

Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols

7:00 pm Wednesday, December 24, 2025

The Congregation rises, turns towards the entrance of the nave, and faces the Cross of Christ, the reminder of Christ's promise to come and dwell among His people as they are gathered in His name.

Invocation

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Processional Hymn Once in Royal David's City



[Solo] 1. Once in roy - al Da - vid's ci - ty Stood a

[Women] 2. He came down to earth from hea - ven Who is

[Men] 3. And through all His won - drous child-hood He would



low - ly cat - tle shed, Where a mo - ther laid her

God and Lord of all, And His shel - ter was a

ho - nor and o - bey, Love and watch the low - ly



ba - by In a man - ger for His bed. Ma - ry

sta - ble, And his cra - dle was a stall; With the

maid - en In whose gen - tle arms He lay. Christ - ian



was that mo - ther mild, Je - sus Christ her lit - tle Child.

poor and mean and •lowly• Lived our Sa - vior pure and •holy•

child - ren, washed in Him, By His life stand pure from sin.

[All] 4. Our High Priest who knew our childhood,

Day by day like us he grew,

He was little, weak and helpless,

Tears and smiles like us he knew;

And he feeleth for our sadness,

And he shareth in our gladness.

[All] 5. But our eyes at last shall see him

Through his own redeeming love,

For that child so dear and gentle

Is our Lord in heav'n above,

As he leads his children on

To the place where he is gone.

[All] 6. Not in that poor lowly stable

With the oxen standing by,

But then at the Resurrection,

We shall see our Lord most high,

When like stars his children, crowned,

All in white, his praise shall sound!

Bidding Prayer, Lord's Prayer

*Beloved in Christ, be it this Christmas Eve...
These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the Throne of Heaven, in the words
which Christ Himself hath taught us:*

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 Almighty God bless us with His grace: Christ give us the joys of everlasting life: and unto the fellowship of the citizens above may the King of Angels bring us all..... Amen

[Be Seated]

Carol Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding



[All] 1. Hark! A thrill-ing voice is sound-ing, "Christ is near," we
[Men] 2. Star-tled at the sol- emn warn-ing Let the earth-bound
[Women] 3. See, the Lamb, so long ex- pect- ed, Comes with par- don
[All] 4. Of His grace we may be cer-tain, For this eve' He
[All • Rise] 5. Hon- or, glo- ry, might do- min- ion To the Fa- ther



hear it say! "Cast a- way the works of dark-ness,
soul a- rise; Christ, its sun, all sloth dis- pel- ling,
down from heav'n. Let us haste, with tears of sor- row,
came to earth. Fore-taste of His fi- nal bless- ing,
and the Son With the ev- er- liv- ing Spir- it



all you child- ren of the day."
Shines up- on the morn- ing skies.
One and all, to be for- giv'n;
Giv- ing all men joy and mirth.
While e- ter- nal a- ges run!

[Be seated]

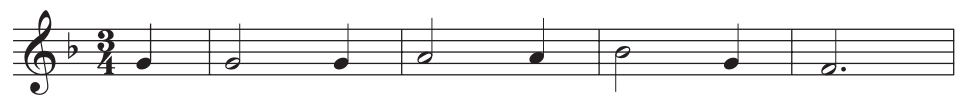
**+ The Word of God for the People of God +
Seven-fold Lessons and Carols for Christmas**

First Lesson Genesis 3:8–15

*Yahweh announces in the Garden of Eden that the Seed of the Woman
shall bruise the serpent's head.*

[Following the reading] *This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God!*


Carol A Child Is Born in Bethlehem



1. A Child is born in Beth- le- hem,
2. With- out the ser- pent's an- cient stain,
3. Our sin- ful flesh and His are one,
4. Like to Him- self He mak- eth us,
5. And so for this most joy- our birth,



1. Beth - le - hem. _____ Where - fore re -
 2. an - cient stain. _____ Yet of our
 3. His _____ are one, _____ Yet in Him
 4. mak - eth us, _____ Nor in our
 5. joy - ous birth, _____ Praise we the



1. joice, Je - ru - sa - lem! Al - le - lu -
 2. blood He doth re - main. Al - le - lu -
 3. of our sin is none. Al - le - lu -
 4. sin for - sak - eth us. Al - le - lu -
 5. Lord of heav'n and earth. Al - le - lu -



1. ia! Al - le - lu - ia!
 2. ia! Al - le - lu - ia!
 3. ia! Al - le - lu - ia!
 4. ia! Al - le - lu - ia!
 5. ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

Second Lesson Genesis 22:15–18

Yahweh promises to Abraham that in his seed shall the nations of the earth be blessed.

