

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD—CHRISTMAS DAY

Infinite Gifts in Finite Wrappings

December 25, 2018

AS WE GATHER

Whether your family exchanges Christmas gifts on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day (or at all), Christians gather here to celebrate, receive, and unwrap the perfect Gift, that is, Jesus Christ Himself. The wrapping paper in our homes temporarily covers a gift and is soon thrown away, but Jesus comes to us this day by His Means of Grace to give to us infinite things we can't find anywhere else—the love of His life, the forgiveness of sins, and the salvation of our souls. We rejoice in the gift of the Child wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in the manger, knowing the great gifts the Lord comes to bring for us and for the whole world through the Savior given and born for us.

PRE-SERVICE

"Fantasia of Carols" Joyce Schubkegel

✠ PREPARATION ✠

HYMN #386

"Now Sing We, Now Rejoice"

Now sing we, now rejoice, Now raise to heav'n our voice;
He from whom joy streameth Poor in a manger lies;
Not so brightly beameth The sun in yonder skies.
Thou my Savior art! Thou my Savior art!

Come from on high to me; I cannot rise to Thee.
Cheer my wearied spirit, O pure and holy Child;
Through Thy grace and merit, Blest Jesus, Lord most mild,
Draw me unto Thee! Draw me unto Thee!

Now through His Son doth shine The Father's grace divine.
Death was reigning o'er us Through sin and vanity
Till He opened for us A bright eternity.
May we praise Him there! May we praise Him there!

Oh, where shall joy be found? Where but on heav'nly ground?
Where the angels singing With all His saints unite,
Sweetest praises bringing In heav'nly joy and light.
Oh, that we were there! Oh, that we were there!

(Rise)

INVOCATION & OPENING SENTENCES

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

People: Amen.

Pastor: In the beginning was the Word,

People: and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Pastor: In Him was life,

People: and the life was the light of men.

Pastor: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

People: The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

Pastor: To us a child is born, to us a son is given;

People: and the government shall be upon His shoulder,

Pastor: and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,

People: Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Pastor: And so this is the message we have heard from Him and proclaim to you, that God is light,

People: and in Him is no darkness at all.

Pastor: If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

People: But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION

Pastor: Jesus, the Word made flesh, you dwell among us, but how can we continually abide in your dwelling?

People: For we are 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.

Pastor: For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us.

People: 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.

✠ WORD ✠

Pastor: Almighty God in His mercy has given the gracious gift of His Son to be born into this world, wrapped in our flesh, to live a perfect life we can never attain, and to give His life as a perfect sacrifice that for His sake He forgives you all your sins. Christ was born to live among us, to die for us, and to rise in victory for us. He was given and born as our Savior to forgive. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS (to the tune of "Hark! The Herald..." LSB380)

"Glory be to God on high!" This is now our joyful cry.
Peace to all who live on earth, Grace and favor for new birth.
You we praise and glorify, Worship You, O Lord most high.
Gracious Father, heav'nly King, To Your name alone we sing:
Praise the glory of Your name, Now and evermore the same!
Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, Sole-begotten, holy One,
Born on earth from realms on high, Born true man for us to die.
Lamb of God, You take away This world's sin. Grant peace, we pray.
With the Spirit, You alone Are most high, O God the Son
And the Father, God above. Praise we now Your glorious love.

SALUTATION & PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Let us pray. Almighty God, you make this day to shine with the brightness of the true light.

People: Grant that as we know the mysteries of that light on earth wrapped in infinite love, we may also come to the fullness of His joys in heaven;

Pastor: through the same Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

(Be seated)

OLD TESTAMENT READING *Isaiah 52:7-10* ("All the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.") How 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." The 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. Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem, for the LORD has comforted his people; he has redeemed Jerusalem. The 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.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

GRADUAL

Pastor: To us a child is born, to us a son is given;

People: and the government shall be upon His shoulder.

Pastor: And His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor,

People: Mighty God,

Pastor: Everlasting Father,

People: Prince of Peace.

Pastor: Sing to the Lord a new song,

People: for He has done marvelous things!

EPISTLE *Hebrews 1:1-6* (The Son is the radiance of the glory of God.)

