

December 24, 2022

The Nativity of our Lord – Christmas Eve



Luther Memorial Church & School

134 21st Street, Fond du Lac, WI 54935

www.FdLLutheran.com

Rob Sauers, Pastor – (920) 602-3242 – pastor@fdllutheran.com

Jennifer Wiese, Principal – (920) 375-0279 – principal@fdllutheran.com

As We Gather

Our service tonight expounds on the great love of God that the apostle John speaks of in chapter 3 of his first epistle. Tonight, we will consider God's love at creation, at the fall, throughout Old Testament history, and at Jesus' birth in Bethlehem. Finally, the greatness of God's love for all people is highlighted. Let us see what great love God has for us.

✠ Preparation for Worship ✠

Invocation

Matthew 28:19b

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

C Amen.

Theme Verse

1 John 3:1a

P See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.

Hymn

TLH 90 – Come, Your Hearts and Voices Raising

1. Come, your hearts and voices raising,
Christ the Lord with gladness praising;
Loudly sing His love amazing,
Worthy folk of Christendom.

2. Sin and death may well be groaning,
Satan now may well be moaning;
We, our full salvation owning,
Cast our ev'ry care away.

3. See how God, for us providing,
Gave His Son and life abiding;
He our weary steps is guiding
From earth's woe to heav'nly joy.

4. Christ, from heaven to us descending
And in love our race befriending,
In our need His help extending,
Saved us from the wily Foe.

5. Jacob's Star in all its splendor
Beams with comfort sweet and tender,
Forcing Satan to surrender,
Breaking all the powers of hell.

6. From the bondage that oppressed us,
From sin's fetters that possessed us,
From the grief that sore distressed us,
We, the captives, now are free.

7. Oh, the joy beyond expressing
When by faith we grasp this blessing
And to Thee we come confessing,
That our freedom Thou hast wrought!

8. Gracious Child, we pray Thee, hear us,
From Thy lowly manger cheer us,
Gently lead us and be near us
Till we join th' angelic choir.

Christmas Eve Welcome

✠ God's Love at Creation ✠

Hymn

TLH 98 (1) – Of the Father's Love Begotten

Of the Father's love begotten Ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega, He the Source, the Ending He,
Of the things that are, that have been, And that future years shall see
Evermore and evermore.

Mady: Little children sing, “God is so good, he’s so good to me.” God has always been good to his creation. The song words we just heard tell us that God’s love was at work even before the world was made.

Austin: The very first verse of the Bible says, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Mountains, seas, and rivers; every form of plant life; the universe with the sun, moon, and all the stars; all the living creatures on land and in the water. For all of it, he simply said, “Let there be . . .” and there it was. And then . . . and then he created once more. This time, the Bible chronicles a different process altogether.

Sid: “Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” (Genesis 1:26)

Cooper: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” (Genesis 1:27)

Maggie: “And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” (Genesis 1:28)

Caleb: Genesis chapter 2 goes on to describe the way God created the first human: “Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.” (Genesis 2:7)

Charlotte: And God provided for every need of this special creation, his children. “And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” (Genesis 2:8,9)

Pastor, Children, and Congregation: “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.”

Hymn

LSB 561 – The Tree of Life

1. The tree of life with ev’ry good In Eden’s holy orchard stood,
And of its fruit so pure and sweet God let the man and woman eat.
Yet in this garden also grew Another tree, of which they knew;
Its lovely limbs with fruit adorned Against whose eating God had warned.
2. The stillness of that sacred grove Was broken as the serpent strove
With tempting voice Eve to beguile And Adam to by sin defile.
Oh, day of sadness when the breath Of fear and darkness, doubt and death,
Its awful poison first displayed Within the world so newly made.
3. What mercy God showed to our race, A plan of rescue by his grace:
In sending One from woman’s seed, The One to fill our greatest need—
For on a tree uplifted high His only Son for sin would die,
Would drink the cup of scorn and dread To crush the ancient serpent’s head!

