



Worship Notes

Thursday, December 24, 2020

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Musicians:
Janice Algren
Jamie Reynolds

Dear Friends and Family,

This is our special Christmas Eve and Sunday, December 27th Worship Notes. With this newsletter, you will receive the links to:

- Christmas Eve Traditional Worship
- Christmas Eve Blue-Christmas Worship
- Sunday, December 27th Worship
- “One Silent Night” Pageant video

Feel free to share these links with all your friends and family. Have a blessed Christmas.

Thank you for your generous support of our ministry

Your continued giving makes an impact in our community as our church continues to be a beacon of hope.

Mailing your donations to the church office and maintaining your automatic giving helps support ministries across the nation and around the world.

In December, all poinsettia donations will go to our Vision and Purpose Giving to support the Warren County Ministerium Emergency Aid Fund.



Please keep in prayer the following:



Bradley Anderson, Josie Blake, Bev Coulter, Nancy Dowell, John Ellison, Linda Ellison, Dave Erlandson, Jim Erlandson, Brad and Jodie Haist, Cassie Jern & Family, Delores Johnson, Graham Johnson, Bob Kerschke, Ila Roseberry, Norman Worthington, Evelyn Volz, Darrell Thirtyacre, Donna Larson, Beckie Bean, Joy Johnson, Pat Root, Diane Bradley, Anna Lovdahl, Kim Anderson, Matthew Council, Rose Youngquist, Kathi Cruce

Please let the church office know any updates that are needed to our prayer list.

Online Worship

In 2020, we were unable to be in person for Easter and now for Christmas. The needs of community safety outweigh our sentimental needs of being together.

“Do not fear” is a message the angel says a lot during the Christmas story. And we still need to hear those words today. “Do not fear,” the angel says to us. Our singing favorite Christmas hymns together is not what brings the Christ-child into the world. In fact, since it has already happened, there is nothing that can stop our joy—not a pandemic, not anything. Even as we worship online this season, there is great joy to be had. May these special worship services increase your joy this season.

This week in worship



We have the gift of many talented musicians in our congregation.

Those talented musicians are on full display this season. Thank you to everyone who contributed to our worship services.

The Blue Christmas worship service was recorded at Faith Lutheran Church, Wataga. It begins in darkness and the light increases as we move from acknowledging our grief to discovering the source of hope and joy.

May each of these Christmas Eve worship opportunities give you comfort and hope this season.

Helping with online worship for December 24

Worship Assistant: Heide Gallagher

Reader: Emma Nuckles

Lord's Prayer: Cohen and Reese Anderson

Helping with online worship for December 27

Worship Assistant: Heide Gallagher

Reader: Mark and Ellen Shrader

Lord's Prayer: Cohen and Reese Anderson

Christmas time musicians

Janice Algren, Jamie Reynolds,

Chip Algren, Jim Johnson, Heide Gallagher

Collin Nuckles, Trace Gallagher, Leo Ramer

Derek and Ayla Johnston, Kathy Janssen

One Silent Night

This silent-film style Christmas story has become a passion project for Pastor Jamie. It tells the story of a tree. Yes, that's right, a tree. Now you may be wondering, where in the Bible does it say a tree was at the birth of Jesus? Well, it doesn't. But let's imagine a tree being a vital part of the story.

The tree begins as a background sight gag, helping the viewer to sense distance as Mary and Joseph, and later the Magi, travel between places. This tree offers an oasis of water, and kind directions to our wanderers. In the terrible scene when Herod sends troops to Bethlehem, the tree stands in the way, trying to block what is about to happen. The centurion cuts the tree down and marches forward. The tragedy of the slaughter of innocents symbolized with a fictional tree. Yet the tree is not done. Wait for the final scene, when the cast sings "Silent Night". What should appear? Our friend the tree, only this time in a new shape that foreshadows our Savior's victory at Easter.

Blessings

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors."

Luke 2:14

Imagine you are driving down the road late at night. You are coming home from second shift, or late night errands, or picking up the kids from grandma's house where they could have fun while you labored to get all of Christmas perfect at home. Suddenly before you on the road appears a person. The person is radiating bright white light. You aren't sure if you have just stepped into a horror movie set or if that last cup of coffee you had while wrapping had some bad creamer in it. As you slam on the brakes and come to a screeching halt, the person raises their arms. Though your windows are closed (it is the cold of winter, after all) and your Christmas music is loud (sing it proud) the voice of this person comes in clearly.

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom God favors."

Sure, we aren't likely to see angels standing on our front lawn or in the middle of our neighborhood streets anytime soon. Or will we? Maybe, we don't get the grand view as the ancient shepherds—but perhaps the sight of a gathered people singing in front of a church becomes a sight some passerby pulls over to see and hear something that offers a glimpse of hope. Maybe the donations we offer to a place like Jamieson Center become the gift of hope for someone praying for a message or a sign from above. Maybe the lights we hang on our homes become a radiant beacon of faith, assuring us the darkness will not win.

There are so many ways the angels are experienced today. The trick is, God's messengers (the ancient Greek word for angel means messenger) don't come as radiant, winged beings magically popping out of thin air. God's messengers are you and me. We are the ones who get to tell people peace among those whom God favors. Imagine that. Imagine realizing you are the one who is a messenger to someone else. Imagine being the one who tells someone they have peace because they are favored by God. Imagine a person who has never heard the words, "God loves you" hearing those words for the first time. Sure, the Christmas story has been around a long time. Everyone knows Jesus was born, and everyone vaguely knows the manger and the shepherds and the wise men and yet not everyone knows this to be true: God loves them. They need a messenger. They need you. I don't recommend stepping out into traffic to stop people to tell them this message, though. I do recommend singing it loudly and proudly. In peace, Pastor Jamie