[Following the reading] *This is the Word of the Lord.* Thanks be to God!

Carol Sing Praise to the God of Israel Burgundy Hymn 936

Third Lesson Isaiah 9:2–7

Christ's birth and kingdom are foretold by the prophet, Isaiah.

[Following the reading] *This is the Word of the Lord.* Thanks be to God!

Solo For Behold / The People that Walked G. F. Handel

[from the oratorio, The Messiah.]

Fourth Lesson Micah 5:2-4

A shoot comes forth from the stump of Jesse.

[Following the reading] *This is the Word of the Lord.* Thanks be to God!

Carol O Little Town of Bethlehem Burgundy Hymn 361

[Sung to the tune of "Forest Green".]

Fifth Lesson Luke 1:26–38

The angel Gabriel announces the birth of a son to the Blessed Virgin Mary .

[Following the reading] *This is the Word of the Lord.* Thanks be to God!

Carol Savior of the Nations, Come Burgundy Hymn 332

[All sing stanza 1; Men alone sing stanza 2; Women alone sing stanza 3;
 All sing stanza 4; OMIT stanzas 5 thru 7; All sing stanza 8; Rise for stanza 8.]

Sixth Lesson Luke 2:1-20
Saint Luke proclaims the birth of Christ.

[Following the reading] *This is the Word of the Lord.* **Thanks be to God!**

Choral Anthem And the Glory of the Lord G. F. Handel
[from the oratorio, The Messiah.]

Seventh Lesson John 1:1-14
The Incarnation of the Word of God.

[Following the reading] *This is the Word of the Lord.* **Thanks be to God!**

Carol Hark! The Herald Angels Sing Burgundy Hymn 380

Sermon

Offerings

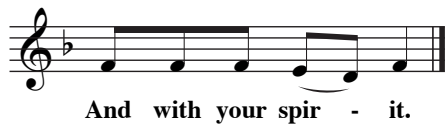
Choral Voluntary Christmas Night arr. J. Rutter

Hymn From Heaven Above to Earth I Come ... Burgundy Hymn 358
[All sing stanzas 1 and 2; Women alone sing stanzas 3 and 5;
Men alone sing stanzas 4 and 6; All sing stanzas 7.]

+ The Prayers of the People of God Before the Throne of God +

[Stand] **Salutation**

The Lord be with you.



And with your spir - it.

Collect for Christmas Eve: *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.*



A - men.

Collect for Peace: *O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works, give to us, Your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey Your commandments and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.*



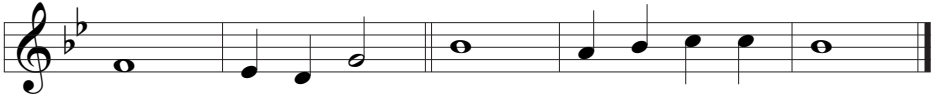
A - men.

+ CANDLELIGHT CEREMONY +

[The light for the candles is distributed during the organ improvisation.]

[The lighted candle will remain upright. Please tip your unlighted candle to the flame for lighting.]

Proclamation of the Light of God



1. *The people who* *those who*
walked in dark- *dwelt in a*
ness have seen . . a great light; *land of deep*
darkness, on | them has light ____ shined.
2. **For unto us a . . child is born** **unto us a son is •given•.**
3. *In Him was life,* *and that life | was the light of men.*
4. **The light shines | in the •darkness•, but the**
darkness
has not . . . ov- er come ____ it.
5. *And the Word •became• flesh* *and dwelt*
among us, | full of grace and truth;
6. **We have be— held His •glory•, glory as of the**
only Son | from the Fa- ____ ther.

