

Christmas Eve Service
December 24, 2024

Faith Lutheran Church

Georgetown, TX 78628

512-863-7332

flcms.org

(The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod)

PRELUDE

PROCESSIONAL HYMN: “Once in Royal David’s City” (Lutheran Service Book, #376)

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.

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.

For He is our childhood’s pattern,
Day by day like us He grew;
He was little, weak, and helpless,
Tears and smiles like us He knew;
And He feels for all our sadness,
And He shares in all our gladness.

And 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.

Not in that poor, lowly stable
With the oxen standing by
Shall we see Him, but in heaven,
Set at God's right hand on high.
Then like stars His children, crowned,
All in white, His praise will sound!

Text: Public domain

INVOCATION:

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

CALL TO WORSHIP: *Isa. 9:6; Rom. 6:23; John 3:16; Mark 10:45; 1 Tim. 1:15;
Heb. 9:28*

Pastor: Unto us a Child is born; unto us a Son is given!

People: Oh, come, let us worship Him.

Pastor: The wages of sin is death;

People: but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Pastor: For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son

People: that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Pastor: The Son of Man did not come to be served,

People: but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.

Pastor: Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance:

People: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners!

Pastor: Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people;

People: and He will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for Him.

Pastor: Unto us a Child is born; unto us a Son is given!

People: Oh, come, let us worship Him!

GREETING and PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Let us pray:

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, You once blessed this night and caused it to shine by the birth of Your Son, Jesus Christ. We thank You that in times of old You comforted Your people with the promise of a Savior; we praise You that in the fullness of time You sent forth Your Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might be adopted as Your children and heirs; and we rejoice that at the end of time You will send Christ again, to judge the living and the dead and to take with Him to heaven all who confess His holy name. Hallow this moment among us, we pray, and grant that as we are drawn closer to Jesus by hearing again the story of His birth we may with ever-increasing joy share His love with all the world;

People: through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE: "Waiting, Waiting"

The Christmas Narrative

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came about. In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, who was a descendant of King David. The virgin's name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, you who are highly favored; the Lord is with you."

But when Mary saw the angel she was troubled at his words and wondered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore, the Child born to you will be called the Son of God. For with God nothing will be impossible."

Then Mary said, "I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be to me as you have said." And the angel departed from her.

HYMN: "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming" (LSB, #359)

Lo, how a rose e'er blooming
From tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming
As prophets long have sung,
It came, a flow'ret bright,
Amid the cold of winter,
When half-spent was the night.

Isaiah 'twas foretold it,
The rose I have in mind;
With Mary we behold it,
The virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright,
She bore to us a Savior,
When half-spent was the night.

This flow'r, whose fragrance tender
With sweetness fills the air,
Dispels with glorious splendor
The darkness ev'rywhere.
True man, yet very God,
From sin and death He saves us
And lightens ev'ry load.

O Savior, child of Mary,
Who felt our human woe;
O Savior, King of glory,
Who dost our weakness know:
Bring us at length we pray

To the bright courts of heaven,
And to the endless day.

Text: Public domain

After Mary and Joseph were betrothed but before they were married Mary was found to be pregnant by the Holy Spirit. Joseph, her husband, being a righteous man, and not wanting to subject her to public ridicule, decided to divorce her privately. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a Son and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: “Behold, a virgin shall be with Child and will give birth to a Son and will call His name Immanuel (which means, ‘God with us.’)”

Then Joseph, being awakened from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him. He took Mary as his wife, yet he had no union with her until she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus.

HYMN: “O Little Town of Bethlehem” (LSB 361)

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.
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!
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.
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!

Text: Public domain

And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered for taxation. This census first took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria. So everyone went to be registered, each to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into 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 wife, who was expecting a Baby. And it came to pass, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. She brought forth her firstborn Son, wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

HYMN: “Hark the Herald Angels Sing” (Lutheran Service Book, #380)

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

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 Godhead see,
Hail the_incarinate Deity!
Pleased as Man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel! 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 man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth. Refrain

Text: Public domain

Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord appeared before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. But the angel said to them, “Fear not! For behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people: Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord. This will be the sign to you: You will find a 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, goodwill toward men!”

HYMN: “Go Tell It On The Mountain” (LSB 388)

Refrain:

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. Refrain

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

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

Text: Public domain

So it was that when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph and the Babe lying in a manger. Then, when the shepherds had seen Jesus, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds, but Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, as it had been revealed to them.

HYMN: "Angels We Have Heard on High" (Lutheran Service Book, #368)

Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply,
Echoing their joyous strains.

Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome 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.

Text: Public domain

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is He Who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him."

When Herod heard this question he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had gathered together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet:

'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not the least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.

"His origins are from of old, from ancient times.
He will stand and shepherd His flock in the strength of the Lord,
in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God.
And they will live securely,
for His greatness will reach to the ends of the earth.
And He will be their Peace.' "
(Micah 5:2b, 4-5a)

Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men together and had found out from them what time the star which they had followed to Jerusalem had first appeared, sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search diligently for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also." When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over the place where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary, His mother, and fell down and worshipped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

HYMN: "As With Gladness Men of Old" (LSB #397)

As with gladness men of old
Did the guiding star behold;
As with joy they hailed its light,
Leading onward, beaming bright;
So, most gracious Lord, may we
Evermore be led by Thee.

