

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
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December 25, 2024 † The Nativity of Our Lord

St. John's Lutheran Church is a supporting congregation Calvary Lutheran High School, Jefferson City, 638-0228.

Today the paraments are white to reflect the glory of the Lord Jesus, whose birth we remember this day.

The Lord's Supper is celebrated today. If you have been instructed and confirmed in the Lutheran faith and believe that with the bread and wine Christ gives you His true body and blood for the forgiveness of your sins and belong to the LCMS fellowship, you are invited to join in this blessed Sacrament. Gluten-free wafers are available; speak with Pastor or an elder prior to worship. (If you are desiring to commune for the first time at St. John's as a Lutheran or you are a non-Lutheran, **please see the pastor prior to the service**).

Confession and Absolution

378 Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light

- 1 Break forth, O beauteous heav'nly light,
And usher in the morning.
Ye shepherds, shrink not with affright,
The day of grace is dawning.
This Child, though weak in infancy,
Our confidence and joy shall be,
The pow'r of Satan breaking,
Our peace with God now making.

- 2 O dearest Child, whom I adore,
Whose grace surpasses measure,
My Brother, whom I cherish more
Than earth with all its treasure:
Haste from Thy manger to depart,
O come and dwell within my heart;
With joy will I receive Thee,
A cradle there will give Thee.

- 3 All blessing, thanks, and praise to Thee,
Lord Jesus Christ, be given:
Thou hast my Brother deigned to be,
Thou Lord of earth and heaven.
Help me throughout this day of grace
To praise Thy love and seek Thy face;
And when I stand before Thee
Forever to adore Thee.

Text: Johann Rist, 1607-67; tr. "Lutheran Hymnal (Australia)", 1973

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Stand

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

Invocation

- P** In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

Exhortation

- P** If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

- C** But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

Confession of Sins

- P** Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.
- C** Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

Absolution

- P** Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** Amen.

Stand

Service of the Word

Introit

For to us a child is born, to us a son is | given;*
and the government shall be upon his | shoulder,
and his name shall be called Wonderful | Counselor,*
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, | Prince of Peace.
Oh sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done | marvelous things!*
His right hand and his holy arm have worked salva- | tion for him.
The LORD has made known his sal- | vation;*
he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the | nations.
He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of | Israel.*
All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation | of our God.

Make a joyful noise to the LORD, | all the earth,*
break forth into joyous song and sing | praises!

**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.**

For to us a child is born, to us a son is | given,*
and the government shall be upon his | shoulder,
and his name shall be called Wonderful | Counselor,*
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, | Prince of Peace.

Kyrie

A In peace let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

A For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

A For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

A For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

A Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

C Amen.

Gloria in Excelsis

A Glory to God in the highest, and peace to His people on earth.

C Lord God, heavenly king, almighty God and Father:

We worship You, we give You thanks, we praise You for Your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God:

You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

You are seated at the right hand of the Father; receive our prayer.

For You alone are the Holy One, You alone are the Lord,

You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Salutation and Collect of the Day

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Let us pray.

Almighty God, grant that the birth of Your only-begotten Son in the flesh may set us free from the bondage of sin; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Sit

Old Testament Reading

⁷How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of him who brings good news,
who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness,
who publishes salvation,
who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.”

⁸The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice;
together they sing for joy;
for eye to eye they see
the return of the LORD to Zion.

⁹Break forth together into singing,
you waste places of Jerusalem,
for the LORD has comforted his people;
he has redeemed Jerusalem.

¹⁰The LORD has bared his holy arm
before the eyes of all the nations,
and all the ends of the earth shall see
the salvation of our God.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Epistle

¹Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. ³He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

⁵For to which of the angels did God ever say,

“You are my Son,
today I have begotten you”?

Or again,

“I will be to him a father,
and he shall be to me a son”?

⁶And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says,

“Let all God’s angels worship him.”

⁷Of the angels he says,

“He makes his angels winds,
and his ministers a flame of fire.”

⁸But of the Son he says,

“Your throne, O God, is forever and ever,
the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom.

⁹You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness;
therefore God, your God, has anointed you
with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.”

¹⁰And,

“You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning,
and the heavens are the work of your hands;

¹¹they will perish, but you remain;
they will all wear out like a garment,

¹²like a robe you will roll them up,
like a garment they will be changed.

But you are the same,
and your years will have no end.”

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Stand

Alleluia and Verse

C Alleluia.

Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Holy Gospel

P The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the first chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹²But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵(John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'") ¹⁶And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

Sit

375 Come, Your Hearts and Voices Raising

- 1 Come, your hearts and voices raising,
Christ the Lord with gladness praising;
Loudly sing His love amazing,
Worthy folk of Christendom.
- 2 Christ, from heav'n to us descending
And in love our race befriending;
In our need His help extending,
Saved us from the wily foe.
- 3 Jacob's star in all its splendor
Beams with comfort sweet and tender,
Forcing Satan to surrender,

Breaking all the pow'rs of hell.

4 From the bondage that oppressed us,
From sin's fetters that possessed us,
From the grief that sore distressed us,
We, the captives, now are free.

5 Oh, the joy beyond expressing
When by faith we grasp this blessing,
And to You we come confessing
That Your love has set us free.

