



SAINT PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

December 24, 2025

5:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.

“In Nomine Iesu”

915 - 27th Street, Marion, Iowa 52302
e-mail: office@stpaulsmarioniowa.org
Phone: (319)377-4687
www.mystpauls.org

AS WE GATHER: Our thoughts on Christmas Eve most often turn to the message of the Gospel shared through the singing of carols. The service for this evening is an adaptation of a Service of Lessons and Carols, made famous in Oxford, England many years ago. Both the readings and the hymns take us on a journey through the Nativity narrative, getting our hearts and minds ready to welcome our long-expected Savior.

*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 Emmanuel!*
(O Little Town of Bethlehem v. 4)

We are so happy to have you join us for worship this evening. We hope that this service of carols brings joy to your heart and fills you with the love of the Lord. We also hope that you will worship with us again soon.

Please let us know you worshipped with us tonight by filling out the registration card found in your pew rack. All are welcome to join us again!

Prelude

The Bell Calls Us to Worship

Invocation (please stand)

P In the name of the Father and of the (+) Son
and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen

Lighting of the Christ Candle

P Jesus Christ is the light of the world!

C The light no darkness can overcome!

P The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.

**C The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness
has not overcome it.**

P Those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has a light shined.

**C We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and
only Son who came from the Father.**

P For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given.

C In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

P Jesus spoke saying, “I am the light of the world;

**C He who follows me will not walk in darkness,
but will have the light of life.” (John 8:12)**

P Tonight we light the Christ candle.

Saint John wrote: “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.” (John 1:1-5)

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, with joy we enter into the celebration of
Your Son’s incarnation for us and our salvation. Open our
minds to understand, our hearts to believe, and our

mouths to proclaim the glory of Him who took on our human flesh and blood in order to suffer and die in our place. Prepare our hearts to be fitting mangers to cradle Your Son that he may dwell in us and we in Him today and throughout all eternity; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

(be seated)

The Story of Christmas

Luke 1:26-38

²⁶ And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, ²⁷ To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. ²⁹ And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. ³⁰ And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. ³¹ And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. ³² He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: ³³ And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

³⁴ Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

³⁵ And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. ³⁶ And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. ³⁷ For with God nothing shall be impossible. ³⁸ And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

Luke 1:5-25

⁵ There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. ⁶ And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. ⁷ And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years.

⁸ And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, ⁹ According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. ¹⁰ And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense. ¹¹ And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. ¹² And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. ¹³ But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. ¹⁴ And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. ¹⁵ For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. ¹⁶ And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

¹⁸ And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.

¹⁹ And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings. ²⁰ And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season. ²¹ And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple.

²² And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless. ²³ And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.

²⁴ And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying, ²⁵ Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.

Hymn *“O Come, All Ye Faithful”* LSB #379

Matthew 1:19-25

¹⁹ Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. ²⁰ But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

²¹ And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins. ²² Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

²³ Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

²⁴ Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: ²⁵ And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus.

Hymn *“O Little Town of Bethlehem”* LSB #361

Luke 2:1-7

¹And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. ²(And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) ³And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. ⁴And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) ⁵To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. ⁶And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. ⁷And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

Hymn

“What Child Is This?”

LSB #370

Luke 2:8-15

⁸ And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

¹⁵ When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.”

Luke 2:16-20

¹⁶ And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷ And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰ And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Fear not, O virgin mild,
Dear Mary, favored maid,
For you will bear the holy Child
For whom Eve prayed.
Your Child shall conquer death:
The Life, by all confessed.
Rejoice, O Mary, child of faith
Forever blessed.

Fear not, King David's son:
O Joseph, just and true.
The nurture of the Promised One
Belongs to you.
Take Mary as your wife;
Your righteousness remains.
This Child shall be the Lord of life
And bear all sins.

Fear not, you faithful priest—
Good Zechariah, hear:
Your son proclaims, “The Lamb's high feast
Has now come near.”
The hearts of men shall sway.
The prophet has foretold
He will prepare Messiah's way
Through preaching bold.

Fear not, O shepherds brave.
Rejoice to hear this Word;
For born to you—born all to save—
 Is Christ the Lord.
Like you, He guards His sheep.
 He claims them as His own.
Go, seek Him where the cattle sleep:
 His manger throne.

Δ Fear not, O saints. Rejoice!
 The Savior now is here.
Lift up your head and raise your voice
 For all to hear
 The triumph song begun,
 As saints and angel host
Sing, “Glory to the Father, Son
 And Holy Ghost.”

Text: Alan Kornacki, Jr., b.1974
Tune: YIGDAL (LSB 798)

Message

Apostles' Creed (*please stand*)

All 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)

Presentation of the Offering and Hymn

Hymn

“Joy to the World”

LSB #387

Prayers

P O God, You make us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Grant that as we joyfully receive Him as our Redeemer, we may with sure confidence behold Him when He comes to be our Judge; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

The 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 (please stand)

P The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you.
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and (+) give you peace.

C **Amen.**

Lighting of the Candles

Ushers will light their candles from the Christ Candle and proceed into the congregation. They will light the candle of the people sitting by the aisle. They in turn will light those next to them, tipping the unlit candle towards the lit one.

Closing Hymn

“Silent Night, Holy Night”

LSB #363

Silent Prayer

(be seated)

Postlude

“Soli Deo Gloria”

Acknowledgments Divine Service, Setting One from Lutheran Service Book Unless otherwise indicated, all scripture quotations are from *The Holy Bible, King James Version*, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Created by Lutheran Service Builder © 2006 Concordia Publishing House. Streaming license through CCLI, Stream License number: 20193242 Copyright License number: 1259603



“Glory to God in
the *highest*,
And on earth *peace*,
goodwill toward
men!”

Luke 2:14