

Bethlehem & St. John Lutheran Churches

~ The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod ~

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The Nativity of Our Lord

December 24, 2025

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: “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 trees, 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

Life Thoughts: “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14), and in Him is life (John 1:4)! By His holy incarnation, being conceived in the Virgin Mary, growing in her womb, and being born as an ordinary man in Bethlehem (Luke 2:4-6), our Lord Christ has sanctified our human nature, along with every stage of human life and development from the womb to forever.

Divine Service III

Processional

Hymn: "Once in Royal David's City"

LSB 376

(stz. 1 Solo, stzs. 2-5 all)

Confession and Absolution (p.184)

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*

- ² 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.
- ³ 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.
- ⁴ 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.
- ⁵ For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult
 and every garment rolled in blood

will be burned as fuel for the fire.
⁶For 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.
⁷Of 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*

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

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

⁸And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. ¹⁰And 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. ¹¹For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths 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, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

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

Nicene Creed (p.191)

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 (p. 197)

Agnus Dei (p.198)

Distribution of the Sacrament

Distribution Hymns:

"Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence" LSB 621

"It Came upon the Midnight Clear" LSB 366

"Away in a Manger" LSB 364

Nunc Dimittis: (p.199)

Thanksgiving (p.200)

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, Holy 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)

Closing Hymn: “Joy to the World”

LSB 387



Please join us tomorrow, Thursday, December 25th
for Christmas Day service.

Bethlehem 8 am

St. John 10 am