

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH

Missouri Synod

The Nativity of Our Lord – Christmas Eve

December 24, 2023

5:00* & 7:00 pm

*livestreamed on [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#)



AS WE GATHER

“All is calm, all is bright.” Is it really? We sing those words from the hymn “Silent Night, Holy Night” every Christmas Eve. Yet the world in which we live is in so many ways neither calm nor bright. War, violence, shootings, unending anxiety: these are anything but calm and bright.

Yet we sing. Why? Because the calmness and brightness of which we sing on Christmas Eve comes not from politics or laws or humanity’s ability to overcome obstacles; it comes from God. “Glory to God in the highest,” sings the multitude of angels to the shepherds, “and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased” (Luke 2:14).

In Christ, we are given peace beyond human understanding, peace flowing from God to us, peace that comes from God’s self-sacrificing love. So filled with hope, we join the angel chorus and sing of the peace found only in Jesus.

Rev. Eric J. Edwards † Rev. Christopher Beck † Rev. Liwei Sui

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✠ ✠ ✠ PREPARATION ✠ ✠ ✠

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC – *Of the Father’s Love Begotten* (arr. Wilbur Held)

OPENING VERSES

from the books of Isaiah, John and Matthew

- P** The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.
- C** **Those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness, on them has light shined. We have beheld Christ’s glory – glory as of the only Son from the Father.**
- P** The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son and they will call Him Immanuel – which means, “God with us.”
- C** **Immanuel, God is with us. It is in His name that we worship, live, and hope.**

INVOCATION

- P** In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** **Let us go to the city of David and worship and adore Christ the Lord!**

HYMN OF INVOCATION – LSB 380 – Hark! The Herald Angels Sing



1 Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, “Glo - ry to the new - born King;
2 Christ, by high - est heav’n a - dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord,
3 Hail, the heav’n-born Prince of Peace! Hail, the Sun of Righ-teous-ness!



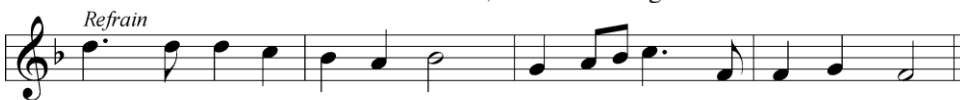
Peace on earth and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled!”
Late in time be - hold Him come, Off - spring of a vir - gin’s womb.
Light and life to all He brings, Ris’n with heal - ing in His wings.



Joy - ful, all ye na - tions, rise, Join the tri - umph of the skies;
Veiled in flesh the God - head see, Hail the in - car - nate De - i - ty!
Mild He lays His glo - ry by, Born that man no more may die,



With the an - gel - ic host pro - claim, “Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!”
Pleased as Man with man to dwell, Je - sus, our Im - man - u - el!
Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them sec - ond birth.



Refrain
Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, “Glo - ry to the new - born King!”

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Everlasting Father, we acknowledge our unworthiness to stand in Your presence as we celebrate the arrival of Your Son to save us. Confessing our sins of thought, word, and deed, we pray:

C **Father, forgive us.**

P The Virgin Mary accepted Your call to be the mother of Jesus. Forgive us for the ways we ignore the call of Your Holy Word and live in disobedience to Your perfect will. We pray:

C **Father, forgive us.**

P Your Son, our Savior, was humbly born and laid in the Bethlehem manger. Forgive our greed, pride, and rejection of Your commands. We pray:

C **Father, forgive us.**

P The shepherds left their flocks to go to Bethlehem and see what the Lord had made known to them. Forgive our self-interest and unwillingness to leave everything to follow You. We pray:

C **Father, forgive us.**

P The Magi followed the star as it led them to Jesus, the true King of all people. Forgive us for not seeking You with all our hearts. We pray:

C **Father, forgive us.**

All sing:



