

Christmas Day

9:00 AM

December 25, 2023



St. Paul's Lutheran Church

1100 Georgia Ave - Norfolk, Nebraska
Church Office & School = 371-1233

Pastor Paul Hirsch (402)649-9268
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“Good morning & Merry Christmas!!”

We believe that God has given His Word, the Bible, in order to teach mankind the only way to reach heaven. Through faith in Jesus, we believe our sins are forgiven beginning with His humble birth in Bethlehem, His holy life, His humiliating suffering and eventual death on the cross, and ending with His glorious resurrection on Easter! We also believe that through the same Bible which teaches us about Jesus, God has shown us how to live lives that please Him!

We pray that we all grow in the grace of Jesus Christ as we remind ourselves of the love of our God which was shown in that barn in Bethlehem some 2,000 years ago!

God bless our worship this morning!!

Opening Hymn CW #62 "Joy the World "



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let
 2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let
 3 No more let sins and sor - rows grow Nor
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace And

earth re - ceive her King; Let ev - 'ry
 all their songs em - ploy, While fields and
 thorns in - fest the ground; He comes to
 makes the na - tions prove The glo - ries

heart pre - pare him room And heav'n and
 floods, rocks, hills, and plains Re - peat the
 make his bless - ings flow Far as the
 of his right - eous - ness And won - ders

na - ture sing, And heav'n and na - ture sing, And
 sound - ing joy, Re - peat the sound - ing joy, Re -
 curse is found, Far as the curse is found, Far
 of his love, And won - ders of his love, And

heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
 peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
 as, far as the curse is found.
 won - ders, won - ders of his love.

Invocation and Psalm 96

Pastor: We begin our Christmas worship in the name of the Father, who cares for us as His children, and of the Son, who became a child to redeem us, and of the Holy Spirit, who helps us grow stronger in faith as God's children.

Cong: Let us worship our triune God for this Good News of salvation! Amen.

P: To us a Child is born.

C: To us a Son is given. Alleluia! Let all God's children praise the Lord!

P: Sing to the LORD a new song;

C: Sing to the LORD, all the earth.

P: Sing to the LORD, praise his name;

C: proclaim his salvation day after day.

P: Declare his glory among the nations,

C: His marvelous deeds among all peoples.

P: For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise;

C: He is to be feared above all gods.

P: For all the gods of the nations are idols,

C: But the LORD made the heavens.

P: Splendor and majesty are before him;

C: Strength and glory are in his sanctuary.

P: Ascribe to the LORD, O families of nations,

C: Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

P: Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;

C: Bring an offering and come into his courts.

P: Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness;

C: Tremble before him, all the earth.

P: Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;

C: Let the sea resound, and all that is in it;

P: Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them.

C: Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy;

P: For He will judge the world in righteousness

C: And the peoples in his truth.

Hymn #35, vss 1&2 “Of the Father’s Love Begotten”

Of the Father’s love begotten
Ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega,
He the source, the ending he,
Of the things that are, that have been,
And that future years shall see
Evermore and evermore.

Oh, that birth forever blessed
When the virgin, full of grace,
By the Holy Ghost conceiving,
Bore the Savior of our race,
And the babe, the world’s Redeemer,
First revealed his sacred face
Evermore and evermore.

Scripture Lesson Genesis 3:1-15

The Christmas story cannot begin and end only in the Bethlehem manger. It began in the Garden of Eden.

¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”

² The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³ but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”

⁴ “You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. ⁵ “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

⁶ When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

⁸ Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”

¹⁰ He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”

¹¹ And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”

¹² The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?”

The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

¹⁴ So the LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, “Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. ¹⁵ And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”

Hymn #35, vss 3&4 “Of the Father’s Love Begotten”

This is he whom heav’n-taught singers
Sang of old with one accord;
Whom the Scriptures of the prophets
Promised in their faithful word.
Now he shines, the long-expected;
Let creation praise its Lord
Evermore and evermore.

Let the heights of heav’n adore him,
Angel hosts his praises sing,
Pow’rs, dominions bow before him
And extol our God and King.
Let no tongue on earth be silent,
Ev’ry voice in concert ring
Evermore and evermore.

God's Promises to Send a Savior

P: The need for a Savior from sin began in the Garden of Eden after Adam and Eve broke God's one command to not eat from the tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. In spite of that disobedience, God gave the first Gospel promise. Genesis chapter three, verse fifteen: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

ALL: For thousands of years through the Old Testament, God reminded His people of this promise, and details of this plan of salvation would become more and more clear. Details for this plan of salvation were first revealed to Abraham that the Savior would be born from his family. Genesis chapter twelve, verses one through three. *"The LORD had said to Abram, 'Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. ² I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."*

P: The following are just a few of the Old Testament prophecies that pointed ahead to the fact that a Savior from sin would be born. Isaiah chapter seven, verse fourteen: "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel."

