

# Bethlehem & St. John Lutheran Churches

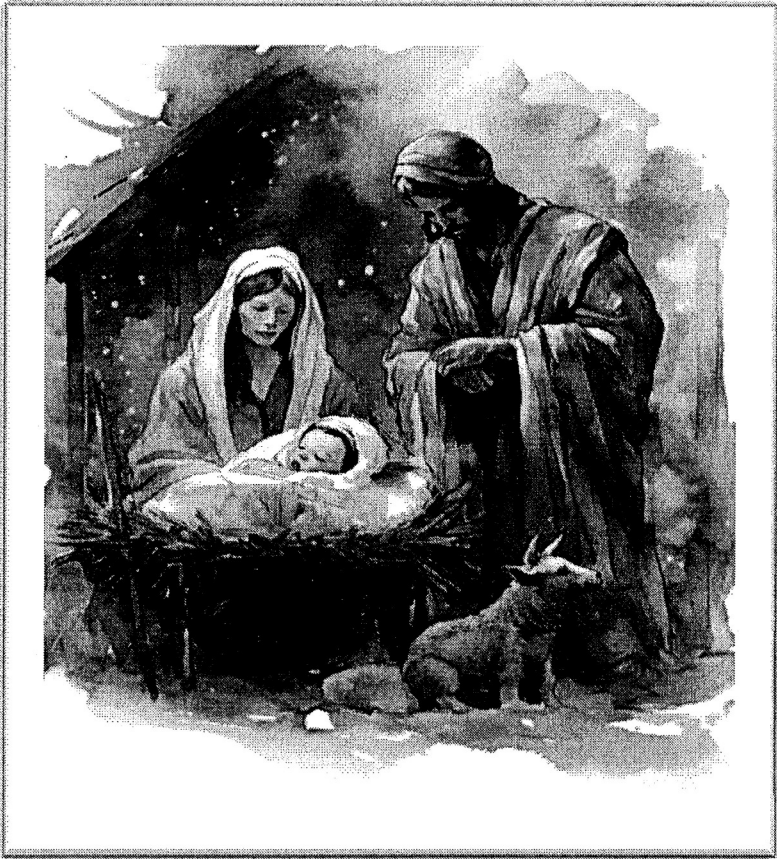
- The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod -

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The Nativity of Our Lord

December 24, 2024

Reverend Michael Mathey, Pastor

**The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod's Statement on Close Communion:**

The Lord's Supper is celebrated at this congregation in the confession and glad confidence that, as He says, Our Lord gives into our mouths not only bread and wine but His very body and blood to eat and drink for the forgiveness of sins and to strengthen our union with Him and with one another. Our Lord invites to His table those who trust in His words, repent of all sin, and set aside any refusal to forgive and love as He forgives and loves us, that they may show forth His death until He comes.

Because those who eat and drink our Lord's body and blood unworthily do so to their great harm and because Holy Communion is a confession of the faith which is confessed at this altar, any who are not yet instructed, in doubt, or who hold a confession differing from that of this congregation and the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, and yet desire to receive the Sacrament, are asked to first speak with the Pastor.

(CTCR, *Admission to the Lord's Supper*, Nov 1999)

**Life Quotes:** December 24 “This time of the year always fills us with cheer. But the reason we celebrate is not always clear. The cookies, the lights, the presents, the tree | The carols, the decorations, the family parties | But all of the delight and all of the fun | Does not mean a thing if we don't know God's Son | The tiny baby that was born to die | Can sometimes cause us to stop and ask why | Do we really deserve the sacrifice He made? | Are we worth the offering and the price that was paid? | In His eyes, we are, because He made us His own | And on the cross, the ultimate love was shown | So take joy in the season and spread His true love | But always remember the gift from above!” Jerrod Nelson – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • [lutheransforlife.org](http://lutheransforlife.org)

**Life Thoughts: December 24 – Christmas Eve –**

Almighty God has profound interest and investment in childbearing and childrearing (2 Samuel 7:12; Luke 1:31). He has made this relationship and vocation central to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Every mother and father, every son or daughter embodies the love of the Lord for humankind. While abortion attempts to conceal the realities, our sanctity-of-life advocacy gets to reveal this delightful mystery (Romans 16:25).