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but 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. He 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, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. For 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"? And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him."

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

CHOIR ANTHEM

"Little Child of Love"

Nancy & Don Besig

(Rise)

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. John the first chapter.

People: Glory to you, O Lord.

HOLY GOSPEL *John 1:1-14* (The Word became flesh.)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And 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.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

(Be seated)

SERMON HYMN #359 "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"

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'ry-where.
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.

SERMON

"A Down to Earth Kind of God"

John 1:1-14

(Rise)

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And 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 sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence 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.

(Be seated)

OFFERING As your offering is collected, **please sign our attendance book** located at the end of the pew. If you are a visitor, please leave your address and phone. After you are finished, please pass the book along to others in your pew, and return the book to the center aisle. You may check the register to see the names of those to greet after the service.

(Rise)

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Pastor: God came down to earth in the Christ Child, that our prayers might be heard through the love of Christ. Therefore, as God's precious children, let us bring our prayers and concerns, trusting that He hears us for the sake of Christ. Father in heaven, with great joy and humble awe we acknowledge your dear Son to be the Word made flesh. We give you thanks and praise that you are a "down to earth" kind of God.

People: We rejoice that because Christ is now our brother, we have become your sons and daughters in our Baptism. Keep us in the true faith and bless us to love one another.

Pastor: Lord God, give us joy in serving you. your Son gladly served you by His humble willingness to honor His earthly parents, growing in wisdom and knowledge, and taking His place in daily life.

People: Teach us to rejoice in our daily lives and callings in our homes, our work, our land and your Church.

Pastor: Gracious Lord, the mystery of the incarnation was first believed and proclaimed by down to earth kinds of people: Mary and Joseph and the shepherds, who treasured Christ in their hearts.

People: Give us confidence to tell the joyful message of our Savior's birth, life, death and resurrection, that your Spirit may work the miracle of faith as He wills.

Pastor: Almighty God, guide all who administer and judge our laws in this land. Preserve us in justice and truth, and make us faithful citizens, honoring those in authority over us.

People: Wherever rulers fail to fulfill their calling to serve justly, and are hostile to your truth and even persecute your people, turn them from their evil and protect your Church.

Pastor: Father, you sent Jesus to serve the poor and forgotten before the wealthy and powerful. Keep us from false confidence in the earthly blessings you bestow, and fill our hearts with generous love toward the destitute and the suffering. Visit and relieve the sick and the injured especially Nancy, Don, Barbara, Larry, Marge, Dolores, Bob, Herb, Cliff, Cindy, LuEva, Arlene, Dick, Nancy, Shirley, Gladys, Russ, John, Arlene, Jack, Shirley, Jonathan, Leonard and Sarah.

People: Heal them according to your mercy and move us to show them love, support, and compassion in their time of need.

Pastor: O Holy Spirit, come to us in rich measure, so that all who commune may do so in true faith to their soul's well-being and strength.

People: Grant each of us to take to heart the glad tidings of great joy that today, in bread and wine, we will receive Christ's body and blood for our forgiveness, life, and salvation.

Pastor: Into your hands, O Lord, we commend ourselves and all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

✠ SACRAMENT ✠

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

THE PEACE OF THE LORD

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: Amen.

AGNUS DEI

(Tune=LSB361, "O Little Town")

Lord Jesus, holy Lamb of God, You take our sins away;

Lord Jesus, holy Lamb of God, You take our sins away.

We who are gathered here now Ask peace for all the earth;

Grant Christmas peace to one and all, And heav'nly joy and mirth.

(Be seated)

DISTRIBUTION Those guests who desire to commune who are members of another LCMS congregation may do so; if you are coming from another church background, please see the pastor or an elder first.

HYMN #368 "Angels We Have Heard On High"

Angels we have heard on high, Sweetly singing o'er the plains,

And the mountains in reply, Echoing their joyous strains.

Gloria in excelsis De - O. Gloria in excelsis De - O.

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?

What the gladsome tidings be Which inspire your heav'nly song?

Gloria in excelsis De - O. Gloria in excelsis De - O.

