

THE KINDEST GIFT

*The Nativity of Our Lord—Christmas Day
9:00am December 25, 2020*



ROCK OF AGES

LUTHERAN CHURCH

Reaching Out in Rim Country with Rock-Solid Hope in Jesus

Welcome!

- May the message you hear today will fill your heart with the peace and joy we have in knowing that Jesus Christ is our Savior from sin.
- **Our mission** is to share the rock-solid hope of Jesus with today's world through timeless truths found in the Holy Scriptures.
- **Children's** activity bags, quiet toys, and a changing table are available from the nursery in entry area.
- **Large print** service folders and **hearing assistance** devices are available.
- **Restrooms** are located at the far ends of the entry area.
- Thank you for respecting your fellow worshippers by practicing **social distancing**. Volunteers are sanitizing the shared touch points between services.
- We are part of a world-wide Christian body and support the gospel ministry of the WELS. We'd love to share more with you. Contact our pastor today. You can also visit wels.net





Christmas Song Service

A service of praise to God for fulfilling his promises with the incarnation of Jesus his Son.

Greeting

Hymn

Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful

Christian Worship 55

♪ 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.

Refrain:

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

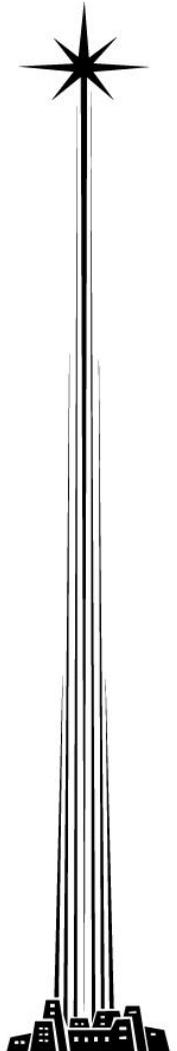
2. God from true God, and Light from Light eternal,
Born of a virgin, to earth he comes,
Only begotten Son of God the Father. [Refrain]

♪ *Interlude*

3. Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation;
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above.
Glory to God, All glory in the highest. [Refrain]

4. 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. [Refrain]

Stand



Dialogue of Praise

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

O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. You have set your glory above the Heavens.

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.

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

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.

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.

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.

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

“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.”

Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.

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.

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

Hymn

Love Has Come



1. Love has come— a light in the dark - ness! Love ex - plodes in the
2. Love is born! Come share in the won - der. Love is God now a -
3. Love has come— He nev - er will leave us! Love is life ev - er -



Beth - le - hem skies. See, all heav - en has come to pro - claim it.
sleep in the hay. See the glow in the eyes of His moth - er.
last - ing and free. Love is Je - sus with - in and a - mong us.



Hear how their song of joy a - ris - es: Love! Love! Born un - to
What is the name her heart is say - ing? Love! Love! Love is the
Love is the peace our hearts are seek - ing. Love! Love! Love is the



you, a Sav - ior! Love! Love! Glo - ry to God on high!
name she whis - pers. Love! Love! Je - sus, Im - man - u - el.
gift of Christ - mas. Love! Love! Praise to You, God on high!

Prayer of the Day

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.

Amen.

Be Seated

First Lesson

Micah 5:2-5a

The promised Messiah would come from both mighty and lowly origins.

But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, from you, will go out the one who will be the ruler for me in Israel. His goings forth are from the beginning, from the days of eternity.

³Therefore the Lord will give them up, until the time when the woman who is in labor bears a child. Then the remaining survivors from his brothers will return to the people of Israel. ⁴He will stand and shepherd with the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. They will dwell securely, for at that time he will be great to the ends of the earth.

⁵This one will be their peace.

Hymn

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Christian Worship 65

♪ **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.**

**2. 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.**

**3. 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.**

**4. 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;
Oh, come to us, Abide with us,
Our Lord Immanuel!**

Second Lesson

Galatians 4:4-7

The Son of God was born to take our place and bring about our redemption.

But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son to be born of a woman, so that he would be born under the law, ⁵in order to redeem those under the law, so that we would be adopted as sons.