## Divine Service III

### Processional

Hymn: "Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus" LSB 338 (Solo)

### Confession and Absolution

Psalm 96

Kyrie (p. 186)

Gloria in Excelsis (p.187)

### Salutation and Collect of the Day

**P** The Lord be with you.

**C** And with thy spirit.

**P** Let us pray.

O God, You make us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Grant that as we joyfully receive Him as our Redeemer, we may with sure confidence behold Him when He comes to be our Judge; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

### Old Testament Reading

*Isaiah 9:2-7*

<sup>2</sup> The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,  
on them has light shined.  
<sup>3</sup>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.  
<sup>4</sup>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.  
<sup>5</sup>For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle  
tumult  
and every garment rolled in blood  
will be burned as fuel for the fire.  
<sup>6</sup>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.  
<sup>7</sup>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.

**P** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

### *Gradual*

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.**  
Sing to the Lord a new song,  
**for he has done marvelous things!**

**Epistle:** *Titus 2:11–14*

<sup>11</sup>For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation  
for all people, <sup>12</sup>training us to renounce ungodliness and  
worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly  
lives in the present age, <sup>13</sup>waiting for our blessed hope, the  
appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,  
<sup>14</sup>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.

**P**: This is the Word of the Lord.

**C**: Thanks be to God.

Alleluia and Verse (p. 190)

**Holy Gospel:** *Luke 2:1–20*

- P:** The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the second chapter.
- C** Glory be to Thee, O Lord.

<sup>1</sup>In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>And all went to be registered, each to his own town. <sup>4</sup>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, <sup>5</sup>to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. <sup>6</sup>And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. <sup>7</sup>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.

<sup>8</sup>And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. <sup>10</sup>And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. <sup>11</sup>For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup>And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” <sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup>“Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

<sup>15</sup>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.” <sup>16</sup>And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. <sup>17</sup>And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. <sup>18</sup>And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. <sup>20</sup>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.

Nicene Creed (p.191)

Office hymn: “Of The Father’s Love Begotten”                      LSB 384

Sermon

Offertory (p.192)

Prayer of the Church

### Service of the Sacrament

Preface (p.194)

Sanctus (p.195)

The Lord’s Prayer (p.196)

The Words of Institution (p.197)

Pax Domini

Agnus Dei (p.198)

Distribution of the Sacrament

**Hymns:**

“Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence”                      LSB 621

“Angel We Have Heard on High”                      LSB 368

“It Came upon the Midnight Clear”                      LSB 366

Nunc Dimittis: (p.199)

Post Communion Collect (p.201)

*The lights are turned off as a **Service of Light** begins. Pastor lights his candle from the Christ candle on the advent wreath and the “Light of Christ” will be passed through out the congregation symbolizing Christ’s light coming into the world. Please observe these notes of caution:*

- 1) **Do not tip lit candles.** Only tip your candle to light from another.

- 2) *Please be mindful of dripping wax.*
- 3) *Parents please be mindful of your younger children, and help them if they are using a candle.*

### **The Prophet Isaiah Speaks:**

**P:** Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

**C:** **The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;**

**P:** those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone

**C:** **For to us a child is born, to us a son is given;**

**P:** and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called

**C:** **Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

**P:** Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end,

**C:** **The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.**

**P:** The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;

**C:** **Arise, shine, for your light has come,**

**P:** and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

**Hymn:** "Silent Night"

LSB 363

*(Following the hymn the lights are turned on. Please extinguish your candle with a gentle puff of air, and hold it upright until the wax dries.)*

Benediction (p.202)

**Hymn:** "Joy to the World"

LSB 387

+ + +  
KIDS IN THE  
DIVINE SERVICE  
+ + +



✦ **The Eve of the Nativity of our Lord**

✦ Tonight we begin the season of Christmas. On this night, Christians all over the world are lighting candles, singing hymns and joining together to worship the one true God who made this night so special.

✦ **What makes this night different from all other nights?**

✦ Tonight is the big night! All through the season of Advent, the Church has been preparing for the birth of Jesus. Tonight we celebrate and remember His arrival! This is the night that our God became a man, born of the Virgin Mary, to save all people from their sins. What a blessed and wonderful night!



**Parents:** Before or after the service, allow your children to explore the decorations of the church. Instruct them to be reverent in God's holy places. Direct their attention to all of the lights and candles that fill the sanctuary. Remind them that Jesus is the Light of the World. He overcame the darkness of sin and saves all those who believe.