As with joyful steps they sped,
Savior, to Thy lowly bed,
There to bend the knee before
Thee, whom heav'n and earth adore;
So may we with willing feet
Ever seek Thy mercy seat.

As they offered gifts most rare
At Thy cradle, rude and bare,
So may we with holy joy,
Pure and free from sin's alloy,
All our costliest treasures bring,
Christ, to Thee, our heav'nly King.

Holy Jesus, ev'ry day
Keep us in the narrow way;
And when earthly things are past,

Bring our ransomed souls at last
Where they need no star to guide,
Where no clouds Thy glory hide.

In the heav'nly country bright
Need they no created light;
Thou its light, its joy, its crown,
Thou its sun which goes not down;
There forever may we sing
Alleluias to our King.

Text: Public domain

Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, the wise men departed for their own country. Now when they had gone, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him."

When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and there he remained until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son." Then, when Herod had died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared again in a dream to Joseph and said, "Arise, take the Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead."

Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream he turned aside into the region of Galilee. And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene." The Child grew and became strong in spirit. He was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him.

HYMN: “O Come All Ye Faithful” (LSB #379 v1-3)

O come, all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant!
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold Him
Born the king of angels: Refrain

Refrain:

O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord!

Highest, most holy,
Light of Light eternal,
Born of a virgin, a mortal He comes;
Son of the Father
Now in flesh appearing! Refrain

Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God
In the highest: Refrain

Text: Public domain

SERMON: “Holy Celebration”

PRESENTATION OF GIFTS AND OFFERINGS

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Lord Jesus, Son of God, Friend of sinners, and Savior of the world, the gospel of Your birth fills us with wonder. Wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger, You are God’s Christmas gift to us. Preserve in our hearts the joy of this night, and move us to share it gladly and eagerly with others.

Loving Father, the mystery and miracle of Christmas astonish us anew each

year. We tremble with a mixture of fear and delight as we ponder the angel's announcement, "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord." Who are we to be given such a gift? Who are we to be so highly favored? With sweet relief we hear the word, "Fear not!" and we hasten to Bethlehem to find the Child Whose birth inspires angels to sing and turns shepherds into evangelists. Keep fresh within us the marvel of Jesus' coming, and prompt us by faith to hold before the world the Holy One Whom Mary once held in her arms.

Incarnate Word, You have secured our salvation. You have forgiven our sin. You have opened our graves and promised us places with You in Paradise. By Your death and resurrection You have restored to us all that Satan robbed from us. Eternity and all its blessings are ours because You entered history and died in our place. How can we praise You for such goodness?

Into Your cradle to rest with You, Lord Jesus, we place dear ones, families and friends whose needs press on our hearts. Around the world, within our congregation, and in our own families are those for whom this day's joys are dimmed by griefs and pains. According to Your perfect will heal the sick, comfort the bereaved, befriend the lonely, shelter the homeless, encourage the despairing, protect the endangered, and embrace the dying. Grant Your protection to all who serve our nation, and Your wisdom to those who govern all nations.

To You alone, O Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be all glory, honor, worship, and thanksgiving, for You have revealed to us the measure of Your love in Bethlehem's lowly manger, Calvary's bloodied cross, and Easter's emptied tomb. Make it all our delight to lead others where You have led us. In the shadows of a stable we glimpse the outlines of heaven. There Jesus reigns at Your right hand, holy Father, and from there He will come again. In His name, we dare to approach You in prayer, and by His commission are bold to say to the world, "Peace, goodwill to all."

Lord Jesus, Son of God, Friend of sinners, and Savior of the world, in the serenity of this moment the angels' song becomes our song. With Christians around the world, with believers of every age and place, with cherubim and seraphim and the whole company of heaven we repeat the glad refrain,

“Glory to God in the Highest” and we sing to You this peaceful lullaby of praise:

HYMN: “Silent Night, Holy Night” (LSB, #363)

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 Thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

Text: Public domain

VERSICLES: (Isaiah 9:6; Acts 10:43; Titus 3:4a; John 1:16; Acts 4:12)

Pastor: Unto us a Child is born; unto us a Son is given!

People: Whoever has the Son has life.

Pastor: When the goodness and loving kindness of God appeared, He saved us.

People: From His fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.

Pastor: There is salvation in no one else,

People: for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

Pastor: In the holy name of Jesus, then, and as He has taught us, with one voice we pray:

THE LORD'S PRAYER:

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.

BENEDICTION:

Pastor: By the grace of God the Father, the love of God the Son, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit may we who have heard today the angels' song carry it to others until all creation sings for joy at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. And may this same Triune God bless and keep us all in Christmas peace, now and forevermore.

People: Amen.

RECESSIONAL HYMN: "Joy To The World" (LSB, #387)

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 men 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.

Text: Public domain

POSTLUDE

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Go in peace and serve the Lord!

In Christian Service:

All disciples of the Lord Jesus

with

Liturgist: Rev. Dr. Jim Marriott

Proclaimer: Rev. Walt Pohland

Organist: Rev. Dr. Jim Marriott

Children's Message: Rev. Dr. Jim Marriott