Hymn Silent Night, Holy Night



1. Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm,
2. Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake
3. Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God,



all is bright Round yon vir - gin mo - ther and child.
 at the sight; Glo - ries stream from hea - ven a - far,
 love's pure light Ra - dant beams from Your ho - ly face



Ho - ly in - fant so ten - der and mild, Sleep in hea - ven - ly
 Hea - v'nly hosts ____ sing, "Al - le - lu - ia!" Christ, the Sav - ior, is
 With the dawn of re - deem - ing grace, Je - sus, Lord at Your



peace, ____ Sleep in hea - ven - ly peace.
 born! ____ Christ, the Sa - vior, is born!
 birth, ____ Je - sus, Lord at Your birth.

Benedicamus

Let us bless the Lord.



Thanks be to God.

Benediction

May He, who by His Incarnation gathered into one things earthly and heavenly, fill you with the sweetness of inward peace and goodwill; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost ☩ be upon you and remain with you always.



A - men.

[The candles are extinguished]

During the Recessional, the Congregation turns and faces the Processional Cross, the symbol of Christ's promise to remain with and lead His people as they now go and live in the world in His name.

Recessional Hymn Joy to the World Burgundy Hymn 387

Choral Postlude From the Christmas Cantata: Alleluia J. S. Bach



**THE DIVINE SERVICE FOR
THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD
Tomorrow, Christmas Day, at 9:00 a.m.**

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Lessons for the Eve of the Nativity of Our Lord

First Lesson

Genesis 3:8-15

[The man and woman] heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

The LORD God said to the serpent,

"Because you have done this,
cursed are you above all livestock
and above all beasts of the field;
on your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat
all the days of your life.

I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel."

Second Lesson

Genesis 22:15-18

The angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven and said, "By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice."

Third Lesson

Isaiah 9:2-7

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

Fourth Lesson

Micah 5:2-4

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,
who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to be ruler in Israel,
whose coming forth is from of old,
from ancient days.
Therefore he shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labor has given birth;
then the rest of his brothers shall return
to the people of Israel.
And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.

And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great
to the ends of the earth.
And he shall be their peace.

Fifth Lesson

Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Sixth Lesson

Luke 2:1-20 (KJV)

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And 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:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And 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.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 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. And the angel said unto them, “Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

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.” And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

Seventh Lesson

John 1:1-14

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.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

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.

Hymns for the Eve of the Nativity of our Lord

LSB376 Once in Royal David's City

Cecil F. Alexander

Text: (sts. 2-4, 6) alt by Robert W. Schaibley; © 1986 Zion Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Printed in Service Bulletin

Printed Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding

Latin, c. 5th-10th cent.

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Printed in Service Bulletin

Printed A Child Is Born in Bethlehem

Traditional English

Printed in Service Bulletin

LSB936 Sing Praise to the God of Israel

Stephen P. Starke

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1. Sing praise to the God of Israel! Sing praise for His visitation!
Redeeming His people from their sin, Accomplishing their salvation,
Upraising a mighty horn within The house of His servant David.
2. God spoke by the prophets long ago, His promise an oath recalling—
To Abraham made in former years; Of vanquishing foes appalling,
That those He delivered from their fears Might gladly and truly serve Him.
3. You, child will go before the Lord As prophet, His way preparing;
To speak on behalf of God Most High, His counsel of truth declaring;
Rich mercy and grace for all whereby Iniquity is forgiven.
4. O, bright, rising Sun, now shine on us In need of illumination;
Come scatter the shades of sin and death And shatter their domination.
Be guiding our footsteps on the path In peace, in Your presence dawning!

LSB361 O Little Town of Bethlehem

Phillips Brooks

1. O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep The silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth The everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee tonight.
2. For Christ is born of Mary, And gathered all above
While mortals sleep, the angels keep Their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together Proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the king And peace to all the earth!

3. How silently, how silently The wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts The blessings of His heav'n.
No ear may hear His coming; But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him, still The dear Christ enters in.
4. 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 Immanuel!

LSB332 Savior of the Nations, Come

Ambrose of Milan

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1. Savior of the nations, come, Virgin's Son, make here Your home!
Marvel now, O heav'n and earth, That the Lord chose such a birth.
- M 2. Not by human flesh and blood, By the Spirit of our God,
Was the Word of God made flesh—Woman's offspring pure and fresh.
- W 3. Here a maid was found with child, Yet remained a virgin mild.
In her womb this truth was shown: God was there upon His throne.
4. Then stepped forth the Lord of all From His pure and kingly hall;
God of God, yet fully man, His heroic course began.
- △ 8. Glory to the Father sing, Glory to the Son, our king,
Glory to the Spirit be Now and through eternity.

