

**Zion Lutheran Church**

Ottawa Lake, MI

Rev. Jeffrey Geske

**CHRISTMAS EVE ~ December 24, 2022**

**AS WE GATHER**

Silent Night. Most of us don't like silence. But one year the silence breaking through the sounds of war was welcomed. At Ypres, Belgium, on December 24, 1914, the Western front was in a war. In this bloody conflict that day were the British, the French, and the Germans. As the sun began setting, the Germans began decorating their trenches with Christmas trees. Signs also had gone up just before the sunset from the German army: "You no shoot; we no shoot." Not long afterward, the Germans began singing Christmas carols, including "Silent Night." As we come together on this night, "the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." *Philippians 4:7*

**WELCOME**

**HYMN LSB 379 St. 1-2** “O Come, All Ye Faithful”

**INVOCATION**

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**People: Amen.**

**CONFESSION and ABSOLUTION**

(*As we begin our worship with confession, we remember that* "*all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*" *(Romans 3:23). After we confess, we hear the good news that God* "*who is faithful and just*" *forgives us all our sins*

*(1 John 1:8-9).*)

Pastor: We come together tonight. We sing and speak about "Peace on Earth." Yet because of our brokenness and sin, we don't experience peace. As we prepare to celebrate the gift of our Prince of Peace wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger, let's go to our Lord and confess our brokenness and sin.

**All: Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your steadfast love; according to Your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You may be justified in Your words and blameless in Your judgment. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.** *Psalm 51: 1-5*

Pastor: We are born sinners, yet God gives us the gift of Jesus, who was born to be our Savior. For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 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. *Titus 2:11-14*

**All: Give thanks to the Lord of hosts, for the Lord is good, for His steadfast love endures forever!** *Jeremiah 33:11*

Pastor: At the command of Christ and by His authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**All: Amen!**

Pastor: Peace be with you!

**All: Amen!**

**COLLECT PRAYER**

Pastor: Let us pray:

**All: O God, You made 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. Amen.**

**LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE**

Pastor: Advent is past, Christmas has come. We light the Christ Candle to remind us that Jesus said,

**People: "I am the light of the world; whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."** *John 8:12*

Pastor: We also remember that Simeon called the Christ Child "a light to lighten the Gentiles." *Luke 2:32, adapted*

**People: With candles burning to symbolize the Lord's presence, we worship Him, who is our newborn King.**

Pastor: Jesus is born!

**People: Let us rejoice!**

**HYMN OF PRAISE** **LSB 379 St. 3-4** “O Come, All Ye Faithful”

**+ GOD’S WORD FOR US+**

**OLD TESTAMENT** Isaiah 9:2-7 (*On them has light shined.*)

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM** Psalm 96 (*Worship in the splendor of Holiness.*)

Lector: Sing to the Lord, bless His name; tell of His salvation from day to day.

**People: Oh sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth!**

Lector: Sing to the Lord, bless His name; tell of His salvation from day to day.

**People: Declare His glory among the nations, His marvelous works among all the peoples! For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the Lord made the heavens. Splendor and majesty are before Him; strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.**

Lector: Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength! Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name; bring an offering, and come into His courts! Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness; tremble before Him, all the earth!

**People: Say among the nations, "The Lord reigns! Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved; He will judge the peoples with equity."**

Lector: Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it; let the field exult, and everything in it!

**People: Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before the Lord, for He comes, for He comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness, and the peoples in His faithfulness.**

Lector: Sing to the Lord, bless His name; tell of His salvation from day to day.

**EPISTLE** Titus 2:11-14 (*Teach sound doctrine.*)

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**HOLY GOSPEL** Luke 2:1-20 (*The Birth of Jesus Christ*)

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to Saint Luke, the second chapter.

**People: Glory to You, O Lord!**

Pastor: In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius\* was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town.

**CAROL LSB 361 St. 1** "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

Male Reader: 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, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

*Female Reader: And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. 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.*

**CAROL LSB 365** "Away in a Manger"

Pastor: And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them,

**People: "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."**

Pastor: And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

**People: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!"**

**CAROL LSB 380 St. 1** "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

Pastor: When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another,

Male Reader: "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us."

**CAROL LSB 380 St. 1**  "Angels from the Realms of Glory"

Pastor: And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this Child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them.

*Female Reader:*  But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.

Pastor: And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**People: Praise to You, O Christ!**

**CAROL LSB 388** "Go Tell It on the Mountain"

**SERMON God’s Love For Us! ~ Luke 2:1-20**

**CREED LSB 384** "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 things that are, that have been, And that future years shall see**

**Evermore and evermore.**

***All: 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.***

**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.**

***All: He 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 His innocent suffering and death.***

**O ye 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.**

***All: All this He has done that I might be His own, and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness,***

**Christ, to You, with God the Father And the Spirit, there shall be**

**Hymn and chant and high thanksgiving And the shout of jubilee:**

**Honor, glory, and dominion And eternal victory Evermore and evermore!**

***All: Just as He is risen from the dead and lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.*** *Martin Luther's explanation of the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed*

**OFFERING** (*Our Gifts to our Newborn King*)

(*On coming to the house, they saw the child with His mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped Him. Then they opened their treasures and presented Him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. Matthew 2:11, adapted*)

**PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

Pastor: O Wonderful Counselor,

**People: hear our prayer and grant us Your peace.**

Pastor: O Mighty God,

**People: open our eyes to see Your mighty works. Open our minds to Your Word that Your truth may rest in us.**

Pastor: O Everlasting Father,

**People: use the witness of our words and deeds to proclaim Your seeking and saving love to those around us. Open our eyes to the needs of those around us and inspire us to be agents of comfort to the distressed and instruments of healing and relief to the sick and suffering, especially those we name before You in our hearts.**

Pastor: O Prince of Peace,

**People: give us the peace that passes all understanding, that we may trust that You have come into our imperfect world and brought the perfect gift of salvation and have freely given it to us.**

Pastor: O Immanuel,

**People: receive our worship and adoration, our time and talents, and the firstfruits of our incomes that we bring in grateful praise to the mystery of the Word made flesh.**

Pastor: In Your hands, O gracious Lord, we place our prayer, we offer our praise, and we commend ourselves and our loved ones, trusting in Your mercy and having confidence in Your love, O Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, God forever.

**People: Amen.**

**LORD'S PRAYER**

**+ GOD’S SACRAMENT FOR US +**

**WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

**DISTRIBUTION HYMNS**

**LSB 366** “It Came upon the Midnight Clear”

**LSB 370** “What Child Is This”

**LSB 376** “Once in Royal David’s City”

**PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

Pastor: Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good,

**People:** for His steadfast love endures forever! *Psalm 106:1*

Pastor: Let us pray.

**People: Gracious God and Father, thank You for this gift of Your Son and for the message of the angels that announced His arrival. Jesus, thank You for caring so much for us that You came to be one of us. Spirit, thank You for carrying the song of the angels to our ears, that we might be lifted up in hope and joy. For all the blessings of this night and the life You give to us, O Lord, we praise and glorify You without end. Amen.**

**BENEDICTION**

**CANDLE LIGHTING**

**HYMN LSB 363 St. 1-3** “Silent Night, Holy Night”

**HYMN LSB 387 St. 1** “Joy to the World”

***Go In Peace and Share the Love of Jesus!***

***Merry Christmas to You!***