

December 24 – Christmas Eve

Word of God

Isaiah 7:10–14: Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, “Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test.” And he said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”

Psalms 110:1–4: The Lord says to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.” The Lord sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your enemies! Your people will offer themselves freely on the day of your power, in holy garments; from the womb of the morning, the dew of your youth will be yours. The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, “You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.”

1 John 4:7–16: Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

Matthew 1:18–25: Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her

husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

Reflection in the Field

In the stillness of the stable, humility became flesh. The One who spoke the stars into being chose to enter His creation through straw and shadow, wrapped not in royal silk but in swaddling cloth. Heaven’s song resounded in a forgotten corner of the world where beasts outnumbered men, and yet the very presence of the animals testified to the goodness of creation redeemed. The lowly manger is not a symbol of poverty alone, but of divine tenderness—a grace that stoops down to dwell among the smallest and most broken places.

For those who serve beside horses, this quiet grace feels familiar. A horse meets us without pretense or demand, responding not to words but to presence. Healing begins not in command but in stillness—in the quiet trust of breath shared between human and creature. So, too, the Christ Child comes to us without force, inviting us to draw near in wonder rather than fear. Just as the horse mirrors the calm we bring, so the Savior reflects the love of the Father who bends low to meet us in our need.

The manger, like the pasture, becomes holy ground: a place where gentleness restores, where humility opens the door to healing, and where the fragile light of love outshines every darkness. In the soft breath of the animals and the hush of the night, God’s promise takes shape—Immanuel, God with us.

Luther Reflection

“Behold how very ordinary and common things are around the birth of Christ. Everything happens quietly and in humble circumstances. The inn was full, and the Lord of all is born in a stable among the animals. There is no bed, only a manger; no attendants, only Mary and Joseph. O how simple and lowly is the birth of our dear Lord! Thus does God show that He has no regard for the proud and the mighty but is pleased with those of low estate.”

— Martin Luther, Sermon on the Nativity, Christmas 1522; Luther’s Works 52:13–14

Reflection Prompts

In what ways does Christ’s humility in the manger invite you to lay down pride or self-reliance in your own life?

Where have you experienced healing or peace through quiet presence — whether beside a horse, in prayer, or in stillness before God?

How might you create a “manger space” in your daily life — a place where humility, gentleness, and divine peace can dwell?

What does it mean for you personally that God is with us — not only in glory, but in the simplest, most ordinary moments?

Closing Prayer

Gracious Lord Jesus, You chose the humility of the manger over the majesty of the throne, showing us that true strength is found in gentleness. In Your lowly birth, You drew near to our weakness, wrapping divinity in tenderness so that no heart would be beyond Your reach. Teach us to welcome You with the same stillness that settles a restless horse, to find in Your presence the quiet healing of trust and peace. May our lives mirror the humility of that holy night—simple, faithful, and open to Your light. Amen.

*The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you;
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.
(Numbers 6:24–26)*