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 De - O. Gloria in excelsis De - O.

HYMN #370 "What Child Is This"

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!

Why lies He in such mean estate Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here
The silent Word is pleading. Nails, spear shall pierce Him through,
The cross be borne for me, for you;
Hail, hail the Word made flesh, The babe, the son of Mary!
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!

HYMN #358 "From Heaven Above to Earth I Come"

"From heav'n above to earth I come To bear good news to ev'ry home;
Glad tidings of great joy I bring, Where-of I now will say and sing.

"To you this night is born a child Of Mary, chosen virgin mild;
This little child of lowly birth Shall be the joy of all the earth.

"This is the Christ, our God Most High, Who hears your sad and bitter cry;
He will Himself your Savior be From all your sins to set you free.

"He will on you the gifts bestow; Prepared by God for all below,
That in His kingdom, bright and fair, You may with us His glory share.

"These are the signs that you shall mark:
The swaddling clothes and manger dark.
There you will find the infant laid
By whom the heav'ns and earth were made."

How glad we'll be to find it so! Then with the shepherds let us go
To see what God for us has done In sending us His own dear Son.

Come here, my friends, lift up your eyes, And see what in the manger lies.
Who is this child, so young and fair? It is the Christ Child lying there.

Welcome to earth, O noble Guest, Through whom the sinful world is blest!
You came to share my misery That You might share Your joy with me.

Ah, Lord, though You created all, How weak You are, so poor and small,
That You should choose to lay Your head Where lowly cattle lately fed!

Were earth a thousand times as fair And set with gold and jewels rare,
It would be far too poor and small A cradle for the Lord of all.

Instead of soft and silken stuff You have but hay and straw so rough
On which as King, so rich and great, To be enthroned in royal state.

And so it pleases You to see This simple truth revealed to me:
That worldly honor, wealth, and might Are weak and worthless in Your sight.

Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child, Prepare a bed, soft, undefiled,
A quiet chamber set apart For You to dwell within my heart.

My heart for very joy must leap; My lips no more can silence keep.
I, too, must sing with joyful tongue That sweetest ancient cradlesong:

Glory to God in highest heav'n, Who unto us His Son had giv'n!
While angels sing with pious mirth A glad new year to all the earth.

COMMON DISMISSAL

(Rise)

POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Let us pray. We give thanks to you, almighty God, that as you have
given the greatest gift in Christ our Savior, the Word made flesh, you
still come to us in your Word and Sacrament through this salutary
gift. We implore you that of your infinite love, mercy, and
forgiveness, you would strengthen us through the same in faith
toward you, that we would share the gifts of grace and good news 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.

People: Amen.

BENEDICTION

Pastor: Christmas peace and joy through God's infinite love given in Christ,
His only-begotten Son, be yours; and the blessing of God Almighty—
Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit—be and abide with you forever.

People: Amen.

CLOSING HYMN #389 “Let All Together Praise Our God”

Let all together praise our God Before His glorious throne;
Today He opens heav’n again To give us His own Son, To give us His own Son.

He leaves His heav’nly Father’s throne, Is born an infant small,
And in a manger, poor and lone, Lies in a humble stall, Lies in a humble stall.

Within an earth-born form He hides His all creating light;
To serve us all He humbly cloaks The splendor of His might,
The splendor of His might.

He undertakes a great exchange, Puts on our human frame,
And in return gives us His realm, His glory, and His name,
His glory, and His name.

He is a servant, I a lord: How great a mystery!
How strong the tender Christ Child’s love!
No truer friend than He, No truer friend than He.

He is the key and He the door To blessed paradise;
The angel bars the way no more. To God our praises rise,
To God our praise rise.

Your grace in lowliness revealed, Lord Jesus, we adore
And praise to God the Father yield And Spirit evermore;
We praise You evermore.

Preacher	Pastor Doug Bender
Liturgist	Pastor Harold Bender
Lector	Dan Vaclav
Organist	Michelle Prince
Choir Director	Nancy Hoelke
Bulletin Sponsor	Jan Koehn in loving memory of Bob Koehn, husband, father, grandpa & papa on his birthday.