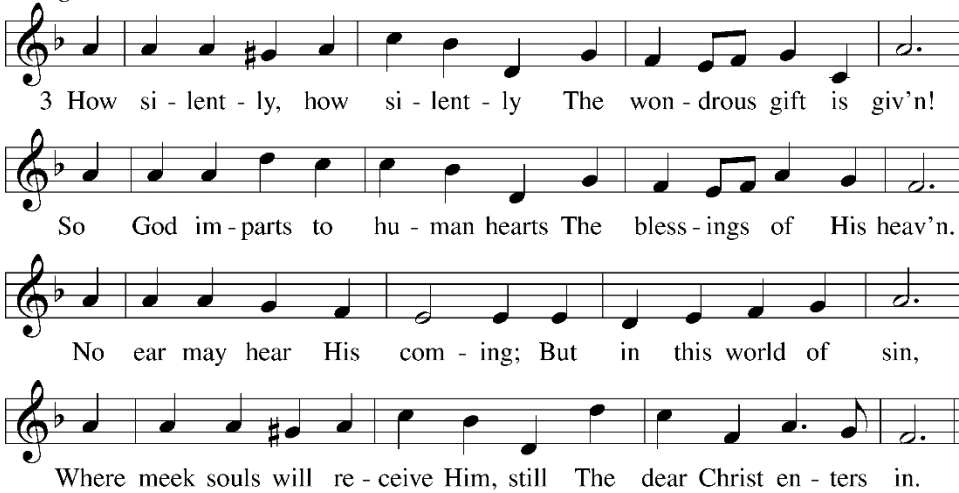
P Everlasting Father, knowing that You hear and answer us for sake of Jesus Christ, we bring the silent prayers of our hearts before Your throne of grace.

(silent reflection)

P Our Wonderful Counselor and Mighty God sends forth His perfect gift into our sinful world. On this most sacred night, we behold the glory of Jesus Christ and receive the redemption He earned for us by His death and resurrection. By faith in His promises, we become children of our Everlasting Father and heirs of His eternal kingdom. As your pastor, and by the command and authority of Jesus, our Prince of Peace, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen!

All sing:



3 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly The won - drous gift is giv'n!
So God im - parts to hu - man hearts The bless - ings of His heav'n.
No ear may hear His com - ing; But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will re - ceive Him, still The dear Christ en - ters in.

✠ ✠ ✠ WORD ✠ ✠ ✠

COLLECT OF THE DAY

P Let us pray. O God, You make this most holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that as we have known the mysteries of that Light on earth we may also come to the fullness of His joys in heaven; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT – Isaiah 9:2-7 – The promise of David’s heir and Lord calls for great rejoicing.

² The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shone.

³ You have multiplied the nation;
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as they are glad when they divide the spoil.

⁴ For the yoke of his burden,
and the staff for his shoulder,
the rod of his oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

⁵ For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult
and every garment rolled in blood
will be burned as fuel for the fire.

⁶ 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.

⁷ 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.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**



GRADUAL HYMN – LSB 368 – 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.



Refrain

Glo - - - - ri - a



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



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

Text and tune: Public domain

EPISTLE – Titus 2:11-14 – Christ sanctifies us and gives us hope.

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ¹² training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, ¹³ waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.



*For the grace of
 God has appeared,
 bringing salvation
 for all people.*

Titus 2:11, ESV

ALLELUIA – LSB 381 – Let Our Gladness Have No End – All sing:

1 Let our glad - ness have no end, al - le - lu - ia!
4 In - to flesh is made the Word, al - le - lu - ia!

For to earth did Christ de - scend, al - le - lu - ia!
He, our ref - uge and our Lord, al - le - lu - ia!

Refrain
On this day God gave us Christ, His Son, to save

us; Christ, His Son, to save us.

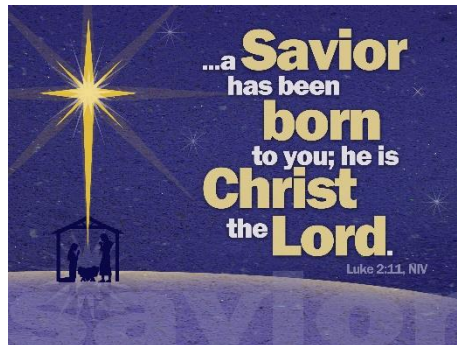
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HOLY GOSPEL – Luke 2:1-20 – The Savior is born!

- P** The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the second chapter.
- C** **Glory to you, O Lord!**

¹ In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴ And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵ to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. ⁶ And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

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.” 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.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ!

HYMN OF THE DAY – LSB 359 – Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming



1 Lo, how a rose e'er bloom - ing From ten - der stem hath
2 I - sa - iah 'twas fore - told it, The rose I have in
3 This flow'r, whose fra - grance ten - der With sweet - ness fills the
4 O Sav - ior, child of Mar - y, Who felt our hu - man



sprung! Of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing As proph - ets long have
mind; With Mar - y we be - hold it, The vir - gin moth - er
air, Dis - pels with glo - rious splen - dor The dark - ness ev - 'ry
woe; O Sav - ior, King of glo - ry, Who dost our weak - ness



sung, It came, a flow - 'ret bright, A - mid the
kind. To show God's love a - right, She bore to
where. True man, yet ver - y God, From sin and
know: Bring us at length we pray To the bright



cold of win - ter, When half - spent was the night.
us a Sav - ior, When half - spent was the night.
death He saves us And light - ens ev - 'ry load.
courts of heav - en, And to the end - less day.