LSB380 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Charles Wesley

1. Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, Join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Refrain: Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

2. Christ, by highest heav'n adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold Him come, Offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, Hail the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as Man with man to dwell, Jesus, our Immanuel! *Refrain*
3. Hail, the heav'n-born Prince of Peace! Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings, Ris'n with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by, Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them second birth. *Refrain*

LSB358 From Heaven Above to Earth I Come

Martin Luther

1. "From heav'n above to earth I come
to bear good news to ev'ry home:
Glad tidings of great joy I bring,
Whereof I now will say and sing:
2. "To you this night is born a child
Of Mary chosen virgin mild;
This little child of lowly birth
Shall be the joy of all the earth.
- W 3. "This is the Christ, our God Most High,
Who hears your sad and bitter cry;
He will Himself your Savior be
From all your sins to set you free.
- M 4. "He will on you the gifts bestow
Prepared by God for all below,
That in His kingdom, bright and fair,
You may with us His glory share.
- W 5. "These are the signs that you shall mark:
The swaddling clothes and manger dark.
There you will find the infant laid
By whom the heav'ns and earth were made."
- M 6. How glad we'll be to find it so!
Then with the shepherds let us go
To see what God for us has done
In sending us His own dear Son.
7. Come here, my friends, lift up your eyes,
And see what in the manger lies.
Who is this child, so young and fair?
It is the Christ Child lying there.

LSB363 Silent Night

Franz Joseph Mohr

1. Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child. Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace.
2. Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight;
Glories stream from heaven afar, Heav'nly hosts sing, Alleluia!
Christ, the Savior is born! Christ, the Savior is born!

3. Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from Thy holy face With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

