

Messiah Lutheran Church

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The Reverend William N. Esborn
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Pastor
Senior Choir Director
Junior Choir Director
Organist
Altar Guild

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE December 24, 2013 -- 7:00 PM

*Please Stand as **YOU** Are Able

CHIMES: CALL TO WORSHIP

PRELUDE

[A Time for Meditation and Prayer]

GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

On a long winter evening we gather to proclaim the coming of the light. Isaiah announces that the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Paul reminds us that the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all. In the familiar account of Christ's birth, the evening sky is bright with the heavenly host singing, "Glory to God in the highest." Amid our broken world we proclaim that the prince of peace is born among us. God comes to us in human flesh—in Christ's body and blood—so that we may be bearers of divine light to all the world.

TIME OF SILENCE

* INVOCATION (*from rear*)

OPENING GOSPEL: Luke 2:1-20

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see--I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth 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 heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

[¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.]

* PROCESSIONAL CAROL "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
come and behold him, born the king of angels;

Refrain: O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

The highest, most holy, light of light eternal,
born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;
Son of the Father now in flesh appearing! **Refrain**

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God . . . in . . . the . . highest: **Refrain**

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee . . be . . glory giv'n!
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing: **Refrain**

PLACING OF THE CHRIST CHILD IN THE CRECHE

* PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Let us pray...

C Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: Isaiah 9:2-7

²The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness--on them light has shined. ³You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. ⁴For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. ⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

OLD TESTAMENT CAROL "O Little Town of Bethlehem" (vs. 1)

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
yet in the dark streets shineth the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

PSALM 96 (responsively by verse)

Sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth.

²**Sing to the LORD, bless the name of the LORD; proclaim God's salvation from day to day.**

³Declare God's glory among the nations and God's wonders among all peoples.

⁴**For great is the LORD and greatly to be praised, more to be feared than all gods.**

⁵As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols; but you, O LORD, have made the heavens.

⁶**Majesty and magnificence are in your presence; power and splendor are in your sanctuary.**

⁷Ascribe to the LORD, you families of the peoples, ascribe to the LORD honor and power.

⁸**Ascribe to the LORD the honor due the holy name; bring offerings and enter the courts of the LORD.**

⁹Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness; tremble before the LORD, all the earth.

¹⁰**Tell it out among the nations: "The LORD is king! The one who made the world so firm that it cannot be moved will judge the peoples with equity."**

¹¹Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea thunder and all that is in it; let the field be joyful and all that is therein.

¹²**Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy at your coming, O LORD, for you come to judge the earth.**

¹³You will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with your truth.

PSALM CAROL "Joy to the World" (vs. 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.

THE EPISTLE: Titus 2:11-14

The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, ¹²training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, ¹³while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. ¹⁴He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

EPISTLE CAROL *"It Came upon the Midnight Clear"* (vs. 1)

It came upon the mid-night clear, that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heav'n's all-gracious king."
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.

* THE GOSPEL: John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. ⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

* GOSPEL CAROL *"Silent Night, Holy Night!"*

Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight;
glories stream from heaven afar, heav'nly hosts. . sing, Alleluia!
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!

Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light
radiant beams from your holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth, Jesus, Lord, at your birth.

HOMILY

Pastor Esborn

* CAROL OF THE DAY “What Child Is This”

What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary’s lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the king, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!

Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;
hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary!

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; come, peasants, king, to own him.
The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts en-throne him.
Raise, raise the song on high, the virgin sings her lullaby;
joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary!

* APOSTLES’ CREED (all)

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

OFFERING

ORGAN OFFERTORY

[Please pass the Friendship Pads down your pew for all to sign and then back to the center aisle so everyone has the opportunity to read the names. We request that our guests also give us their home address. Thank you].

ANTHEM

“Come To Us Little King”

Junior Choir

* SUNG OFFERTORY CAROL “Let All Together Praise Our God” (vs. 1)

Let all together praise our God before the highest throne;
today God o-pens heav’n again and sends the only Son, and sends the only Son.

* OFFERING PRAYER

P Good and loving God, we rejoice in the birth of Jesus, who came among the poor to bring the riches of your grace. As you have blessed us with your gifts, let them be blessing for others. With the trees of the field, with all earth and heaven, we shout for joy at the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C Amen.

* PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

P In joy and wonder, we pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

A brief silence.

P Increase the joy of your people who gather this night to celebrate the arrival of your Anointed One. Send us out to announce all that you have done for your people. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P Raise our voices in the song of all creation. With earth and heavens, seas, fields, and trees, lead us in proclaiming your salvation and declaring your glory throughout the world. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P Bring glad tidings of peace to every nation. Break the rod of the oppressor. Cover the global community in the compassionate authority of your Son, our Sovereign. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P Give birth to hope in the lives of those who are lost or helpless. Send your Spirit of healing and comfort to all who are in need. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P As you made yourself manifest in Christ, our Savior, make your salvation known also through us, his body. Shape us into a people who are zealous for good and righteous deeds. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

P All the saints rejoice in the eternal light of your salvation. Inspire us to rejoice in all things, trusting in your promises fulfilled, until you come among your people again. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P Almighty God, we entrust to you all for whom we pray, confident that you fulfill your promises through Christ our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

* THE LORD'S PRAYER ['trespasses'] **(all)**

C 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

* BENEDICTION

P May the Word that Mary brought to birth carry you into new and abundant life.

May the Word that Joseph cradled in his arms enfold you with love and strength.

May the Word that angels proclaimed in song bring harmony to our world.

And the blessing of almighty God, the Father, the + Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always.

