

The Nativity of Our Lord

A Christmas Morning Service



*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.*

December 25, 2023

9:30 a.m.

This Morning's Hymns

387 370 368 365 358 352 366

For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. For they could not endure the order that was given, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned." Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I tremble with fear." But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the Living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in Heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the Mediator of a New Covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better Word than the blood of Abel.

Hebrews 12:18–24

The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the Blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the Body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread . . . For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, "This is My Body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of Me." In the same way also He took the cup, after supper, saying, "This Cup is the New Covenant in My Blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.

1 Corinthians 10:16–17; 11:23–29

Who receives this sacrament worthily? Fasting and bodily preparation are certainly fine outward training. But that person is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words: "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins." But anyone who does not believe these words or doubts them is unworthy and unprepared, for the words "for you" require all hearts to believe.

Luther's Small Catechism: The Sacrament of the Altar

Falsely are our churches accused of abolishing the Mass; for the Mass is retained among us and celebrated with the highest reverence. Nearly all the usual ceremonies are also preserved . . . For ceremonies are needed to this end alone: that the unlearned be taught what they need to know of Christ . . . The people are accustomed to partake of the Sacrament together, if any be fit for it, and this also increases the reverence and devotion of public worship. For none are admitted except they be first examined.

Augsburg Confession XXIV: Of the Mass

A Welcome to Our Visitors

Welcome to St. Paul Lutheran Church. We are glad that you have joined us this morning to receive from our gracious God and to offer Him your prayer, praise, and thanksgiving. If this is your first visit to St. Paul, or you have never received the Lord's Supper from Pastor Proctor, we ask that you speak with him or one of the elders before receiving Holy Communion. Children and adults who are not permitted to the Sacrament of the Altar may come forward and cross their arms against their chest to indicate they would like to receive a blessing at the rail.

Worshiping the New Born King

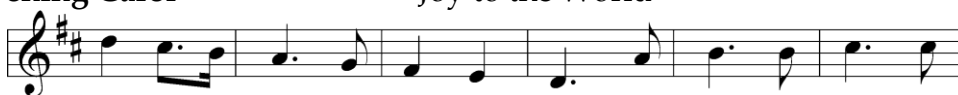
Words of Welcome

- P** There is a significant contrast between our celebration of the birth of the Lord Jesus on Christmas Eve and the celebration of the same event of Christmas day.
- C** The Christmas Eve celebration has an aura of mystery, of quietness, and deep silence.
- P** But all that changes on Christmas Day when we welcome the newborn King. The daylight reveals to us the greatness of God coming to earth in our flesh.
- C** With all creation we rejoice to greet this royal and holy Child.

Opening Carol

Joy to the World

387 sts. 1-2



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 -



King; Let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare Him
poy, While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and



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



sing, And heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
joy, Re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.

Confession and Forgiveness

- P** In the name of the Father and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** Amen.
- P** Jesus is the Light of the world!
- C** The Light no darkness can overcome.

- P** And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.
- C** We have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.
- P** Amid the shadow of the world we live in, let us confess our own sin and welcome the Light of God's forgiveness.
- C** O Lord God, heavenly Father, we confess that we have sinned against You in our thoughts, words, and deeds. The world of darkness has tempted us in this Christmas season and we have sinned against You and against one another. For the sake of the Babe of Bethlehem, Jesus Christ who died for us. Decorate our hearts with repentance and joy that our Christmas celebration may be pleasing to You.
- P** This Child whose birth we celebrate came among us to live perfectly in our stead, and to give His life in payment for our sins. As a called and ordained servant of the Word, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** Amen. Thanks be to Christ!
- P** This morning we continue our celebration of the Birth of our Savior as we look at the light of the Christmas Tree. It was Martin Luther who after walking through the forest in 1510 saw the stars through the branches of a pine tree and related that heavenly light to the light of Christ on Christmas morning. Luther brought a tree into the house to share the joy of his discovery with his family.

A Carol

Joy to the World

387 sts. 3-4

3 No more let sins and sor - rows grow Nor thorns in - fest the
4 He rules the world with truth and grace And makes the na - tions
ground; He comes to make His bless - ings
prove The glo - ries of His righ - teous -
flow Far as the curse is found, Far as the curse is
ness And won - ders of His love, And won - ders of His



A Christmas Psalm

- P** The Lord has said to Me, “You are My Son, today I have begotten You.” I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion.
- C** The earth is the Lord’s and all it’s fullness, the world and those who dwell therein.
- P** Who may stand in His holy place? Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord?
- C** He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol.
- P** He shall receive blessings from the lord, and righteousness from the God of our salvation.
- C** 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.
- P** We pray together:
- C** O Lord God, our heavenly Father, of Your great goodness and mercy you caused Your only begotten Son to become human like us, that we might be saved from sin and everlasting death.
- P** We ask You Lord to enlighten our hearts that we may be comforted, and truly thankful for His gracious birth.
- C** We pray for these Christmas blessings in our Savior’s name; Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Epistle Reading

Titus 3:4-7

⁴But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

A Carol

What Child is This

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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!