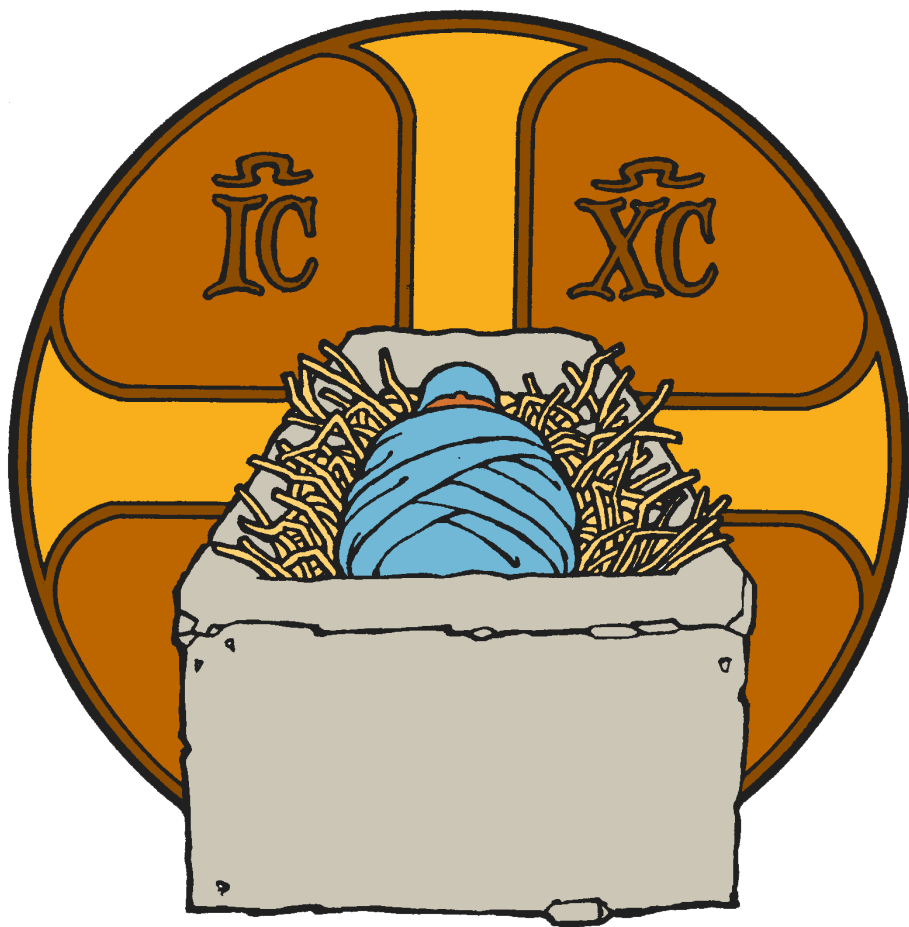
LSB387 Joy to the World

Isaac Watts

1. Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King:
Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing, And heav'n and nature sing.
2. Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let men their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat the sounding joy.
3. No more let sins and sorrows grow Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found, Far as the curse is found.
4. He rules the world with truth and grace And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love, And wonders of His love.

*The Eve of the
Nativity of Our Lord
Service of Lessons and Carols*

December 24, 2025, 7:00 PM



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. Luke 2:7



In loving memory of all our family
members, who are now with Our Lord
by Rosie & Carl Albersmeyer and family



In loving memory of my parents
Donald & Berniece Allen
by Bruce Allen

In loving memory of Beth Bieberich
by Don Bieberich

In loving memory of our parents Paul & Esther Bieberich and
Paul & Hilda Menze
by Dwight & CarolLu Bieberich

In loving memory of our mother Sandy Cunningham
by her children Ebony Vanderveer & James Cunningham

To the Glory of God
by Mike & Rita Davies

In memory of Don Ganaway & Bryce Shull
by Julie Ganaway

In loving and honor of Stanley & Shirley Goeglien
– Blessed Christmas!
By Tim, Jenny, Tim and Paul Goeglein

Oh, Come, Oh Come, Emmanuel
by Joyce Gottschalk

In loving memory of all my family members who have passed on
by Marylou Graham

In loving memory of my mother Virginia Hollman
and grandmothers Hulda Sonne & Alma Hollman
by Beth Hollman

In memory of my beloved wife Virginia Hollman
by Richard Hollman

In loving memory of Alma Jackson, Amanda & Gerald Stewart, and
Alonzo & Ora Edmonds
by Alanza & Frank Jackson



In loving memory of
Lois & Richard Kaiser,
Eric & Virginia Hoffman and
Sandra Kaiser
by David & Janeen Kaiser and
Robert & Shelly Kaiser



In loving memory of Spiro & Anne Kostoff
and Karen Kostoff Wood
by the family

“To honor the Christ Child”
by Rev. George & Lois Lange

In loving memory of
Dr. Robert & Katherine Leininger
and Fred, Betty, Teresa, & John Beckman
by Kevin & Maribeth Leininger

In loving memory of Willie Manning
by his wife Rose Manning

In loving memory of our parents Georgianna & Walter Ostermeyer
“Gloria in Excelsis!”
by their thankful children Karen, Kim, David and Kirk

To the “little child of lowly birth,” “the joy of all the earth.””
In loving memory of our parents
Darwin & Arlene Punke and Earl Klein
by Pastor & Marge Punke

In loving memory of Marcile Keck
by her children

To our blessed Savior
by Carolyn Wallchlaeger

“Glory to the newborn King”
by André Woodard

In loving memory of my mother
by Charlene Young

Celebrate The Birth Of Christ

Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

2313 Hanna Street, Fort Wayne, IN 46803 | 260-744-1389

pastor@zionfw.org, church@zionfw.org | website: www.zionfw.org

Zion Lutheran Church is the body of Christ at Hanna and Creighton in Fort Wayne, Indiana that:

- Receives Christ's gifts in Word and Sacraments; and
- Responds to God's love in Christ by
 - Reaching out to those who do not know His love; and
 - Revealing His love in acts of kindness and mercy.

