

Christmas Eve Service

December 24, 2021



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Listening for the Promise

Weekly Devotional

Christmas Eve - December 24, 2021

“And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear.” (Luke 2:8-9)

I never get tired of reading the story of the shepherds in Luke's narrative of the Christmas story. I can easily identify with them. You see, I was born a Christian in predominantly Muslim Jerusalem (then Jordan). Because of my faith, I was shunned, just like the shepherds were because of their vocation (they were ostracized and I was considered to be an infidel - both unclean and would defile anyone or anyplace they came in contact with).

The shepherds were chosen by God to be among the first to know about the birth of Jesus. These were simple and uneducated men who spent at least nine months of every year in the wilderness tending sheep. Keep in mind that the sheep were not theirs; they belonged to others.

To these simple people a very complicated message was delivered: There was happening in that moment, the birth of the Savior of Israel and the world, in a cave they were very familiar with, no more than a mile or two away. It takes simple people to accept and believe such an unbelievable message. If the angel came to you with this story, how many questions would you have asked the angel and what list of proofs would he need to provide for you to believe? The shepherds did not question. They accepted every word that was spoken and Luke tells us they believed and responded, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” (Luke 2:15b)

I find joy in reading about the shepherds in the Nativity story because the safety of the sheep did not matter. It was the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy that proved to be most important (Isaiah 7). The simple men of the wilderness of Judea showed a faith that I pray I will have before my days on this earth are over. They walked to the cave, looked at the face of the baby, told Mary and Joseph what they were told, and walked back. Their sheep were safe and their faith was strengthened. What a story!!

Prayer: We give you thanks, Good Lord for the gift of Jesus our Savior. Increase our faith to believe and trust in the fulfillment of your promises. Through Jesus Christ, the holy child of Bethlehem. Amen.

THE GRACE OF GOD HAS APPEARED

*The Processional Hymn *The First Noel* (ELW) No. 300

*The Confession and Forgiveness (ELW) page 94

P: In the name of the Father, and of the \dagger Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: God of all mercy.....of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

P: Most merciful God,

C: We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. 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. 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.

P: In the mercy of almighty God,.....in the name of the Father, and of the \dagger Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

*The Apostolic Greeting (ELW) page 138

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

*The Kyrie (*sung response*)

(ELW) page 138

P:, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

C: Amen.

*Hymn of Praise

O Little Town of Bethlehem

(ELW) No. 279

*The Prayer of the Evening

C: O God, you have made this most holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Grant that as we have known on earth the mysteries of that Light, we may also come to the fullness of his joys in heaven; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

First Reading

Isaiah 9:2-7

L: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

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Acolytes: Nathaniel Black and Wesley Black

Cello—Nathaniel Black

1. Joy to the world! the Lord is come; Let earth re-ceive her King;
2. Joy to the world! the Sav-iour reigns; Let men their songs em-ploy,

Let ev-ery heart pre-pare him room, And heaven and na-ture
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains Re-peat the sound-ing

And

And heaven and nature sing, And heaven, and heaven and na-ture sing.
sing, joy, Re-peat the sound-ing joy, Re-peat, re-peat the sound-ing joy.

heaven and na-ture sing, and heaven and na-ture sing,

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.

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

¹Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the whole earth.

²**Sing to the Lord and bless His Name; proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day.**

³Declare His glory among the nations and His wonders among all peoples.

⁴**For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; He is more to be feared than all gods.**

⁵As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols; but it is the Lord who made the heavens.

⁶**Oh, the majesty and magnificence of His presence! Oh, the power and the splendor of His 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 His name; bring offerings and come into His courts.**

⁹Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; let the whole earth tremble before Him.

¹⁰**Tell it out among the nations: "The Lord is King! He has made the world so firm that it cannot be moved; He 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 before the Lord when He comes, when He comes to judge the earth.**

¹³He will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with His truth.

L: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

*The Gospel Acclamation (sung)

(ELW) page 142

**C: Alleluia, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.
Alleluia. Alleluia.**

* The Gospel

Luke 2:1-20

C: Glory to You, O Lord. (sung after announcement of the Gospel)

C: Praise to You, O Christ. (sung after conclusion of the Gospel)

Sermon

Rev. Robert B. Grewe

The Hymn of the Evening

O Little Town of Bethlehem

(SBH) No. 27

*The Nicene Creed

I believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through Him all things were made. For us and for our salvation He came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit He became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate; He suffered death and was buried. On the third day He rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son He is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins. I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen

16

1. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, All is calm, all is bright

Round yon Vir - gin Moth - er and Child. Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and mild,

Sleep in heav - en - ly peace, Sleep in heav - en - ly peace.

2 Silent night, holy night,
Shepherds quake at the sight;
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing, Alleluia,
Christ, the Saviour, 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.

