
Christmas Eve Vespers



December 24th, 2021



ST. PAUL LUTHERAN

— MINISTRIES —

CHURCH • SCHOOL • CHILDCARE

WHAT CHILD IS THIS

This Christmas Eve, an angel answers that question. "A savior has been born to you." It is a stunning statement, for two reasons. First, this child looks nothing like what we would expect in a hero-savior. This child is weak, helpless, and mired in poverty. Second, he has come to bring salvation "to you." It is a salvation we all need desperately. It was God's gift to us, given on that first Christmas Eve.

OPENING HYMN

What Child Is This – **CW 344**

P: The Lord Almighty grant us peace in the glad tidings of Christmas.
C: Amen.

P: We rejoice before you
C: As people rejoice at the harvest.

P: For you have shattered the yoke that burdens us,
C: The bar across our shoulders.

P: For to us a child is born;
C: To us a Son is given.

LESSON

Isaiah 9:2-7

The prophet Isaiah foretold a child who would bring the light of God's grace to a world mired in darkness.

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. ³ You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as warriors rejoice when dividing the plunder. ⁴ For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor. ⁵ Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire. ⁶ 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. 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.

P: Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C: Who made heaven and earth.

P: Let us confess our sins in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence for self-examination

P: Almighty God, our heavenly Father,

C: we have sinned against you in our thoughts, in our words, in our deeds, and in all that we have not done. Forgive us in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Deliver and restore us, that we may rest in peace.

P: By the mercy of God we are redeemed by Jesus Christ, and in him we are forgiven. Let us rest in his peace until the rising of the sun when we shall serve him in newness of life.

C: Amen.

PSALM OF THE DAY

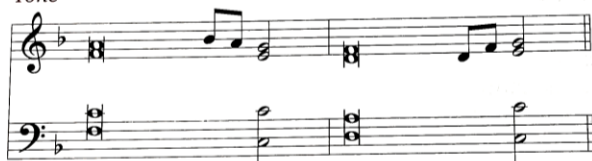
Psalm 96 (p. 96)

Refrain

Let the heav-ens re-joice, let the earth be glad, let all that is
in them sing to the LORD. Let the sing to the LORD.

The musical score is written for a two-part setting (treble and bass clef) in a key with one flat (B-flat). The melody is simple and hymn-like. The lyrics are: "Let the heav-ens re-joice, let the earth be glad, let all that is in them sing to the LORD. Let the sing to the LORD." The score includes repeat signs and first/second endings.

Tone



Sing to the LORD a / new song;
sing to the LORD, / all the earth.
Sing to the LORD, / praise his name;
proclaim his salvation day / after day.
Declare his glory among the / nations,
his marvelous deeds among all / peoples.
Ascribe to the LORD the glory / due his name;
bring an offering and come in-/to his courts. *Refrain*

Let all creation rejoice before the LORD, / for he comes,
he comes to / judge the earth.
He will judge the world in / righteousness
and the peoples in his / faithfulness.

**Glory be to the Father and / to the Son
and to the Holy / Spirit,
as it was in the be-/ginning,
is now, and will be forever. / Amen. *Refrain***

Silence for meditation

P: Lord Jesus, on the night of your birth, the glory of the Lord burst upon our world. Move us to proclaim your glory to all people. Let us tell them of your marvelous deeds so that when you come again to judge them in righteousness, they may be outfitted with the righteousness you have established for them.

C: Amen.

LESSON

Luke 2:1-20

What child is this? The Savior who is born to you.

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.) ³ And everyone went to their own town to register. ⁴ So 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. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ and 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

O Little Town of Bethlehem – **CW 333**

SERMON TEXT

1 John 4:9-14

How do you know, for certain, that God loves you? He sent this child, his only Son, to be the sacrifice for your sins.

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. ¹⁰ This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹ Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. ¹³ This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴ And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.

SERMON

Pastor Matthew Holtz

HYMN

Joy to the World – **CW 353**

OFFERING

PRAYER

P: Hear my prayer, O Lord.

C: Listen to my cry.

P: Keep me as the apple of your eye;

C: Hide me in the shadow of your wings.

P: In righteousness I shall see you.

C: When I awake, your presence will give me joy.

P: Oh gracious and almighty Father, we praise you that you kept your ancient promises by sending your everlasting Son in human flesh.

C: On this holy night, receive our thanks and devotion, our songs and prayers.

P: You sent Jesus as a lowly child to demonstrate your concern for all, the weak and lonely, the troubled and frightened, the timid and helpless. No one is overlooked by your ever-seeking eyes. No one is excluded from your upholding arms. No one is denied the comfort and help of your outstretched hand.

C: Bless us with a childlike faith in the divine assurance that you love and care for us always.

P: You sent Jesus as the Savior of the world to deliver all from the curse of sin, the power of death, and the torment of hell. He took our place. He was born under the law to set us free. He became the innocent lamb of sacrifice. He came to die and rise again in order that we might live eternally. Firmly implant this good news in our hearts, and fill us with an eager desire to spread the Word concerning what we have heard tonight.

C: May all who hear the message, in every nation under heaven, be amazed and believe what is told them about the child.

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 the glory are yours

now and forever. Amen.

Lighting of the candles

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 his 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: Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

Silent Night, Holy Night – **CW 337**

P: Guide us waking, O Lord,

C: And guard us sleeping;

P: That awake we may watch with Christ,

C: And asleep we may rest in peace.

BLESSING

P: The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the Son, + and the Holy Spirit, bless us and keep us.

C: Amen.

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Worship Notes

Presiding Minister: Matthew Holtz

Organist: Nancy Zander

Service Teams:

6:00 p.m.: Team Blob