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SERMON – *The Wait Is Nearly Over!* – Titus 2:11-14

CREED

A We confess our faith in the second article of the Apostles' Creed.

C **I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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.**

A 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, even as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.**

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

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

Wonderful Counselor, You govern all things with wisdom, righteousness, and truth. Grant to all mankind the joy of Your presence, that we may see You at work in our midst. Guide all nations to behold Your glory in the face of Jesus. Wherever the good news of great joy is announced, grant that lives be changed forever by the power of Your Holy Spirit. Let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord Jesus, bring joy to our world!**

A Mighty God, You reign over all things and yet, in Christ, You reach down to save us by placing the most brilliant Light and most beautiful diamond in the manger of Bethlehem. Give us the boldness to declare Your mighty deeds and reflect the brightness of Your truth throughout the world. Inspire us to fulfill our earthly callings so that, through our worship and witness, all may know Your saving love. Let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord Jesus, bring joy to our hearts and minds!**

A Everlasting Father, You embrace us and make us Your children through faith in Your only-begotten Son. Bless all those who, in any form of illness of mind and body, need Your tender care. Heal the sick, bind up the brokenhearted, and grant Your perfect peace to all who rest in You. We pray for those with special needs, [*especially* . . .], that they may rejoice in the message of Christ coming into this world for them. Let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord Jesus, bring joy to our bodies and souls!**

A Prince of Peace, You give to us what the world can never give. Drive out all fears and doubts. Deliver us from all enemies, seen and unseen. Grant us solace in Him whose blood has set us free that we may be Your people forever. Open our ears to the message of the angels: “Fear not . . . for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” Let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord Jesus, bring joy to our world!**

A Gracious God, we entrust all of these prayers into Your good and gracious hands, for the sake of Him whose birth we celebrate: Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C **Amen.**

OFFERING – *What Child Is This* (arr. Timothy Albrecht)



✠ ✠ ✠ **CANDLELIGHTING** ✠ ✠ ✠

LITANY OF LIGHT

1 John 1:5, 7; John 8:12; Matthew 5:16

P This is the message we have heard from Him and proclaim to you,

C **that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.**

P If we walk in the light, as He is in the light,

C **we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.**

P Jesus says, “I am the light of the world.

C **Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”**

P “In the same way, let your light shine before others,

C **so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”**

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

The Pastor takes a candle and lights it from the Christ candle, which symbolizes Christ, the Light of the World.

- A** The Light of Christ for the people of Christ.
- C** Thanks be to God! Alleluia!

*The ushers will light their candles from the Pastor's candle,
and then they will light the candle of the worshiper nearest the aisle.
Worshippers light their candles by **dipping the unlit candle**
into the flame of the lit one.*



LSB 363 – Silent Night, Holy Night

After the extended introduction, please join in singing the hymn.



1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm, all is bright Round yon
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



vir - gin moth-er and child. Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and mild,
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,



Sleep in heav - en - ly peace, Sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
Christ, the Sav - ior, is born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!
Je - sus, Lord, at Thy birth, Je - sus, Lord, at Thy birth.

BENEDICTION

- P** May He who is the Light of the World lighten our darkness and give to each one of us the Light of life.
- C** Amen.

The worshipers' candles may be extinguished when the Pastor's candle is extinguished.

SILENT PRAYER

POST-SERVICE MUSIC – In Dulci Jubilo (J. S. Bach)



Thanks to our narthex instrumentalists:
*Jeff Arnold, Asher Edwards, Jarrod Franklin, Jonah Grimes,
Joshua Grimes, Noah Grimes, Sam Poage, and Nate Poage*



Monday-Friday, December 26-29

If you have any **urgent pastoral needs** throughout this next week please contact **Pastor Beck** at 812-332-166 (ext. 3) or pastorbeck@faithbtown.org.

Pastor Edwards will be out of town through New Year's Day.

The office email (office@faithbtown.org) will be monitored this week on a *limited basis only*. Please use this for *non-essential* matters only. Regular office hours will resume on Tuesday, January 3.

Sunday, December 31 (1st Sunday after Christmas)

8:00am + 10:30am* + 5pm

+++ **All three services** are Divine Service 1 with Holy Communion AND Year-end prayers and praises.+++

9:15am Multi-age activity

* Service will also be **livestreamed** on Facebook and YouTube
The digital bulletin and more information – including any updates to this schedule – may be found at faithbtown.org.