

Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

Christmas Program Advent 3 December 17, 2023

Prelude

Welcome: Pastor Scott lets everyone know how the pageant will work and thanks them all for being there!

Announcements

GATHERING SONG *Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah* (ELW 240) vs. 1,2 3

1 Light one candle to watch for Messiah:
let the light banish darkness.
He shall bring salvation to Israel,
God fulfills the promise.

2 Light two candles to watch for Messiah:
let the light banish darkness.
He shall feed the flock like a shepherd,
gently lead them homeward.

3 Light three candles to watch for Messiah:
let the light banish darkness.
Lift your heads and lift high the gateway
for the King of glory.

Text: Wayne L. Wold, b. 1954. Text © 1984 Fortress Press, admin. Augsburg Fortress. Used by permission: One License #A-728050.

Narrator 1:

Welcome everyone to Bethlehem! Let us open our eyes and ears and listen to the story of when Christ was born.

Part I: Mary and Joseph

Have you ever wanted to play Mary or Joseph? This is your chance. Come forward and help us tell the story.

Those who wish to portray Mary and Joseph are invited forward. Marys are given a shawl or scarf; Josephs are given a bathrobe.

Song: ELW 293 That Boy: Child of Mary.

Refrain

That boy-child of Mary was born in a stable,
a manger his cradle in Bethlehem.

1 What shall we call him, child of the manger?
What name is given in Bethlehem? **Refrain**

2 His name is Jesus, God ever with us,
God given for us in Bethlehem. **Refrain**

3 How can he save us, how can he help us,
born here among us in Bethlehem? **Refrain**

4 Gift of the Father, to human mother,
makes him our brother in Bethlehem. **Refrain**

5 One with the Father, he is our Savior,
heaven-sent helper in Bethlehem. **Refrain**

6 Gladly we praise him, love and adore him,
give ourselves to him in Bethlehem. **Refrain**

Text: Tom Colvin, 1925-2000. Text © 1969 Hope Publishing Company. All rights reserved. Used by permission. One License # A-728050.

When the Marys and Josephs are on stage, narrator begins.

Narrator 1:

Mary and Joseph, a pitiful sight.
So tired and dirty, they gave me a fright.
Sickly or dying? What was the matter?
“A room in the inn?” Impossible chatter!
“My rooms are all taken; not one empty bed.
There’ll not be a room in all Bethlehem,” I said.
But their eyes told a story of hunger and need.
I couldn’t avoid them, so I tried a good deed.
I cleaned up the stable: Rachel cooked up a meal.
We helped all we could, at least, that’s how I feel.
For we noticed that Mary was expecting – and soon!
So we prepared for delivery right under the moon.
The child came so quickly. His face seemed a light.
As if God had shone God’s presence so bright.
Joseph said softly. “It’s Jesus, my friend.”
God sent him among us to bring to an end fear and
hatred, darkness and sin.
Instead God gave light, to let God’s love in.

Part II: The Animals

There were many animals who were the stable that night. Please come forward to be one of the goats, sheep, cows, and watch the birth of Jesus with awe.

*Those who wish to be goats, sheep, cows or donkeys are invited by narrator to come forward.
Animals are given masks or hats.*

“The Friendly Beasts.” When the animals are on stage, narrator begins.

1 Jesus, our brother, strong and good,
was humbly born in a stable rude,
and the friendly beasts around Him stood,
Jesus, our brother, strong and good.

2 “I,” said the donkey, shaggy and brown,
“I carried His mother uphill and down,
I carried His mother to Bethlehem town;
I,” said the donkey, shaggy and brown.

3 “I,” said the cow, all white and red,
“I gave Him my manger for his bed,
I gave Him hay to pillow His head;
I,” said the cow, all white and red.

4 “I,” said the sheep with curly horn,
“I gave Him my wool for His blanket warm,
He wore my coat on Christmas morn;
I,” said the sheep with curly horn.

5 “I,” said the dove, from the rafters high,
“I cooed Him to sleep that he should not cry,
we cooed Him to sleep, my mate and I;
I,” said the dove, from the rafters high.

6 Thus all the beasts, by some good spell,
in the stable dark were glad to tell
of the gifts they gave Emmanuel,
the gifts they gave Emmanuel.

Old English Carol.

Narrator:

The animals were calm, quieter than normal.

They often were noisy, and never too formal.

They always were eating, or else they were sleeping.

The stable required continuous sweeping.

But on Christmas night, they were strangely in awe at the sight of the babe and all that they saw.

It’s as if they were aware that God had just hushed them,

Had fed and watered and carefully brushed them.