4. Now from that tree of Jesus' shame Flows life eternal in his name;
For all who trust and will believe, Salvation's living fruit receive.
And of this fruit so pure and sweet The Lord invites the world to eat,
To find within this cross of wood The tree of life with ev'ry good.

✠ God's Love When Humans Sinned ✠

Sam: The perfect world God made for his perfect children did not last. Genesis 2:15-17 tells us more about the beginning days of God's new earth:

Kayla: "The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." (Genesis 2:15-17)

Charlotte: Why would God give such a command? The threat of death does not sound very loving at all. Placing the tree in the garden, along with the command not to eat from what is always there in front of them, seems like a recipe for disaster. With our limited reason, we might wonder how that could be good.

Austin: God had made the entire universe for his children—the cycle of day and night, food for nourishment, a suitable place in which to live, and beauty beyond compare. What love God had shown for his children! And that completely out of his goodness, for they had done nothing to earn it or deserve it.

Maggie: What could they do to show their love for him in return? How could God's children express their love to their most generous God? God gave them a way. They could eat from ANY tree . . . except one. In walking past the forbidden tree, they were able to show their love for God by following what he said. God says that his children listen to his voice, and they follow him (John 10:27). But Genesis chapter 3 tells us what happened not long after God gave his children a way to express love for him.

Meredith: "Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'" (Genesis 3:1)

Autumn: "And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" (Genesis 3:2,3)

Bryce: “But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” (Genesis 3:4,5)

Blayn: “So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.” (Genesis 3:6)

Hymn TLH 369 (1) – All Mankind Fell in Adam’s Fall

All mankind fell in Adam's fall, One common sin infects them all;
From sire to son the bane descends, And over all the curse impends.

P What happened next shows us again the great love of our God and Father. Sin had come. Death was inevitable. But God promised a Savior who would defeat death and the devil and restore peace between God and people. Please stand, and let’s read together these words from Genesis chapter 3:

C “Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” The LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” (Genesis 3:13-15)

Hymn TLH 369 (4) – All Mankind Fell in Adam’s Fall

But Christ, the second Adam, came To bear our sin and woe and shame,
To be our Life, our Light, our Way, Our only Hope, our only Stay.

✠ God’s Love In His Faithfulness ✠

Hymn TLH 98 (4) – Of the Father’s Love Begotten

This is He whom Heav'n-taught singers Sang of old with one accord;
Whom the Scriptures of the prophets Promised in their faithful word.
Now He shines, the Long-expected; Let creation praise its Lord
Evermore and evermore.

Caleb: The Savior did not come right away. Adam and Eve did not know it, but it would be many centuries before the Savior would be born.

Mady: God lavished his love on his children by reminding them of his promise over and over. Again and again, he renewed his promise through his believers and prophets. The prophet with perhaps the most to say about the coming Savior lived eight hundred years before the Savior was born. His name was Isaiah, and he said this:

Kobe: “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” (Isaiah 7:14)

Sid: “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given... and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:2,6)

Hymn

TLH 95 (1-4, 7) – Savior of the Nations, Come

1. Savior of the nations, come, Virgin's son, make here Thy home!
Marvel now, O heav'n and earth, That the Lord chose such a birth.
2. Not by human flesh and blood By the Spirit of our God,
Was the Word of God made flesh-- Woman's Offspring, pure and fresh.
3. Wondrous birth! O wondrous Child Of the Virgin undefiled!
Tho' by all the world disowned, Still to be in heav'n enthroned.
4. From the Father forth He came And returneth to the same,
Captive leading death and hell-- High the song of triumph swell!
7. Praise to God the Father sing, Praise to God the Son, our King,
Praise to God the Spirit be Ever and eternally.

Pastor, Children, and Congregation: “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.”

✠ God's Love In Bethlehem ✠

Hymn

TLH 98 (2) – Of the Father's Love Begotten

Oh, that birth forever blessed When the Virgin, full of grace,
By the Holy Ghost conceiving, Bore the Savior of our race,
And the Babe, the world's Redeemer, First revealed His sacred face
Evermore and evermore.

P Finally, the time came. The time was right. Over three hundred reminders from the Old Testament prophets had revealed details of the great love the Father lavishes on us. When that set time had come, all the events came together in one moment in history. Listen to the account from Luke 2:1-20.

Grades 3-8:

“And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Beth-lehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.”
(Luke 2:1-7)

Hymn

TLH 647 (1-3)– O Little Town of Bethlehem

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 thy darkness shineth The everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears Of all the years Are met in thee tonight.

2. For Christ is born of Mary, And gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, The angels keep Their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together Proclaim the holy birth
And praises sing To God the King, And peace to men on earth.

3. How silently, how silently, The wondrous Gift is giv'n!
So God imparts To human hearts The blessings of His heav'n.
No ear may hear His coming, But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will Receive Him still, The dear Christ enters in.

Grades 3-8: "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. 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, Good will toward men." (Luke 2:8-14)

Hymn

TLH 94 – Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

1. Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, Join the triumph of the skies;
With th' angelic host proclaim. "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born 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 th' incarnate Deity!
Pleased as Man with man to dwell; Jesus, our Immanuel!
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King!"
3. Hail, the heav'nly Prince of Peace! Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings, Ris'n with healing in His wings.
Mild He leaves His throne on high, Born that man no more may die;
Born to raise the sons of earth; Born to give them second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King!"
4. Come, Desire of nations, come, Fix in us Thy humble home;
Oh, to all Thyself impart, Formed in each believing heart!
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King!"

Grades 3-8: “And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.” (Luke 2:15-20)

Pastor, Children, and Congregation: “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.”

Hymn

TLH 646 – Silent Night

1. 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.
1. Stille Nacht! Heil'ge Nacht! Alles schläft; einsam wacht
Nur das traute hoch heilige Paar. Holder Knab' im lockigen Haar,
Schlafe in himmlischer Ruh! Schlafe in himmlischer Ruh!
2. 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!
3. Silent night! Holy night! Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from thy holy face With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

✠ God's Love to All ✠

Hymn

TLH 98 (3) – Of the Father's Love Begotten

O ye heights of heav'n, adore Him; Angel hosts, His praises sing;
Pow'rs, dominions, bow before Him And extol our God and King.
Let no tongue on earth be silent, Ev'ry voice in concert ring
Evermore and evermore.

Kayla: Who are the “children of God”? In the Old Testament, the descendants of Abraham were rarely called God’s children but were instead often referred to as “God’s people” or his “chosen people.” God kept these people separate from other nations to preserve the human line for the birth of the promised Savior. But “children of God” appears more often in the New Testament, and the inspired writers tell us who God’s children are:

Sam: “In Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.” (Galatians 3:26)

Cooper: “This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring.” (Romans 9:8)

Austin: Believers are God’s children! When the Holy Spirit works faith in a person’s heart, that person becomes a child of God. And this is how faith comes:

Sid: “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.” (Romans 10:17)

Caleb: And that word of Christ is this:

Pre-School – 2nd Grade: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

Pastor, Children, and Congregation: “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.”

General Prayer

The Lord’s Prayer

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 The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you.
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

C Amen.

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 sins and sorrows 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.

8th Grade

Caleb Goldapske
Madysyn Goldapske
Austin Immerfall
Sid Shafer

7th Grade

Kayla Kern
Samuel Kiefer
Charlotte Rabe
Cooper Sabel
Magdalene Seibel

4th Grade

Blayn Rademann

2nd Grade

Autumn Phillips
Bryce Rademann

1st Grade

Kobe Siedschlag

Kindergarten

Meredith Phillips

Pre-School

Jacob Sauers
Ziva Wiese

Violinist: Mrs. Susan Moodie

Chimes:

Joanna Seibel
Caleb Goldapske
Madysyn Goldapske
Kayla Kern
Samuel Kiefer
Charlotte Rabe
Magdalene Seibel

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