C Amen (sung)

* RECESSIONAL CAROL "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born 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 pro-claim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Refrain: Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born king!"

Christ, by highest heav'n adored, Christ, the ever-lasting Lord,
late in time be-hold him come, off-spring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the God-head see! Hail, incarnate deity!
Pleased as man with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel! **Refrain**

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**

* POSTLUDE

[The candles remain lit, symbolizing that the light of the Christ Child is shining in our world].

IN THE NAME OF THE CHRIST CHILD we cordially welcome all parents and children and all who worship with us at the Children's Christmas Service. May love and peace, God's gift to us in the Christ Child, fill all our hearts this night and always.

ATTENTION KIDS! At the time of the children's sermon, all children are invited to come forward to gather around the pastor in the chancel area.

FRIENDSHIP PADS -- We invite everyone (members and visitors) worshiping with us this evening to sign the Friendship Pads during the Organ Offertory. If you are a visitor, please be sure to include your address when signing. The pads are found on the aisle seat of each pew in the nave, and in each section of the Adult Sunday School Room.

THE CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE of Carols and Communion will be held at 10:00 p.m. and will be preceded by a special half-hour of Christmas music at 9:30 p.m. with harpist Louis Lynch of Camp Hill, PA. The young people and members of the congregation will be conducting the Candlelight Service and assisting with communion.

THE CHRISTMAS OFFERING ENVELOPE in your packet, plus the loose plate offering at the Christmas Eve Service, goes to the Matthew 25 Fund to help needy people and situations throughout the year. Please be as generous as you can.

THE CONGREGATION has been collecting a monetary Christmas gift for the pastor. If you wish to contribute and have not already done so during Advent, you may place your gift in the offering plate (designate it as "Pastor's Christmas"), in the special box on the table in the Adult Sunday School Room, or to the church office during the week. Please make any checks payable to the pastor rather than the church.

WE WISH ALL OF YOU a Christmas filled with blessings from God and His peace which passes all understanding.

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO GAVE POINSETTIAS to decorate the church in honor of Christ's birth.

TO THE GLORY OF GOD:

In loving memory of Floyd and Lois Covert by Larry and Shirley Covert.

In memory of loved ones by Larry and Shirley Covert.

In memory of John and Helen Sieber by George and Kay Varner and family.

In memory of loved ones by Sieber and Ona Stoner.

In memory of loved ones by Don and Barb Geedey and Velma Suloff.

In memory of Blaine and Matthew Reynolds by Margaret Reynolds.

In memory of Wanda Smith and Rita Smith by Richard Smith.

In memory of my grandfather, Harry B. Fairman, by Becca, Rich, Noah and Blaine Walters.

In memory of my grandparents, John and Hulda St. Clair, by Bob St. Clair.

In memory of my grandparents, Lester and Grace Parsons, by Bob St. Clair.

In honor of my parents, Robert and Jeanette St. Clair, by Bob St. Clair.

In memory of family and friends whom we miss by Paul Goss and family.

In memory of loved ones by Anne B. McNaught.

In memory of Clarence and Beulah Leister and 'Hap' Smith by the Leister, Holderman, Kint and Beward families and Dottie Smith.

In memory of Lloyd and Florence Showers by the Leister, Holderman, Kint and Beward families.

In memory of Donald Sr., Peg and Ronald 'Tink' Beward by Nick and Bethanie Beward.

In memory of Gerald and Evelyn (Nootie) Davis and George and Evelyn Shirk by family.

In memory of my grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Stuck, by Kenton Stuck.

In memory of my grandfather, Mr. Melvin Bortell, by Kenton Stuck.

In memory of my grandmother, Mrs. Margaret Rodriguez, by Kenton Stuck.

In memory of Jean, George and Bill Flint and Mary Lorraine Hazard by the George Hazard, Jr. family.

In honor of family and friends by George and Marylou Hazard.

In memory of Richard Stetler, Sr. by wife Sis Stetler and family.

In memory of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Tyson by daughter and family.

In memory of Joyce and Mickey Yetter by Jim Yetter and family.

In memory of Diane and Denise Hower and George H. Dullea by Herman and Judy Armstrong.

In memory of Floss Smith and Martha Berryman by Judy Armstrong.

In memory of husband and loved ones by Midge Rowell.

In loving memory of Daniel and Thelma Dreibelbis and Abram and Ruth Shoener by the Stephen Dreibelbis family.

In memory of parents, Harry and Martha Mummah, by Ken and Ruth Mummah.

In memory of parents, Dale H. and Charlotte Henry, by Ken and Ruth Mummah.

In memory of Mr. and Mrs. Charles S. Miller by family.

In memory of Charles M. Miller and Evelyn Showers by family.

In memory of Morgan C. Strawser by Patsy and Jerret Strawser.

In memory of Roy Morral by the Morral family.

In memory of Nora Ella Singer by Ed Singer and family.

In honor of loved ones by the Pines, Stoner and Walton families.

In memory of my Mom and Dad, Mortimer and Mary Yocum, by daughter Nancy Yocum Kreiner.

In loving memory of Barry T. Stratford by Betty and family.

In memory of loved ones by Neil and Pat Fisher.

In memory of Steward and Beulah Renninger by Neil and Pat Fisher.

In memory and in honor of loved ones by Larry and Diana Wise and family.

In memory of James Harvey by Debbie Meinsler.

In memory of loved ones by Leon and Madeline Kramer.

The large Poinsettia on the piano in the front of the sanctuary was placed in memory of Joyce Yetter by Vernon Gunnion and family.

The white Poinsettia on top of the poinsettia tree is placed in honor of God's people at Messiah by Pastor Esborn.