The Pastoral Ministry at Zion

Senior Pastor:

Rev. Douglas D. Punke, MDiv (341-5397)

Field Workers:

Nathaniel Demlow, Joshua Fuchs

The Teaching Staff at Lutheran South Unity

Principal:

Amber Bahr (744-0459; www.lsusfw.org)

Teachers:

Yvonne Schwantz (8th, MS ELA), Michael Cullen (7th, MS Science),

Chase Mertz (6th, MS Social Studies), Danielle Ramsey (5th), Abbey Kohler (4th),

Rachel Wiegman (3rd), John Fink (2nd), Hannah Fink (1st), Michelle Madden (K),

Natalie Reynolds (Art), Elisa Sawall (Music), Lee Buxton (PE), Cathie Wakeland (Literacy Coach),

Arianna Blake (LSEM), Melissa White (FWCS) & Sarah Wheaton (EACS) (Title I Tutors)

The Support Staff

Organist and Director of Parish Music:

Michael Hollman, MM

Church Office Manager:

Melvia Culpher



What Doctor Luther Says:

About the Holy, Blameless, Unstained Christ

26. [*For it was fitting that we should have such a High Priest,*] holy, blameless, unstained.

According to the usage of Scripture that which is clean and sacred to God is called “holy.” On the other hand, that which is open to uses other than divine is called “profane.” Therefore it is frequently recorded in the Law that the people and the priests are sanctified, likewise the temple, the tabernacle, the vestments, and the vessels. And in this way it connotes in a mystical manner the sanctification of the Spirit, by which they become a new creature. A person who is irreprehensible is called “blameless”; for a saint can use his sanctity in an improper manner, just as a Christian can use his Baptism and the newness of the spirit in an improper manner. Therefore “blamelessness” is the irreprehensible use and the work of the saint himself, so that “holy” points out the substance, and “blameless” points out the performance, as in Ps. 24:4: “He who has blameless hands (that is, irreprehensible in what he does) and a clean heart,” that is, one who is holy. And Ps. 18:26 says: “With the blameless Thou shalt be blameless.” Therefore Christ is “the blameless Lamb,” that is, irreprehensible and unaccusable. This, as Isaiah and Peter say, means that “He committed no sin; no guile was found on His lips” (1 Peter 2:22; Is. 53:9). He who cannot be polluted by others either is called “untainted.” For even if a priest of the Law were clean and irreprehensible so far as he himself was concerned, he could be polluted by something else if, for example, he were to touch a corpse or a leper. But just as Christ was free from uncleanness because no inner filth of His own made Him unclean, so He cannot be polluted by the filth of others either.

Luther's Works, 29:195.



Beloved in Christ,

You know the tender story of Christmas: Mary and Joseph make their way to Bethlehem to be registered for the census by Caesar Augustus. And while there Mary gives birth to her firstborn son amidst ox and ass and laid Him in a manger.

They named this son Jesus as she and Joseph had been instructed.

This is all true ... history. But knowing all this is not yet faith as Luther explains: "faith does not merely consist in believing that this story is true, as it is written. For that does not avail anything, because everyone, even the damned, believe that. Concerning faith, Scripture and God's word do not teach that it is a natural work, without grace. Rather the faith that is the right one, rich in grace, demanded by God's word and deed, is that you firmly believe Christ is born for you and that his birth is yours, and come to pass for your benefit. For the Gospel teaches that Christ was born for our sake and that he did everything and suffered all things for our sake, just as the angel says here: 'I announce to you a great joy which will come to all people; for to you is born this day a Savior who is Christ the Lord' [Luke 2:10-11]. From these words you see clearly that he was born for us.

"He does not simply say: 'Christ is born,' but: '*for you* is he born.' Again, he does not say: 'I announce a joy,' but: '*to you* do I announce a great joy.' Again, this joy will not remain in Christ, but is for all people. ...

"Christ has a pure, innocent, holy birth. Man has an impure, sinful, damned birth, as David says in Psalm 51[:5]: 'Behold, in sin am I fashioned in the womb, and in sin did my mother conceive me.' There is no remedy for this except through the pure birth of Christ. ... Christ takes to himself our birth and absorbs it in his birth; he presents us with his birth so that we become pure and new in it, as if it were our own, so that every Christian might rejoice in this birth of Christ and glory in it ..." (*Luther's Works*, 52:14-15).

God grant us grace to find joy in the pure birth of Jesus Christ, God's Son, born for you. Zion's staff and I pray that you may live in the peace and hope that only Christ gives. God grant you also a blessed New Year. Glory to God in the highest!

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Puntke