



Christmas Lights

Seeing Christ in the Decorations
of the Season

Every Heart Prepare

December 10th , 2025

Second Wednesday Advent Service

Noon and 7 PM

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As We Gather

“Prepare!” is often the watchword of the season as the world gets ready for another celebration of Christmas. An integral part of any preparation is decoration. We see decorations everywhere this time of year. The world may not comprehend the real meaning of Christmas, but even secular preparations use many of the same decorations beloved by Christians—an appropriation we shouldn’t mind at all, because these decorations point us to Christ. This year, as we look forward again to the coming of the Messiah, we take a fresh look at how the adornments of the season draw our eyes to Jesus, that we may more richly behold the love, peace, joy, and hope He comes to bring as this beauty is set before us.

Today, we focus on lights. You see them everywhere this time of year. Some neighborhoods even compete, and tourist destinations spend millions on attractive light displays. Like evergreens, this is something nonreligious people do this time of year without appreciating their true significance. Yet we know that Jesus is the light of the world (John 8:12). He came to restore righteousness to the world. This restoration continues to unfold through the ministry He has entrusted to His church. As Zechariah sang, “In the tender compassion of our God, the dawn from on high shall break upon us to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death and to guide our feet into the way of peace” (LSB, Benedictus, Morning Prayer). We gather together to bask in the light of Jesus that His Word would have its way with us and so reflect His saving light into the darkness that remains in our world..

Hark the Glad Sound

LSB 349

Hark the glad sound! The Savior comes,
The Savior promised long;
Let ev’ry heart prepare a throne
And ev’ry voice a song.

He comes the pris’ners to release,
In Satan’s bondage held.
The gates of brass before Him burst,
The iron fetters yield.

He comes the broken heart to bind,
The bleeding soul to cure,
And with the treasures of His grace
To enrich the humble poor.

Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,
Thy welcome shall proclaim,
And heav’n’s eternal arches ring
With Thy belovèd name.

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Invocation

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Confession and Absolution

Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Kyrie

LSB 944

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

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Service of the Word

Prayer of the Day

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

Lord of light and life, You came into our world to remove sin and restore us to righteousness. Shine Your light anew into our hearts and cleanse us from all the deceiving evils that lurk within them, that we may live without fear of this world but joyfully anticipate Your glorious return; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

⁹ But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

⁶ 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.

⁷ 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.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Second Reading**2 Corinthians 4:3-6**

³ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴ In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵ For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Holy Gospel**John 1:1-9**

The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the First Chapter.

Glory to You, O Lord.

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴ In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. ⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

⁷ He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸ He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

⁹ The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

The night will soon be ending;
The dawn cannot be far.
Let songs of praise ascending
Now greet the Morning Star!
All you whom darkness frightens
With guilt or grief or pain,
God's radiant Star now brightens
And bids you sing again.

The One whom angels tended
Comes near, a child, to serve;
Thus God, the judge offended,
Bears all our sins deserve.
The guilty need not cower,
For God has reconciled
Through His redemptive power
All those who trust this child.

God dwells with us in darkness
And makes the night as day;
Yet we resist the brightness
And turn from God away.
But grace does not forsake us,
However far we run.
God claims us still as children
Through Mary's infant Son.

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Message

Pastor Nathan McCarty

Prayers of the Church

In peace, let us pray to the Lord:
Lord, have mercy.

For eyes to behold the Father's hand in all creation, let us pray to the Lord:
Lord, have mercy.

For awareness of beauty and the living traditions of the church that bring Christ to our eyes
through arts and crafts, let us pray to the Lord:
Lord, have mercy.

That we may see the signs of Christ's return even as we celebrate His birth, and encourage
one another all the more as we see the Day drawing near, let us pray to the Lord:
Lord, have mercy.

That we may be living testimonies of new life in Christ through our loving service to our
neighbor—both in word and in deed, let us pray to the Lord:
Lord, have mercy.

That we may be thankful for the bountiful harvest we enjoy amid the many festivities of this season, and be generous to the poor, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

That we may love one another as God so loved us, forgive one another, and work together in the unity we have in Christ Jesus, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

That we may not be lured into temptation or despair or be distracted by the false Christmases around us, but always hold the true meaning of Christmas in our hearts, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

The Lord's Prayer

Service of the Sacrament

The Words of Our Lord

Abide With Me

LSB 878 (Evening Service Only)

Abide with me, fast falls the eventide.
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.

I need Thy presence ev'ry passing hour;
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's pow'r?
Who like Thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with me.

Come not in terrors, as the King of kings,
But kind and good, with healing in Thy wings;
Tears for all woes, a heart for ev'ry plea.
Come, Friend of sinners, thus abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O Thou who changest not, abide with me.

I fear no foe with Thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still if Thou abide with me!

Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies.
Heav'n's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

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Dismissal

Post-Communion Prayer of Thanksgiving

Let us pray.

We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Blessing of God's People (Benediction)

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

LSB 357 (vs. 1 & 6)

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear. **Refrain**

Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, Thou Dayspring from on high,
And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight. **Refrain**

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