of hist'ry.

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, our newborn King.

Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

The Gifts of Christmas: Peace

Scripture Lesson: Isaiah 11:1-10

The Lord tells us more about this promised Savior through the prophet Isaiah. Here we see that he would be a descendent of Jesse and he would come and establish peace between God and mankind.

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.
²The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and of might,
the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD—
³and he will delight in the fear of the LORD.
He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes,
or decide by what he hears with his ears;
⁴but with righteousness he will judge the needy,
with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.
He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth;
with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.
⁵Righteousness will be his belt
and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

⁶The wolf will live with the lamb,
the leopard will lie down with the goat,
the calf and the lion and the yearling together;
and a little child will lead them.

⁷The cow will feed with the bear,
their young will lie down together,
and the lion will eat straw like the ox.

⁸The infant will play near the cobra's den,
and the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest.

⁹They will neither harm nor destroy
on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.

¹⁰In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious.

HYMN: CW 52

"On Christmas Night All Christians Sing"

Women and girls:

**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.**

Men and boys:

**Then why should men on earth be sad
Since our Redeemer made us glad?
Then why should men on earth be sad
Since our Redeemer made us glad?
When from our sins he set us free
All for to gain our liberty.**

All:

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

**All out of darkness we have light
Which made the angels sing this night.
Then out of darkness we have light
Which made the angels sing this night:
“Glory to God in highest heav’n
Now and forevermore, Amen.”**

Singers only:

*Now and forevermore,
Now and forevermore.
Amen. Amen. Amen.*

The Gifts of Christmas: Joy

Scripture Lesson: Luke 2:1-20

God’s people waited hundreds, thousands of years for Christ to come. Here the gospel writer Luke records his birth which announces glad tidings of great joy because a Savior has been born for us.

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ²(This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³And everyone went to their own town to register.

⁴So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. ⁵He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

HYMN: CW 68

“Away in a Manger”

Children’s choir:

*Away in a manger, no crib for a bed
The little Lord Jesus lay down his sweet head
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.*

Children and Congregation:

**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 cradle ‘til 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 fit us for heaven, to live with thee there.**

DEVOTION: Luke 2:19

¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

GATHER THE THANKOFFERING

Thank you for your continued support of our ministry!

1. Online giving – visit our website, 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:6083716891).
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

LORD’S PRAYER

G: 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 the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

HYMN: CW 60

“Silent Night! Holy 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.

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht,
Alles schläft; einsam wacht
Nur das traute hochheilige Paar.
Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar,
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh!
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh!

**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.**

CLOSING PRAYER

P: O Lord, who makes us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of your only Son, Jesus Christ; grant that, as we joyfully receive him as our Redeemer, so may we also behold him with sure confidence when he shall come to be our judge; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

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

BLESSING

P: May he who by his incarnation gathered things earthly and heavenly into one, fill us with such joy that comes with the knowledge of our forgiveness and hope of eternal life. And the blessing of God Almighty —the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit— be upon you and remain with you always.

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

CLOSING HYMN: CW 62

“Joy to the World”

Sung by all:

**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.**

Sung by women and girls:

**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.**

Sung by men and boys:

**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.**

Sung by all:

**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.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS