THE Greatest GIFT

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:11)

Christmas Song Service



Messiah Lutheran Church and School December 25, 2023

Greeting:

P: Oh, come, let us sing to the Lord, let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come into His presence with thanksgiving, let us make a joyful noise to Him with songs of praise.

C: We have seen His glory, the glory of the only begotten Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

(Sung)

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!

P: The Lord be with you! C: And with your spirit!



P: As the Lord Jesus once came in love and great poverty to be born in a manger in Bethlehem,

C: So now He comes to us in the richness of His Word. 2. Highest, most holy, Light of Light eternal, Born of a virgin, a mortal He comes; Son of the Father Now in flesh appearing!



(Refrain)

P: As Jesus once came from heaven to earth to live with people,C: So now He comes in the Word, to give the light of the Spirit.

P: As He came to heal, to forgive, and to save,C: So now He comes to give us the same blessings of His love.

P: Let us praise the great name of the Lord.

C: Let us sing with our hearts the great songs of His Word. 3. Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation, Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above! Glory to God—In the highest:



P: Let us now celebrate His birth.C: And tell of His coming to the ends of the earth.

P: Amen!

C: Let it be so. Amen!

4. 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)



Prayer:

C: Grant, Almighty God, that the birth of Your only-begotten Son in human flesh may set us free, who through sin are held in bondage; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

FIRST LESSON: Genesis 3:8-15 God announces in the Garden of Eden that the woman's Offspring will crush the serpent's head.

Hymn 362:1-3: O Sing of Christ

SECOND LESSON: Genesis 22:15-18 God promises to faithful Abraham that through his offspring all the nations of the earth will be blessed.

Hymn 352:1-3: Let the Earth Now Praise the Lord

THIRD LESSON: Isaiah 9:2, 6, 7 Christ's birth and kingdom are foretold by the prophet Isaiah.

Hymn 412:1-3: The People That in Darkness Sat

FOURTH LESSON: Isaiah 11:1-4, 6-9 The spiritual peace which Christ will bring is portrayed by the total absence of violence.

Hymn: Peace Came to Earth (page 8)

FIFTH LESSON: Isaiah 60:1-6, 19 The prophet in exile foresees the coming of the glory of the Lord.

Hymn: Lord, You Were Rich beyond All Splendor (page 9)

SIXTH LESSON: Luke 1:26-35, 38 The angel Gabriel greets the blessed Virgin Mary.

Hymn 361: O Little Town of Bethlehem

Responsive Reading: Psalm 96 (selected verses) P: Sing to the LORD a new song; C: sing to the LORD, all the earth.

P: Sing to the LORD, praise his name; C: proclaim his salvation day after day.

P: Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns."C: The world is firmly established, it cannot be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity.

P: Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;C: let the sea resound, and all that is in it; let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them.

Choir: And the Glory of the Lord (Handel's Messiah) And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

SEVENTH LESSON: Matthew 1:18-23 The angel tells Joseph of the birth of Jesus.

Hymn 364: Away in a Manger

EIGHTH LESSON: Luke 2:1-14 St. Luke tells of the birth of Jesus.

Pastor: And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.

Men: Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child.

Women: So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Pastor: Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.

Teens and younger: Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."

All: And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

Hymn 380: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Offering

Christmas Prayer

P: Lord Jesus, You left Your home in heaven to join us here on this broken earth. You left the warmth of Your Father's embrace to join us in the cold world. You fill us with awe. C: Lord Jesus, accept our offering of praise.

> Where Shepherds lately knelt and kept the angel's word, I come in half-belief, a pilgrim strangely stirred; But there is room and welcome there for me, But there is room and welcome there for me.



P: Lord Jesus, we are sinful from birth, but You were born pure and holy. Born of a virgin, You chose to rest in a bed of hay. We praise You for Your perfection, and we thank You for choosing to rescue us.

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C: Lord Jesus, accept our offering of praise.

In that unlikely place I find Him as they said: Sweet newborn babe, how frail! And in a manger bed: A still, small voice to cry one day for me...

P: You came to die for us, to take our guilt, so we can find a home in heaven. Infant King, we confess our sin and rejoice that You have taken it from us. O Jesus, it is good that You have made a home for us in heaven with You.

C: Lord Jesus, accept our offering of praise.

How should I not have known Isaiah would be there, His prophecies fulfilled? With pounding heart I stare: A child, a son, the Prince of Peace for me...

P: So many don't know what You have done for us. They think their homes are here. Open our mouths to share the wonder of what You did on Christmas. Open our eyes to opportunities, and give us wisdom and courage to speak of Your grace.

C: Lord Jesus, accept our offering of praise.

Can I, will I forget how Love was born, and burned Its way into my heart—unasked, unforced, unearned, To die, to live, and not alone for me...

P: O Jesus, take these offerings of praise and use them to Your glory. Help us look forward to our heavenly home, as we pray the words You taught us: C: Our Father....

> NINTH LESSON: Matthew 2:1-11 The Wise Men are led by the star to Jesus.

Hymn 388: Go Tell It on the Mountain







TENTH LESSON: John 1:1-14 St. John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.

Benediction:

P: 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. **C: Amen.**

Closing Hymn 387: Joy to the World

(ALL)

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...

(Women)

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let men their songs employ, While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains Repeat the sounding joy...

(Men)

No more let sins and sorrows grow Nor thorns infest the ground; He comes to make His blessings flow Far as the curse is found...

(ALL)

He rules the world with truth and grace And makes the nations prove The glories of His righteousness And wonders of His love...

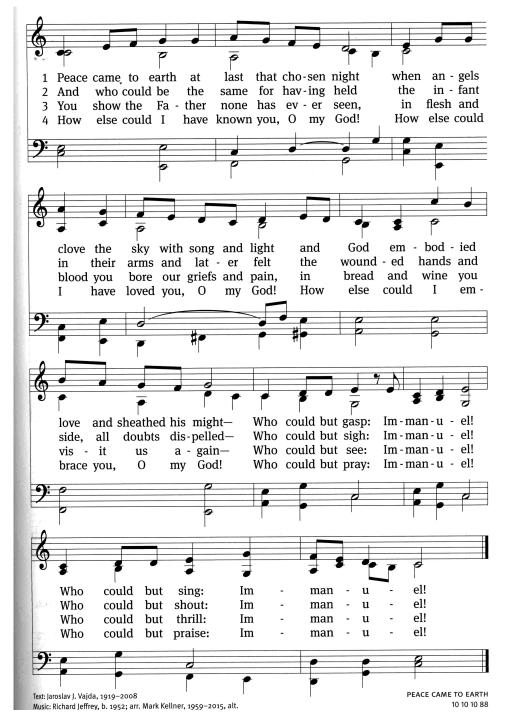




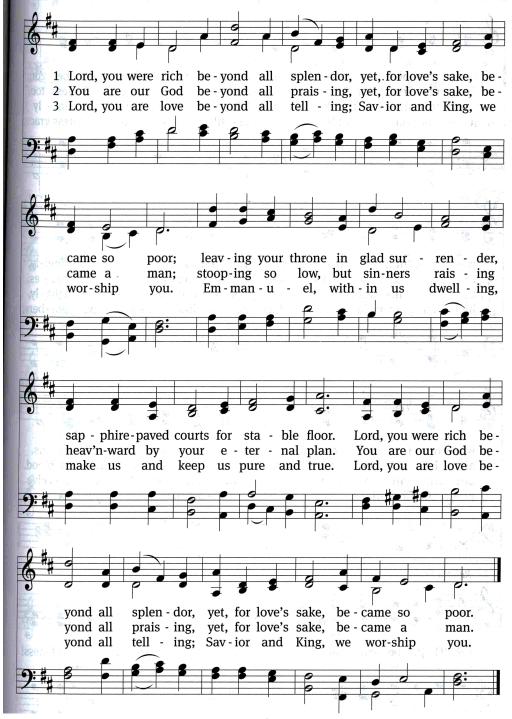




Hymn: Peace Came to Earth



Hymn: Lord, You Were Rich beyond All Splendor



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