They knew, I believe, that God had been able to work a miracle there in that stable.

Part III: Angels

If you want to be an angel or perhaps you already are come forward to tell the story to the shepherds. *Those who wish to be angels are invited forward. Gold and silver garland halos are placed on their heads.*

ELW 270 “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing.” When the angels are on stage, narrator begins.

1 Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn king;
peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled."
Joyful, all you nations, rise;
join the triumph of the skies;
with angelic hosts proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Refrain

Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn king!"

2 Christ, by highest heav'n adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!
Hail, incarnate deity!
Pleased as man with us to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel!

Refrain

3 Hail the heav'n-born Prince of peace!
Hail the Sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
ris'n with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise each child of earth,
born to give us second birth. Refrain

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, alt. Text: Public Domain.

Narrator:

We don't often see angels in flight. But on the first Christmas, they lit up the night. They appeared to the shepherds and, boy, were they scared! "Angels!" cried one. "Will any lives be spared?" "Are they here to destroy us? Is our time on earth up? Have we seen our last day? Have we drunk our last cup?" But "Peace on earth; goodwill to all" was the angels' sweet song; that was their call. With a light show that dazzled all who did see, the angels hallelujahed and sang out with glee. "To Bethlehem, shepherds!" the angels directed. "To see Jesus the Christ, whom God has perfected." "Go worship the Lord and follow his ways. And you'll find Christmas joy for all of your days."

Part IV: Shepherd

If you want to be a shepherd on this holy day Come forward and receive your staff. *Those who wish to be shepherds are invited forward. They are given candy canes to represent shepherd's staffs.*

ELW 290 "Go Tell It on the Mountain." When the shepherds are on stage, narrator begins.

Refrain

Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and ev'rywhere;
go tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born!

1 While shepherds kept their watching
o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens
there shone a holy light. Refrain

2 The shepherds feared and trembled
when, lo, above the earth
rang out the angel chorus
that hailed our Savior's birth. Refrain

3 Down in a lonely manger
the humble Christ was born;
and God sent us salvation
that blessed Christmas morn. **Refrain**

Text: African American spiritual, refrain; John W. Work Jr., 1872-1925, stanzas, alt. Text: Public Domain

Narrator:

The shepherds, as you know, were scared and stunned.
"Too much hard work or too much hot sun!"
That's what they thought; that's how they explained.
Perplexed and afraid, they loudly complained.
But the angels' song calmed them, and then they believed.
They rejoiced when they knew and they were quite relieved.
They went to the stable and worshiped the Lord.
Then they left and began to spread the good Word.

Part V: Wise Persons and Star

Do you think you are wise persons? Come forward to receive your crown of glory and worship the King.

Those who wish to be Wise Persons are invited forward. Colorful construction-paper crowns with "jewels" are placed on their heads. An older child has been asked in advance to bring forward a brilliant star extended high on a stick.

WOV 646 “We Three Kings.” When the Wise Persons are on stage, narrator begins.

1 We three kings of Orient are;
bearing gifts we traverse afar,
field and fountain, moor and mountain,
following yonder star. **Refrain**
Oh, star of wonder, star of night,
star with royal beauty bright;
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light!

2 Born a king on Bethlehem's plain,
gold I bring to crown him again;
king forever, ceasing never,
over us all to reign. **Refrain**

3 Frankincense to offer have I;
incense owns a deity nigh;
prayer and praising, gladly raising,
worshipping God Most High. **Refrain**

4 Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume
breathes a life of gathering gloom;
sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,
sealed in the stone-cold tomb. **Refrain**

5 Glorious now behold him arise,
King and God and Sacrifice;
heav'n sings alleluia:
alleluia the earth replies. **Refrain**

Text: John Henry Hopkins, Jr., 1820-1891, alt. Text: Public Domain

Narrator:

The star that shone brightly led Wise Persons at night
To Bethlehem's stable, to the manger's strange light.

They came bearing gifts, in worship and love, praising God for God's wonders from heaven
above.

The Wise Men were kings and they knelt on the straw.

It was the oddest of things that ever I saw.

If kings bring him treasure, then maybe you, too, can worship with pleasure the person of Jesus,
who came to us all.

So worthy of praise, for he brings us God's call.

“I am the way, the truth, and the life, Come to God for healing from strife.

Come unto me, all you who labor, And I'll give you rest forever to savour.”

Sing ELW 807 vs. 1 and 3“Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing”

1 Come, thou Fount of every blessing;
tune my heart to sing thy grace;
streams of mercy, never ceasing,
call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
sung by flaming tongues above;
praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,
mount of God's unchanging love!

