

CHRISTMAS EVE: THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD



St. Matthias Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Vicar Marty Jo Irvin-Stellabotte
Musician Kathy Gold

Welcome and Words for Lighting of the Christ Candle

P: Alongside the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love, tonight we light the Christ Candle as we make our way to the manger. Tonight is just a few days from the winter solstice, the longest night of the year. Here in the shadows, yet bathed in light, Jesus is born: resplendent, but poor, in a forgotten, backwater town; host of all things, but with nowhere to lay his head; gloriously free, but caught in the cage of the emperor's registration, and King Herod's murderous jealousy. In other words, Jesus meets us where we are, the better to shepherd us to freedom.

Prelude *O Come, Little Children*

Lighting of the Christ Candle

Prayer for Lighting of the Christ Candle

P: God of hope, peace, joy, and love; God of Christmas morning; God of Mary and Joseph, the shepherds and the magi, the powerful and the dispossessed: we thank you and praise you for being a God of the shadows. We thank you and praise you for bringing hope where there is despair, peace where there is conflict, joy where there is sorrow, and love where there is hate or indifference. Give us the grace and wisdom to follow you and do the same. Thank you for being a God of freedom, who gives us a song to sing, and who will finally free us from every cage. Give us the courage and boldness to follow you into a new, dawning day. Thank you for coming to dwell with us, to live with us, and to love us back to life. Come, Jesus, come!

C: Amen.

Greeting

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

P: Let us pray. Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Hearing the Good News of Christmas

Hymn: *Lo, How a Rose is Growing* (vs. 1 & 2)

LBW 58

Lo, How a Rose Is Growing



1 Lo, how a rose is grow - ing, a bloom of fin - est grace;
 2 The rose of which I'm sing - ing, I - sa - iah had fore - told.
 3 The shep - herds heard the sto - ry the an - gels sang that night:
 4 This flow'r, so small and ten - der, with fra - grance fills the air;
 5 O Sav - ior, child of Mar - y, who felt all hu - man woe;



the proph - ets had fore - told it: a branch of Jes - se's race
 He came to us through Mar - y who shel - tered him from cold.
 how Christ was born of Mar - y; he was the Son of light.
 his bright - ness ends the dark - ness that kept the earth in fear.
 O Sav - ior, king of glo - ry, who tri - umphed o'er our foe:



would bear one per - fect flow'r here in the cold of
 Through God's e - ter - nal will this child to us was
 To Beth - le - hem they ran to find him in the
 True God and yet true man, he came to save his
 bring us at length, we pray, to the bright courts of



win - ter and dark - est mid - night hour.
 giv - en at mid - night calm and still.
 man - ger as an - gel her - alds sang.
 peo - ple from earth's dark night of sin.
 heav - en and in - to end - less day.

Text: German, 15th cent.; tr. Gracia Grindal, b. 1943

Music: ES IST EIN ROS, *Alte Catholische Geistliche Kirchengesäng*, Köln, 1599

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Scripture Reading: *Luke 2:1-4*

¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David.

Hymn: *O Little Town of Bethlehem (vs. 1 & 4)*

LBW 41

O Little Town of Bethlehem



O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!
For Christ is born of Mar - y, and, gath - ered all a - bove
How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is giv'n!
O ho - ly child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;



A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by;
while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - d'ring love.
So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heav'n.
cast out our sin, and en - ter in, be born in us to - day.



yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light.
O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth,
No ear may hear his com - ing; but, in this world of sin,
We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;



The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.
and prais - es sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!
where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.
oh, come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Im - man - u - el!

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835–1893
Music: ST. LOUIS, Lewis H. Redner, 1831–1908

Scripture Reading: *Luke 2:5-7*

⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.

⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Hymn: *Away in a Manger*

LBW 67

Away in a Manger



1 A - way in a man - ger, no crib for his bed, the lit - tle Lord
2 The cat - tle are low - ing; the poor ba - by wakes, but lit - tle Lord
3 Be near me, Lord Je - sus; I ask you to stay close by me for -



Je - sus laid down his sweet head; the stars in the sky looked
Je - sus no cry - ing he makes. I love you, Lord Je - sus; look
ev - er and love me, I pray. Bless all the dear chil - dren in



down where he lay; the lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.
down from the sky and stay by my cra - dle till morn - ing is nigh.
your ten - der care and fit us for heav - en, to live with you there.

Text: North American, anonymous, 19th cent.

Music: AWAY IN A MANGER, North American, anonymous, 19th cent.

Scripture Reading: *Luke 2:8-14*

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

Hymn: *Angels We Have Heard on High*

LBW 71

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: French carol; tr. H. F. Hemy, *The Crown of Jesus Music*, 1864
 Music: GLORIA, French carol

Scripture Reading: *Luke 2:15-16*

¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

Hymn: *What Child Is This*

LBW 40

What Child Is This



1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar-y's lap is sleep-ing?
2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - ing?
3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas-ant, king, to own him.



Whom an - gels greet with an-thems sweet while shep-herds watch are keep - ing?
Good Chris-tian, fear; for sin-ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.
The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; let lov - ing hearts en-throne him.



This, this is Christ the king, whom shep-herds guard and an - gels sing;
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;
Raise, raise the 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!

Text: William C. Dix, 1837–1898
Music: GREENSLEEVES, English ballad, 16th cent.

Scripture Reading: *Luke 2:17-20*

¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Hymn: *The First Noel (vs. 1 & 2)*

LBW 56

The First Noel



1 The first Noel the an - gel did say was to
 2 They look - ed up and saw . . a star shin - ing
 3 And by the light of that . . same star three . .
 4 This star drew near to the . . north - west, o'er . .
 5 Then en - tered in those wise . . men three, full . .



cer - tain poor shep - herds in fields as they lay; in fields where
 in . . . the east . . be - yond . . them far; and to the
 wise . . men came . . from coun - try far; to seek for a
 Beth - le - hem . . it took . . its rest; and there it
 rev - 'rent - ly . . . up - on . . . their knee, and of - fered



they lay, keep - ing their sheep, on a cold win - ter's
 earth it gave . . . great light, and . . so it con -
 king was their . . . in - tent, and to fol - low the
 did both stop . . . and stay right . . o - ver the
 there in his . . . pres - ence their . . gold, . . . and

Refrain



night that was so deep.
 tin-ued both day and night.
 star wher - ev - er it went. No - el, No - el, No -
 place where Je - sus lay.
 myrrh, and frank - in - cense.



el, No - el! Born is the King of Is - ra - el.

Text: English traditional
 Music: THE FIRST NOWELL, English traditional

Prayers of Intercession

P: Joining our voices with the song of the angels, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

P: The shepherds sing, “Jesus Christ is born!” Let your church throughout the world proclaim this good news, over the hills and everywhere. Unite the voices of all your faithful people in songs of praise and rejoicing. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: Heaven and nature sing, “Joy to the world!” Give respite to flocks, fields, and those who tend them. Come near to us in the beauty of nighttime, the shining of the stars, and the hush of a world at rest. May our wonder at your creation rouse our care for all the earth. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: The angels sing, “Peace on earth!” Come quickly to still the strife of this world. Hush the noise of war and violence in places of unrest. Inspire leaders of nations to seek lasting peace and sustainable provision for all in their care. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: Mary sings melodies of comfort to her newborn child. Bring rest and reassurance to those facing struggles this night. Shelter travelers and those without homes. Console those who lie awake due to pain or anxiety. Heal those who are sick or hurting, especially all those affected by Covid-19, Christian M. (Marines) and all military service personnel, Don and Joanne, Jacques, Pam, Betty Lou, Mark, Pat, Seth, DJ, Margaret, Sally, George, Arleen, Greg, Billie, Charles, Carol, Terry, Darryl, Wayne and family, family and friends of Debbie, family and friends of Larry, and all who ask for the Lord’s healing and mercy. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: Love sings through the sound of a new baby’s cry. Bless new parents and expectant parents. Comfort those who long for children, especially those running out of hope or options. Surround families of every shape and size with your love and care. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: The heavenly chorus sings, “Glory to God in the highest!” We give you thanks for all the saints who have proclaimed your glory in word and deed. Let us join them this night in joyful praise around your eternal throne. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: God of mercy, come quickly to us with grace upon grace as we lift these and all our prayers to you, in the name of Jesus.