Women: Isaiah chapter nine, verse six: "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

Men: Isaiah chapter eleven, verse twelve: "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on

him -- the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD."

Hymn #47 "Behold, a Branch Is Growing"

Behold, a Branch is growing Of loveliest form and grace,
As prophets sang, foreknowing; It springs from Jesse's race
And bears one little flow'r In midst of coldest winter,
At deepest midnight hour.

Isaiah had foretold it In words of promise sure,
And Mary's arms enfold it, A virgin meek and pure.
Through God's eternal will This child to her is given
At midnight calm and still.

This flow'r, so small and tender, With fragrance fills the air;
His brightness ends the darkness That kept the earth in fear.
True God and yet true man, He came to save his people
From earth's dark night of sin.

Scripture Lesson Isaiah 11:1-10

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a
Branch will bear fruit.

² The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—the Spirit of
wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of
might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD—
³ and he will delight in the fear of the LORD.

He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by
what he hears with his ears; ⁴ but with righteousness he will
judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the
poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his
mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.

⁵ Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around
his waist.

⁶ The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with
the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a
little child will lead them.

- ⁷ The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox.
- ⁸ The infant will play near the cobra's den,
and the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest.
- ⁹ They will neither harm nor destroy
on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.
- ¹⁰ In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious.

Hymn #3 "Lift Up Your Heads, You Mighty Gates"

Lift up your heads, you mighty gates!
Behold, the King of glory waits.
The King of kings is drawing near;
The Savior of the world is here.
Life and salvation he will bring;
herefore rejoice and gladly sing.
To God the Father raise
Your joyful songs of praise.

The King is born in poverty,
His chariot is humility,
His kingly crown is holiness,
His scepter, pity in distress.
The end of all our woe he brings;
Therefore the earth is glad and sings.
To Christ the Savior raise
Your grateful hymns of praise.

Redeemer, come! I open wide
My heart to you; here, Lord, abide!
Oh, enter with your saving grace;
Show me your kind and friendly face.
Your Holy Spirit guide us on
Until our glorious goal is won.
Eternal praise and fame
We offer to your name.

Meditation: Psalm 24:7-10

Open the Door!

⁷ Lift up your heads, O you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.

⁸ Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.

⁹ Lift up your heads, O you gates; lift them up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.

¹⁰ Who is he, this King of glory? The LORD Almighty—he is the King of glory.

Hymn #225, vss 3-5 “This Is the day the Lord Has Made”

Hosanna to the anointed King,
To David’s holy Son!
Help us, O Lord; descend and bring
Salvation from the throne.

Blessed is Jesus Christ, who came
With messages of grace,
Who came in God the Father’s name
To save our sinful race.

Hosanna in the highest strains
The Church on earth shall raise;
The highest heav’ns, in which he reigns,
Shall give him nobler praise.

Offering

Prayers

P: Dear heavenly Father, we rejoice to hear the Good News of great joy that a Savior has been born for us. For fulfilling Your prophecies and in the fullness of time sending Your Son to be our Savior, we give You our heartfelt thanks and praise.

C: Unto us a child is born! Unto us a Son is given!

P: What a great mystery of our faith this is: that God has become fully human for our salvation! Even though He is the all-

powerful Lord of all, He is wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger.

C: Help us always believe that this precious child was born as our substitute to be our Savior.

P: In the midst of our joy, we grieve for the many people in our world who do not know that Jesus has come to bring them forgiveness and healing. As the shepherds spread abroad the good news of the birth of the Savior born for all the world, may we also make use of the unique opportunities this holiday presents to tell others of what we have seen and heard concerning the Child.

C: Grant that the true peace between God and fallen mankind may comfort all people.

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

P: Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

Silent personal prayer.

P: As the angels sang out their praise, move us also to sing out our praise to You, today and every day, as the joy of Christmas remains in our hearts.

C: Glory to God in the highest!

P: Father, we bring these prayers before You this Christmas, and always, confident that You hear and answer them. For it was Your only Son who taught us to pray.

**ALL: Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and forever.
Amen.**

We are Messengers for Christ Today

P: As we prepare to leave this Christmas worship service, let us be ready and willing to see the opportunities God places before all of us as we live our normal daily lives, to share this Good News of Jesus' birth with those who don't know why we worship at Christmas!

C: We are like God's angels whenever we sing for him. We are like the shepherds when we tell everyone we know about him. We are like the Bethlehem star when others see our faith and we lead them to hear God's Word. We are like the wise men when we bring our generous gifts for Jesus.

Pastor: What child is this?

Men: This child is Immanuel!

Women: This child is the Prince of Peace!

Men: This child is the King of Kings!

Women: This child is the Son of God!

ALL: THIS CHILD IS BORN TO BE OUR SAVIOR!

The Blessing

May God our loving Father, His perfect Son, and the comfort of the Holy Spirit bless us all with true joy and peace! Amen.

Closing Hymn #68 "Away in a Manger"

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,
And take us to heaven to live with you there.