6 Gracious Child, we pray, O hear us,
From Your lowly manger cheer us,
Gently lead us and be near us
Till we join Your choir above.

Text: Paul Gerhardt, 1607-76; tr. The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941, alt.

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Sermon

Stand

Nicene Creed

**☩ I believe in one God,
the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth
and of all things visible and invisible.**

**And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from
heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures
and ascended into heaven**

and sits at the right hand of the Father.

**And He will come again with glory to judge both the living
and the dead,
whose kingdom will have no end.**

**And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and
glorified,
who spoke by the prophets.**

**And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
and I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life ✠ of the world to come. Amen.**

Prayer of the Church

P In peace, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P For this congregation, that as the eternal light dawned on our darkness in the incarnation of God's only begotten Son, so His glory would shine on us in the grace and truth of His Word, and we would receive Him with joy and believe in His name, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P For all pastors, that through their proclamation of Christ, God would bring the good news of joy and salvation to all who hear them, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P For all who suffer persecution for the sake of Christ, that though oppression should seek to quench His light in them, they would be sustained in the truth that the darkness cannot overcome Him, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P For families who gather in this holy season, that they may have patience and be slow to judge and quick to forgive, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

- P** For the lonely, that they may be comforted with Christ's presence and we may extend to them the welcome of our homes and the friendship of His grace, let us pray to the Lord:
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For those in poverty or want, that they may be helped; that God would increase our generosity; and that we would present our bodies as living sacrifices, let us pray to the Lord:
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For the sick and those who suffer in our midst, [*especially* _____,] that they may be healed according to the good purposes of our incarnate Savior; and for the grieving, that they may receive comfort in the Babe of Bethlehem, who was born that the dead might live, let us pray to the Lord:
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For those who commune, that they would receive the body and blood of Jesus worthily with faith in His bodily presence; and that they would depart having received grace upon grace from His fullness, let us pray to the Lord:
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** Joining in heaven's eternal praise for the revelation of Your love in Your Word made flesh, we boldly lay all our petitions before You, dear Father, trusting that You will hear us for His sake, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** **Amen.**

Offering

Offertory

- C** **What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits to me?
I will offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving and will call on the name of the Lord.
I will take the cup of salvation and will call on the name of the Lord.
I will pay my vows to the Lord now in the presence of all His people,
in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of you, O Jerusalem.**

Service of the Sacrament

Preface

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Lift up your hearts.

C **We lift them to the Lord.**

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

Proper Preface (Full)

P It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord; for in the mystery of the Word made flesh You have given us a new revelation of Your glory that, seeing You in the person of Your Son, we may know and love those things which are not seen. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

Sanctus

C **Holy, holy, holy Lord God of pow'r and might:**

Heaven and earth are full of Your glory.

Hosanna. Hosanna.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

P Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have had mercy on those whom You created and sent Your only-begotten Son into our flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior. With repentant joy we receive the salvation accomplished for us by the all-availing sacrifice of His body and His blood on the cross.

Gathered in the name and the remembrance of Jesus, we beg You, O Lord, to forgive, renew, and strengthen us with Your Word and Spirit. Grant us faithfully to eat His body and drink His blood as He bids us do in His own testament. Gather us together, we pray, from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage

feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers; deliver and preserve us. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and worship, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

The Words of Our Lord

P Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: “Take, eat; this is My † body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me.”

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: “Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My † blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

Proclamation of Christ

P As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.

C Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

P O Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, in giving us Your body and blood to eat and to drink, You lead us to remember and confess Your holy cross and passion, Your blessed death, Your rest in the tomb, Your resurrection from the dead, Your ascension into heaven, and Your coming for the final judgment. So remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

Lord’s Prayer

C **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.

Pax Domini

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C Amen.

Agnus Dei

C Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; grant us peace.

Sit

Distribution

393 Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

1 Infant holy,
 Infant lowly,
For His bed a cattle stall;
 Oxen lowing,
 Little knowing
Christ the child is Lord of all.
 Swiftly winging,
 Angels singing,
 Bells are ringing,
 Tidings bringing:
Christ the child is Lord of all!
Christ the child is Lord of all!

2 Flocks were sleeping,
 Shepherds keeping
Vigil till the morning new
 Saw the glory,
 Heard the story,
Tidings of a Gospel true.
 Thus rejoicing,
 Free from sorrow,
 Praises voicing,
 Greet the morrow:
Christ the child was born for you!
Christ the child was born for you!

374 Gentle Mary Laid Her Child

- 1 Gentle Mary laid her child
 Lowly in a manger;
 There He lay, the Undeified,
 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 Undeified
 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!

Text: Joseph Simpson Cook, 1859-1933
Text: Public domain

Hymn

In dismissing the communicants, the following is said:

The Dismissal

- P** The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in body and soul to life everlasting. Depart ✠ in peace.
- C** Amen.

Stand

Nunc Dimittis

- C** Lord, now You let Your servant go in peace; Your word has

been fulfilled.

**My own eyes have seen the salvation which You have prepared
in the sight of ev'ry people:**

**A light to reveal You to the nations and the glory of Your people
Israel.**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Post-Communion Collect

A Let us pray.

We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Benediction

P The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

C Amen.

387 Joy to the World

1 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.

2 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.

3 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.

- 4 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: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748

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