C: Amen.

Hymn: *Silent Night, Holy Night!*

LBW 65

Silent Night, Holy Night! *Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht!*



Stil - le Nacht, hei - li - ge Nacht! Al - les schläft,
 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,



ein - sam wacht nur das trau - te, hoch - hei - li - ge Paar.
 all is bright round yon vir - gin moth - er and child.
 at the sight; glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far,
 love's pure light ra - diant beams from your ho - ly face,



Hold - er Kna - be im lok - ki - gen Haar, schlaf in himm - li - scher
 Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and mild, sleep in heav - en - ly
 heav'n - ly hosts . . . sing, al - le - lu - ia! Christ, the Sav - ior, is
 with the dawn of re - deem - ing grace, Je - sus, Lord, at your



Ruh, schlaf in himm - li - scher Ruh.
 peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
 born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!
 birth, Je - sus, Lord, at your birth.

Text: Joseph Mohr, 1792–1849; tr. John F. Young, 1820–1885
 Music: STILLE NACHT, Franz Gruber, 1787–1863

Blessing and Dismissal

P: Almighty God, who sent the Holy Spirit to Mary, proclaimed joy through the angels, sent the shepherds with good news, and led the magi by a star, bless you this day ✠ through the Word made flesh. Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus.

C: Amen. Thanks be to God!

Announcements

Our worship service will be available Christmas Eve after 2 p.m. on YouTube at the following link:

Go to www.youtube.com, then search for St Matthias Lutheran Church Carlisle

Or type in this link:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCL5Au2ez_Slt6Nb_Z_3LXgw

Then click on the video for Christmas Eve

It will also be available on our church Facebook page at the following link:

www.facebook.com/StMatthiasCS



Dear friends and siblings in Christ,

Thank you for worshiping with us on this most holy night of the year. We pray that you will be blessed by hearing the good news of the birth of our Savior and will experience Christ's love and presence in this midst of this time of social distancing and showing care for one another.

A special thank you to our St. Matthias family for your continued prayers and participation in our online worship services — and an extra thank you to God who comes as a Light to the World in the midst of darkness this Christmas.

Wishing you a blessed Christmas filled with the love of Christ,

Vicar MJ



The Proclamation of Christ's Birth

Many ages from the time when God created the heavens and the earth and then formed man and woman in his own image; long after the great flood, when God made the rainbow shine forth as a sign of the covenant; twenty-one centuries from the time the promise was given to Abraham and Sarah; thirteen centuries after Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt and Miriam danced in freedom; eleven hundred years from the time of Ruth and the judges; one thousand years from the anointing of David as king, in fulfillment of the times and years and months and days discerned by the prophets; in the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad; the seven hundred and fifty-second year from the foundation of the city of Rome; the forty-second year of the reign of Octavian Augustus; while the whole world enjoyed a span of peace, Jesus Christ, eternal God and Son of the eternal Father, desiring to sanctify the world by his most merciful coming, being conceived by the Holy Spirit and nine months of growth in the womb of his mother—now in our own times is the nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, God made flesh.

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We are St. Matthias Evangelical Lutheran Church. We are loved by God. We are family of God. We are caring for the world so that all will know Christ's peace. We come from a diversity of traditions. We embrace all races, all abilities, all socioeconomic statuses, all sexual orientations and gender identities as expressions of God's great diversity in this world. We encourage questions. Together we seek God's guidance. We welcome you to the family of God.

- Welcome Statement adopted by the congregation June 30, 2019



We are a
RECONCILING in CHRIST
Congregation