

SAINT PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH



Christmas Carol Service

December 17, 2023

"In Nomine Iesu"

Third Sunday in Advent

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*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.
Of the increase of his government and of peace
there will be no end,
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,
to establish it and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time forth and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. Isaiah 9:6-7*

A blessed Christmas welcome to all who gather in the house of the Lord to sing praises to the newborn King, Jesus Christ, our Savior. **The members of St. Paul's Adult Choir wish you all a very blessed Christmas!** Enjoy the singing and the praises raised this morning. The choir invites you to share Christmas refreshments following worship.

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship ~ Ringing of the Bells

Invocation and Call to Worship *(please stand)*

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C **Amen.**

P Arise, shine, for your light has come!

C **And the glory of the Lord has risen upon you!**

P Let your light shine before others,

C **So that they may see your good works-**

P And give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

C **We proclaim the praises of him,**

P Who called us out of darkness-

C **Into His marvelous light!**

Confession and Absolution

P We draw near to our God to confess our sins. We do this not only because it is commanded of us, but also because He is the source of our life and salvation. We draw near to God in full confidence knowing the source of our forgiveness is found in Jesus; in His life, in His death, and in His resurrection. That in Him we are redeemed.

C **Heavenly Father, I confess to you my selfishness, my greed, and my failure to love others as You have loved me. I have failed to live according to Your will for my life, and in my acts, words, and thoughts, I have sinned against You. Have mercy on me and cleanse me from my sins.**

P He who is mighty has done great things for you. So rejoice, there is forgiveness for you in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, your Lord. In Him you are forgiven. In Him you are made whole. In Him you have life. May the Lord, who has begun this good work in you, bring it to completion in the day of our Lord, (+) Jesus Christ.

C **Amen.**

Collect of the Day

P Lord Jesus Christ, we implore You to hear our prayers and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Hymn

"Prepare the Royal Highway"

LSB #343 vs 1, 4

1 Pre - pare the roy - al high - way; The King of kings is near!
4 His is no earth - ly king - dom; It comes from heav'n a - bove.

Let ev - 'ry hill and val - ley A lev - el road ap - pear!
His rule is peace and free - dom And jus - tice, truth, and love.

Then greet the King of Glo - ry Fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry;
So let your praise be sound - ing For kind - ness so a - bound - ing:

Refrain
Ho - san - na to the Lord, For He ful - fills God's Word!

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(be seated)

Narration

We gather to worship Christ, the newborn King; Jesus, the one foretold by prophets hundreds of years before His birth.

Isaiah once said that God's ways are not our ways; God's thoughts are not our thoughts. Never is that more evident than in the Christmas Story. Rulers, kings, and anointed leaders typically arrive from places of prominence with royal announcements and pedigrees. But in the birth of Christ, nothing follows the normal protocol. The prophet Micah foretold of the tiny village of Bethlehem from which this promised Messiah would come. But until that day arrived, Israel impatiently waited in darkness and despair longing for an end to the seemingly endless night.

St. Paul's Choir
"Waiting and Longing"
 Text and Music: Lloyd Larson

Narration

When Mary was nearing the end of her pregnancy, Caesar Augustus issued a decree for a census to be taken of the entire Roman world. Joseph took Mary to his hometown of Bethlehem, the City of David. Upon arrival, they took up temporary residence in a stable because they had been unable to find a place to stay. While they were there, Mary gave birth to her firstborn Son. She wrapped Him in cloths and placed Him in a manger.

Hymn *"O Little Town of Bethlehem"* LSB #361 vs 1, 2, 3



1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, How still we see thee lie!
 2 For Christ is born of Mar - y, And, gath - ered all a - bove
 3 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly The won - drous gift is giv'n!



A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep The si - lent stars go by;
 While mor-tals sleep, the an - gels keep Their watch of won-d'ring love.
 So God im-parts to hu - man hearts The bless - ings of His heav'n.



Yet in thy dark streets shin - eth The ev - er - last - ing light.
 O morn-ing stars, to - geth - er Pro - claim the ho - ly birth,
 No ear may hear His com - ing; But in this world of sin,



The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee to-night.
 And prais - es sing to God the king And peace to all the earth!
 Where meek souls will re - ceive Him, still The dear Christ en - ters in.

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Hymn *"Away in a Manger"*

LSB #364

1 A - way in a man - ger, no crib for a bed,
 2 The cat - tle are low - ing, the ba - by a - wakes,
 3 Be near me, Lord Je - sus; I ask Thee to stay

The lit - tle Lord Je - sus laid down His sweet head.
 But lit - tle Lord Je - sus, no cry - ing He makes.
 Close by me for - ev - er and love me, I pray.

The stars in the sky looked down where He lay,
 I love Thee, Lord Je - sus! Look down from the sky,
 Bless all the dear chil - dren in Thy ten - der care,

The lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.
 And stay by my cra - dle till morn - ing is night.
 And take us to heav - en to live with Thee there.

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Hymn "Gentle Mary Laid Her Child"

LSB #374

1 Gen - tle Mar - y laid her child Low - ly in a man - ger;
 2 An - gels sang a - bout His birth, Wise Men sought and found Him;
 3 Gen - tle Mar - y laid her child Low - ly in a man - ger;

There He lay, the Un - de - filed, To the world a strang - er.
 Heav - en's star shone bright - ly forth Glo - ry all a - round Him.
 He is still the Un - de - filed But no more a strang - er.

Such a babe in such a place, Can He be the Sav - ior?
 Shep - herds saw the won - drous sight, Heard the an - gels sing - ing;
 Son of God of hum - ble birth, Beau - ti - ful the sto - ry;

Ask the saved of all the race Who have found His fa - vor.
 All the plains were lit that night, All the hills were ring - ing.
 Praise His name in all the earth; Hail the King of glo - ry!