3 O to grace how great a debtor
daily I'm constrained to be!
Let that grace now, like a fetter,
bind my wandering heart to thee.
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
prone to leave the God I love;
here's my heart; O take and seal it;
seal it for thy courts above.

Text: Robert Robinson, 1735-1790, alt. Text: Public Domain.

Part VI: Conclusion

T'was the very first Christmas and there in the manger,
The Christ-child was born; it couldn't have been stranger.
Shepherds saw angels; Wise Men, a star.
They came to see Jesus; they came afar.
They knew he was special – God's very own son,
He came to the earth to love everyone.
He grew up in time, the Savior, the Lord,
To be worshiped each day, to be loved and adored.
So now at Christmas we all take delight.
In the gift that God gave us that first Christmas night.
In the gifts we receive and the ones that we give,
Let us never forget, it's in Christ that we live.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

OFFERING

Offertory - ELW 262 - Wait for the Lord- Sung 2 times

Text: Psalm 38:15, Psalm 69:32, Psalm 123:2, Isaiah40:3-5, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 7:7, Philippians 4:4-5. Text © 1984 Les Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. Used by permission. One License: #A-728050.

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

God of mercy and grace, the eyes of all wait upon you, and you open your hand in blessing. Fill us with good things at your table, that we may come to the help of all in need, through Jesus Christ, our redeemer and Lord. **Amen.**

GREAT THANKSGIVING DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ.

In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh
you have opened the eyes of faith
to a new and radiant vision of your glory,
that, beholding the God made visible,
we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see.

And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Holy, holy, holy Lord,

God of power and might,

heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:

This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

Our Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy name,

thy kingdom come,

thy will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those

who trespass against us;

and lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,

and the power, and the glory,

forever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

COMMUNION

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

and each person may respond Amen.

COMMUNION SONG

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

DISTRIBUTION SONGS

Hallelujah – Leonard Cohen – Rev. Sue Nevile

Hymn What Feast of Love 487 ELW

Text: Delores Dufner, OSB, b. 1939. Text © 1993 Delores Dufner, published by OCP Publications. All rights reserved. Used by permission. One License: #A-728050.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray.

God for whom we wait, in this meal you give us a foretaste of that day when the hungry will be fed with good things. Send us forth to make known your deeds and to proclaim the greatness of your name, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you and give you peace. **Amen.**

Sing ELW 267 “Joy to the World”

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her king;
let ev'ry heart prepare him room
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

3 No more let sin and sorrow grow
nor thorns infest the ground;
he comes to make his blessings flow
far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found,
far as, far as the curse is found.

4 He rules the world with truth and grace
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748. Text: Public Domain.

SENDING

Go in peace. Share the good news.

Thanks be to God!

Postlude

Scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible © 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA

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NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please pray for those who are ill, in hospital, or requested special prayers: Jason, Martha, Charlotte, Ella, Rhonda, Heather, Aileen, Ruth, Anneliese, Kaitlyn, Vaughan, Jack, Joan, Mervin, Don, Judy, Larry, Garnet, Lori, Erin, Betty, Kristine, Alex, Karl.

CHRISTMAS DONATIONS

If you wish to make a donation to a special fund in memory of a loved one, or in thankfulness for God's blessings, please make your written request on a donation form (*located at the entrances to the sanctuary*), and deposit it either in the offering basket, or in the office correspondence mailbox located on the steel office door by the elevator. Filling out this form will ensure that your announcement will appear exactly as you wish. **Please submit your Christmas donation bulletin information no later than Thursday December 20th to be included in the Christmas bulletin.**

DECEMITTEN-MITCEMBER

December is the month we will prioritize fingers and hands. Bring in your mittens for the "DECEMITTEN" tree! Let's make a difference helping the coldest of us stay warm and dry this cold winter season.

UGLY CHRISTMAS SWEATER SUNDAY DECEMBER 31 2023

Want to have some fun? Wear your ugly sweater on Dec 31 and see who is the best!

CHRISTMAS SERVICES (NOTE SERVICE TIME CHANGES)

Sunday December 24th:

10:00 am 4th Sunday of Advent Service & Holy Communion

3:00 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service & Holy Communion

7:00 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service & Holy Communion

Sunday December 31st:

10:00 am 1st Sunday of Christmas, Service of Lessons and Carols

PLEASE NOTE:

Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church office will be **closed** from **Sunday December 24 to Tuesday January 2.**

<p>ATTENDANCE Sunday December 10th –79</p>
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CONTACT INFORMATION

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