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming



1 Lo, how a rose e'er bloom - ing from ten - der stem hath
 2 I - sai - ah had fore - told it, the rose I have in
 3 This flow'r, whose fra - grance ten - der with sweet-ness fills the
 4 O Sav - ior, child of Mar - y, who felt our hu - man



sprung! Of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing as
 mind; with Mar - y we be - hold it, the
 air, dis - pels with glo - rious splen - dor the
 woe; O Sav - ior, king of glo - ry, who



seers of old have sung, it came, a flow'r so bright, a -
 vir - gin moth - er kind. To show God's love a - right, she
 dark-ness ev - 'ry - where. True man, yet ver - y God, from
 dost our weak - ness know: bring us at length, we pray, to



mid the cold of win - ter, when half - spent was the night.
 bore to us a Sav - ior, when half - spent was the night.
 sin and death he saves us and light - ens ev - 'ry load.
 the bright courts of heav - en and in - to end - less day.



*Sharing of the Peace

The Musical Offering

The Offertory

Create in Me a Clean Heart

(ELW) No. 188

*The Great Thanksgiving

(ELW) page 144

*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.

Lamb of God

(ELW) page 146

*Communion Hymn

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

(ELW) No. 272

The Distribution

Prayer/Blessing

The Ushers will distribute candles to the worshippers as the Adult Choir sings an arrangement of "All is Well" by Lloyd Larson.

Following the distribution of the candles, the ushers will process to the chancel.

(Please stand) We will read responsively:

P: I am the Light of the World, saith Christ, they that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the Light of Life.

C: Glory to God in the Highest.

P: Let your light so shine before all people, that they shall see your good works and glorify your Father Who is in heaven.

C: And on earth, peace, good will to all.

The Pastor lights his candles from the Gospel candle, symbolizing The Good News of Jesus Christ. The ushers light their candles from the Pastor's. The ushers take the light of Christ to the worshippers.

(Tilt the unlit candle, not the lighted one.)

During the candle lighting, the Handbell Ensemble will play an arrangement of "Silent Night" by Sandra Eithun

When all the candles are lit, the ushers will come to the altar and all will sing
"Silent Night" (SBH) No. 16

*The Benediction (sung response)

C: Amen, Amen, Amen.

(Please extinguish the candles after The Benediction)

*The Recessional Hymn *Joy to the World* (SBH) No. 15

*FLC Sending Hymn *Be The Love of Christ* arr. Michael Showalter
Roger Thornhil

**MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL
AND TO ALL A GOODNIGHT!**

As you leave the church, please deposit the extinguished candles in one of the boxes covered with foil. Thank you!

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Create in Me a Clean Heart

Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right

spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your

pres-ence, and take not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re -

store un - to me the joy of your sal - va - tion,

and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

1. O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, How still we see thee lie!
2. For Christ is born of Ma - ... ry, And gath - ered all a - bove,

A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep The si - lent stars go by;
While mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep Their watch of won - dering love.

Yet in thy dark streets shin - eth The ev - er - last - ing Light;
O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er Pro - claim the ho - ly birth,

The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee to-night.
And prais - es sing to God the King, And peace to men on earth! A-men.

3 How silently, how silently,
The wondrous Gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming,
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him, still
The dear Christ enters in.

4 O holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in,
Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Immanuel! Amen.

1 The first No - el the an - gel did say was to
2 They look - ed up and saw ... a star shin - ing
3 And by the light of that ... same star three ...
4 This star drew near to the ... north - west, o'er ...
5 Then en - tered in those wise ... men three, full ...

cer - tain poor shep - herds in fields as they lay; in fields where
in ... the east ... be - yond ... them far; and to the
wise ... men came ... from coun - try far; to seek for a
Beth - le - hem ... it took ... its rest; and there it
rev - 'rent - ly ... up - on ... their knee, and of - fered

they lay, keep - ing their sheep, on a cold win - ter's
earth it gave ... great light, and ... so it con -
king was their ... in - tent, and to fol - low the
did both stop ... and stay right ... o - ver the
there in his ... pres - ence their ... gold, ... and

Refrain
night that was so deep.
tin - ued both day and night.
star wher - ev - er it went. No - el, No - el, No -
place where Je - sus lay.
myrrh, and frank - in - cense.

el, No - el! Born is the King of Is - ra - el.

O Little Town of Bethlehem

1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!
 2 For Christ is born of Mar - y, and, gath - ered all a - bove
 3 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is giv'n!
 4 O ho - ly child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;

A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by;
 while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - d'ring love.
 So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heav'n.
 cast out our sin, and en - ter in, be born in us to - day.

yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light.
 O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth,
 No ear may hear his com - ing; but, in this world of sin,
 We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;

The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.
 and prais - es sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!
 where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.
 oh, come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Im - man - u - el!

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

1 Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new - born king;
 2 Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord,
 3 Hail the heav'n - born Prince of peace! Hail the Sun of righ - teous - ness!

peace on earth, and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled."
 late in time be - hold him come, off - spring of a vir - gin's womb.
 Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with heal - ing in his wings.

Joy - ful, all you na - tions, rise; join the tri - umph of the skies;
 Veiled in flesh the God - head see! Hail, in - car - nate de - i - ty!
 Mild he lays his glo - ry by, born that we no more may die,

with an - gel - ic hosts pro - claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"
 Pleased as man with us to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el!
 born to raise each child of earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.

Refrain
 Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new - born king!"