⁶And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts to shout, "Abba, Father!" ⁷So you are no longer a slave, but a son. And if you are a son, then you are also an heir of God through Christ.

Verse of the Day

Galatians 4:4,5a

Alleluia. When the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law. Alleluia.

Hymn

What Child Is This
Christian Worship 67
Stanza 1, duet
Stanzas 2-3 all

♪ What child is this who, laid to rest,
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet With anthems sweet
While shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing.
Haste, haste to bring him laud,
The babe, the Son of Mary!

**2. Why lies he in such mean estate
Where oxen now are feeding?
Good Christians, fear; For sinners here
The silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce him through;
he cross he'll bear for me, for you.
Hail, hail the Word made flesh,
The babe, the Son of Mary!**

**3. So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;
Come, peasant, king, to own him.
The King of kings Salvation brings;
Let loving hearts enthrone him.
Raise, raise the song on high;
The virgin sings her lullaby.
Joy, joy, for Christ is born,
The babe, the Son of Mary!**



Gospel

John 1:1-18

St. John points to Jesus as the glory of the Lord, full of grace and truth.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was with God in the beginning. ³Through him everything was made, and without him not one thing was made that has been made. ⁴In him was life,

and the life was the light of mankind. ⁵The light is shining in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

⁶There was a man, sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as an eyewitness to testify about the light so that everyone would believe through him. ⁸He was not the light, but he came to testify about the light.

⁹The real light that shines on everyone was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not recognize him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, yet his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who did receive him, to those who believe in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. ¹³They were born, not of blood, or of the desire of the flesh, or of a husband's will, but born of God.

¹⁴The Word became flesh and dwelled among us. We have seen his glory, the glory he has as the only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

¹⁵John testified about him. He cried out, "This was the one I spoke about when I said, 'The one coming after me outranks me because he existed before me.' "

¹⁶For out of 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-begotten Son, who is close to the Father's side, has made him known.

Be Seated



Hymn

Gentle Mary Laid Her Child

Christian Worship 56

♪ **Gentle Mary laid her child Lowly in a manger;
There he lay, the undefiled, 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 them.
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 undefiled, 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!**

Sermon

Ephesians 2:7-8

THE KINDEST GIFT

He did this so that, in the coming ages, he might demonstrate the surpassing riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. Indeed, it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.

Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker
of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our
Lord, who was conceived by the Holy
Spirit, born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was
crucified, died, and was buried.**



**He descended into hell. The third day he rose
again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the
right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to
judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion
of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and
the life everlasting. Amen.**

Offering

Moved by God's love in Christ, we offer him our first and best gifts, purely out of thanks to him. Our offerings go to support the gospel ministry of our congregation and our church body, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Today the offerings can be placed on the table as you enter or exit.

Prayer of the Church

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.

Unto us a child is born! Unto us a Son is given!

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.

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

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.

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

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

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

Silent prayer.

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.

Glory to God in the highest! Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Lord, we pray in your name and as you taught.

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

Go, Tell It On the Mountain

Christian Worship 57

*♪ Go, tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and everywhere;
Go, tell it on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born.*

**1. While shepherds kept their watching
Over silent flocks by night,
Behold throughout the heavens,
There shone a holy light:
[Chorus]**

**2. The shepherds feared and trembled
When lo! above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus
That hailed our Saviour's birth:
[Chorus]**

**3. Down in a lowly manger Our humble Christ was born
And God sent us salvation, That blessed Christmas morn:
[Chorus]**

Prayer

Blessed Lord, you have given us your Holy Scriptures for our learning. May we so hear them, read, learn, and take them to heart, that being strengthened and comforted by your Holy Word, we may cling to the blessed hope of everlasting life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Blessing

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

Amen.

Hymn

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Christian Worship 61

Brass introduction

♪ **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!"**

**2. 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 th' incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with us to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel!
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"**

**3. 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!"**



Presiding Minister: Tom Barthel
Music: Keyboard, Jeni Strickland; 4 For Christ
Trumpet, Peter Barthel; Ukulele, Lydia Barthel

Acknowledgments

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