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St. Paul's Choir

Cheryl Killham: Flute

"Jesus, Jesus Rest Your Head"

Appalachian Fold Song; Setting by Ralph C. Schultz

Narration

It was an ordinary night on a Judean hillside just outside of Bethlehem where there were shepherds keeping watch over their flocks. Shepherds were unlikely candidates for earth-shattering news. But this was a night like none other! Suddenly, the blackness shone with extraordinary light as an angel proclaimed to them the news of Christ's birth: "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born! He is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign to you: You will find the Baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." The skies were instantly filled with a great company of the Heavenly host praising God and Saying: "Glory to God in the Highest and on earth peace, good will to men!" The shepherds immediately went with haste to Bethlehem to see this newborn child.

St. Paul's Choir

"Run, Shepherds!"

Traditional Spiritual; Setting by Victor C. Johnson

Hymn *"It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"* LSB #366 vs 1,4

1 It came up-on the mid- night clear, That glo- rious song of old,
4 For lo, the days have come to pass By proph-ets seen of old,
From an- gels bend- ing near the earth To touch their harps of gold:
When down in- to the cir- cing years Came Christ as was fore- told.
"Peace on the earth, good-will to all, From heav'n's all- gra- cious king."
His word of peace shall to the earth God's an- cient prom-ise bring,
The world in sol- emn still- ness lay To hear the an- gels sing.
And all who take this gift will hear The song the an- gels sing.

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Hymn

"Angels We Have Heard on High"

LSB #368



- 1 An - gels we have heard on high, Sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,
- 2 Shep - herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?
- 3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see Him whose birth the an - gels sing;



And the moun - tains in re - ply, Ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.
What the glad - some tid - ings be Which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?
Come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born King.

Refrain



Glo - - - - ri - a



in ex - cel - sis De - o. Glo - - -



- ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

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Narration

Upon arriving at the stable, the shepherds did indeed witness what the angel had told them: a young mother and father, a humble manger stall, and the newborn Holy Child. All who heard the story of what the shepherds had witnessed were amazed! The young maiden Mary, chosen mother of God, treasured all this in her heart. As Bethlehem slept, the King of Ages had come into the very world His tiny hands had once helped create. Earthly parents and shepherds could only marvel at the miracle before them.

St. Paul's Choir

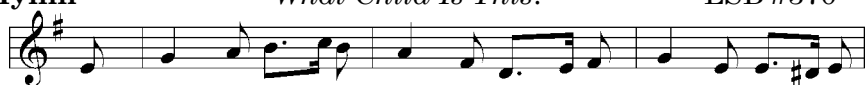
"Cradle Carol"

Text: Christina Rossetti; Music: Victor C. Johnson

Hymn

"What Child Is This?"

LSB #370



1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, On Mar - y's lap is
 2 Why lies He in such mean es - tate Where ox and ass are
 3 So bring Him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; Come, peas - ant, king, to



sleep - ing? Whom an - gels greet with an - thems sweet While
 feed - ing? Good Chris - tian, fear; for sin - ners here The
 own Him. The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; Let



shep - herds watch are keep - ing? This, this is
 si - lent Word is plead - ing. Nails, spear shall
 lov - ing hearts en - throne Him. Raise, raise the



Christ the king, Whom shep - herds guard and an - gels sing;
 pierce Him through, The cross be borne for me, for you;
 song on high, The vir - gin sings her lul - la - by;



Haste, haste to bring Him laud, The babe, the son of Mar - y!
 Hail, hail the Word made flesh, The babe, the son of Mar - y!
 Joy, joy, for Christ is born, The babe, the son of Mar - y!

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(please stand)

The Second Article

C 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 sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

P What does this mean?

C I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born

of the virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity.

This is most certainly true.

Hymn "Joy to the World" LSB #387 vs 1, 2, 4

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re-ceive her
 2 Joy to the earth, the Sav-ior reigns! Let men their songs em-
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace And makes the na-tions
 King; Let ev-'ry heart pre-pare Him
 ploy, While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
 prove The glo-ries of His righ-teous-
 room And heav'n and na-ture sing, And heav'n and na-ture
 plains Re-peat the sound-ing joy, Re-peat the sound-ing
 ness And won-ders of His love, And won-ders of His
 sing, And heav'n, and heav'n and na-ture sing.
 joy, Re-peat, re-peat the sound-ing joy.
 love, And won-ders, won-ders of His love.

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(be seated)

Presentation of the Offering

Prayers

(After each portion of the prayers)

P Lord, in your mercy, **C Hear our prayer.**

P Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

P Heavenly Father, we eagerly await the return of Your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ. Grant that we would not grow weary. Strengthen us through Your Word and Sacraments, that we would ever hold fast Your promise of salvation won for us by Christ. Graciously receive our prayers, deliver and preserve us, for to You alone we give all glory, honor and worship, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

All **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

St. Paul's Choir

"The Lord Bless You and Keep You"

Peter C. Lutkin

Closing Hymn

"Silent Night"

LSB #363

Verse 1 – Solo, Hilary Brech

Verses 2 and 3 – Congregation

2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep-herds quake at the sight; Glo - ries
 3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God, love's pure light Ra - diant

stream from heav-en a - far, Heav'n-ly hosts sing, Al - le - lu - ia!
 beams from Thy ho - ly face With the dawn of re-deem - ing grace,

Christ, the Sav - ior, is born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!
 Je - sus, Lord, at Thy birth, Je - sus, Lord, at Thy birth.

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Please hum an additional verse

Silent Prayer

(be seated)

Postlude

“Soli Deo Gloria”

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