The Birth of Jesus

Luke 2: 1-20

And 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. ⁸ And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. ¹⁰ And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, 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, good will toward men. ¹⁵ And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. ¹⁶ And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. ¹⁷ And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. ¹⁸ And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. ¹⁹ But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

A Carol

Angels We Have Heard on High



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;



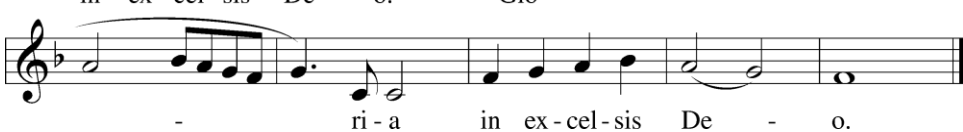
And the moun - tains in re - ply, Ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.
 What the glad - some tid - ings be Which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?
 Come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born King.



Glo - - - - ri - a



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



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

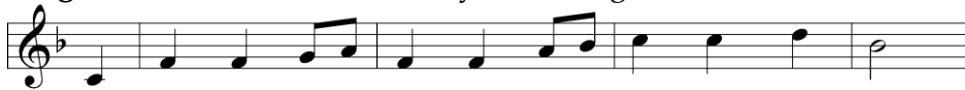
Pastor's Comments

Offering

Offering Carol

Away in a Manger

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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 bright 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 nigh.
And take us to heav - en to live with Thee there.

Our Savior's Holy Supper

- P** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
- C** It is right to give Him thanks and praise.
- P** Blessed are You, gracious Lord, for entering human history in the person of Jesus, revealing to the world Your mercy and love. Thank you for sending Him from heaven to be born of the virgin by the Holy Spirit. Strengthen our faith as we celebrate His birth and receive the blessings of forgiveness, life, and salvation that come to us in His body and blood.
- C** Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

P We pray together the prayer of our newborn Savior:

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.**

The Lord's Word's of Institution

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."

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 The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C **And also with you.**

Sit

Distribution Hymns

From Heaven Above to Earth I Come

358 sts. 1-4

Let the Earth Now Praise the Lord

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The Prayer & Final Blessing

P Let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord have mercy:

P With thankful hearts O Lord, we bring to You our prayers this day. We remember Your many acts of kindness to Your people through all ages. We thank You for the grace you've shown to all people through the birth of Your Son Jesus Christ. May Your Holy Spirit continue to bless us with His presence. Lord in Your mercy,

C Hear our prayer.

P We pray for our world and for all the people who share it with us. Cause the truth of salvation to be known in every part of the earth. Lord in Your mercy,

C Hear our prayer.

P On this Christmas Day, we pray for this congregation. Bless it's leaders and all of the people with a full measure of true faith and joy. Give us the courage to echo the songs of the angels in our communities and be shining lights in our time and place. Lord in Your mercy.

C Hear our prayer.

P Into Your hands O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C Amen.

P The Lord bless us and keep us. The Lord make His newborn Son Jesus known to us and give us faith in the forgiveness that He alone can offer. The Lord will always look upon us with His favor, and will give us His eternal peace.



C A-men, a-men, a - men.



1 It came up-on the mid-night clear, That glo - rious song of old,
2 Still through the clo - ven skies they come With peace-ful wings un - furled,
3 All you, be - neath your heav - y load, By care and guilt bent low,
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:
And still their heav'n-ly mu - sic floats O'er all the wea - ry world.
Who toil a - long a drea - ry way With pain - ful steps and slow:
When down in - to the cir - cling years Came Christ as was fore - told.



“Peace on the earth, good-will to all, From heav'n's all - gra - cious king.”
A - bove its sad and low-ly plains They bend on hov - 'ring wing,
Look up, for gold - en is the hour, Come swift - ly on the wing,
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 ev - er o'er its ba - bel sounds The bless - ed an - gels sing.
The Prince was born to bring you peace; Of Him the an - gels sing.
And all who take this gift will hear The song the an - gels sing.

To God Alone be all the Glory!

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“To Shine Forth the Light of God’s Love into Our World”