

Family Christmas Eve Service

DECEMBER 24 • 4:30 pm
in the sanctuary



CHRIST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

December 24, 2018

PRELUDE

Bethany Pearce

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

P: Merry Christmas! Welcome this holiest of days to Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church. We welcome all visitors, all those of you who have returned home for the holidays, and all who have gathered here this afternoon to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. This is a service that has been designed for families with young children – which means that we want the children here! There is no set time for giving an offering during this service, as you are not expected to give anything at this service other than your praise to God. If you feel compelled to freely give a financial offering, you will find an offering plate outside the church doors following the service. Again, we are glad you are here. Please stand for our opening hymn.

HYMN

“Hark the Herald Angels Sing”

**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!”
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”**

**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!
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”**

CHRISTMAS DIALOGUE

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

C: Amen.

P: The Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory.

C: Oh, come, let us worship him.

P: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

C: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

P: Those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them light has shined.

C: We have seen Christ’s glory, the glory as of a Father’s only Son, full of grace and truth.

P: For a child has been born for us, a son given to us.

C: What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

P: Today, Christ is born; today salvation has appeared.

C: Glory to God in the highest! Alleluia!

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray.

C: Almighty God, may we, like the Magi, offer gifts and thanks and praise in the presence of God. O Come, let us adore him, Christ our Lord, for it is in his name that we pray. Amen.

HYMN

“Away in a Manger”

**Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;
the stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**

**The cattle are lowing; the poor baby wakes,
but little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky
and stay by my cradle till morning till nigh.**

**Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay
close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care
and fit us for heaven to live with you there.**

SCENE ONE – MEET THE MAGI

Luke 2:1-7

N: A reading from the Gospel of Luke: ¹In 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.

SKIT (Note: It starts in the back of the church)

- W1: (stops and looks at congregation) Don't look now, but there are some people there - STARING at us.
- W2: Okay, don't panic. Just try to look normal - blend in, don't draw attention to yourself.
- W3: Oh that will be easy - with these crowns and clothes, we will blend right in!
- W1: Hush, you two. Maybe they can help us. Maybe THEY can direct us to where the king can be found, so we can worship him, give him gifts, and complete our task, the task we have been dedicated to for our whole lives.
- W2: How do we get them to help us?

W3: You call yourself WISE? We ask them for help.

W1: Right, we ask them for help!

W2: Okay, but what if they speak a different language, what if they try to steal our gifts, what if they don't want us to find the king, what if they are mean?

W1: Well, look at them, do they look mean to you?

W1,2,3: Nah!

W3: So we will ask for help along the way.

W2: And we will follow the star.

W1: And we will find the king!

HYMN

“Angels We Have Heard on High”

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains, and the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains.

Refrain

Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong? What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heav'nly song?

Refrain

SCENE TWO – JESUS IS KING

Luke 2:8-15

N: The reading from Luke continues: 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.”

SKIT

W1: Excuse me. Excuse me. That account you were just reading, who is it about?

N: Well, Jesus of course.

W1: Jesus of Course. Jesus of Course. The city of Course, the city of Course.

N: No - not Jesus of COURSE, Jesus. The baby Jesus? The Son of God? Born of Mary?

W1: Baby? Son of God? And who is this Mary?

N: Where have you been? Haven't you heard of Jesus? He is the one sent by God to save us.

W1: Well – we are looking for a king.

N: Yes, Jesus is like a king.

W1: So he is a great warrior? Strong and mighty!

N: No - he is a baby.

W3: Ooooh, a baby...a baby?

N: Yes. Born to save us from sin and to give us life. A great gift God has given us.

W1: You said he is the Son of God - how can this be?

N: With God, all things are possible.

W2: But you said he is the Son of Mary. So, is Mary God?

N: No, no. Mary is God's servant. God asked her to help bring Jesus into the world.

W1: So where do we find this baby, this savior?

N: Just like it says here in the reading - a babe, lying in the manger in the city of David.

W1: City of David. Thank you for your help.

W1: Okay, look on the map for the city of DAVID.

W3: DAVID – where are we now, Avon Lake? I see Westlake, Bay Village, Lorain?

W2: No, it's none of those. I told you that we should try using GPS instead of a paper map, do you even know how to read that thing?!

HYMN

“Infant Holy, Infant Lowly”

**Infant holy, infant lowly, for his bed a cattle stall;
 Oxen lowing little knowing, Christ the child is Lord of all
 Swiftly winging angels singing, bells are ringing, tidings bringing
 Christ the child is Lord of all! Christ the child is Lord of all!**

**Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping vigil till the morning new
 Saw the glory, heard the story, tiding of a Gospel true.
 Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow praises voicing, greet the morrow
 Christ the child is born for you! Christ the child is born for you!**

SCENE THREE – GETTING DIRECTIONS

Matthew 2:1-2

N: A reading from the Gospel of Matthew: In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage."

SKIT

W2: Excuse me?

N: Merry Christmas.

W2: No - Balthasar.

N: Pardon me?

W2: My name is NOT Mary, or Christmas. We are Magi – scholars from afar. My name is Balthasar. And these are my friends, Melchior (we call him the Milk man) and Gasper, the friendly Magi.

N: Pleasure to meet you? Can I help?

W2: We are looking for the City of David? We don't see it on the map.

N: The City of David?

W2: Yes - you see, we have studied the stars for years. We have read books, and studied maps. And we believe the time has come - the star has appeared in the East, and we have followed it. We have heard of a baby born in a city called David. We come to worship him, and bring the king gifts.

N: Oh! You are looking for the City OF David. The place Jesus was born. That is Bethlehem.

W2: Bethlehem.

N: Bethlehem - you know, (Singing) O little town of Bethlehem?

W2: I am sorry, but no, I don't know.

N: Well listen, I would love to take you there, but I have a bunch of stuff that I have to get done today, so I can't.

W3: What is this Christmas she keeps talking about?

W1: I don't know, but at least we can look now for Bethlehem.

W2: The City of David - Bethlehem.

W3: Here it is - right near Philadelphia, in the land of Pennsylvania!

HYMN

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

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 dark streets shineth the everlasting light.

The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

**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 all the earth!**

SCENE FOUR – BETHLEHEM, PA

Matthew 2:3-8

N: The reading from Matthew continues: ³When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: ⁶'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'" ⁷Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage."

SKIT

W3: So, this is Bethlehem, in the land of Pennsylvania! But the star still seems to be a far way off! Maybe this isn't the right place. Excuse me?

N: Yes?

W3: We come searching for a king. Do you know of any kings nearby?

N: Let's see - there is a Burger King over on the main road in town.

W3: Burger King?

N: Then there is a character named King Kong. But, I don't think you are looking for him.

W3: King Kong? No – that is not his name – his name is Jesus! We came to Bethlehem to find him, but don't know where to look.

N: Well, if I remember my Bible School lessons, Jesus is born in the city of David, which is Bethlehem.

W3: Yes, yes, we know - we have already been through all that – that's why we are here.

N: And the city of Bethlehem is in the land of Judah.

W3: Judah! Thank you! I told you both that a state with the Steelers in it couldn't be where the king was born. Let's go to Judah - see - the star is getting brighter.

HYMN

“The First Noel”

The first Noel the angel did say was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay; in fields where they lay, keeping their sheep, on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

Refrain

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.

They looked up and saw a star shining in the east beyond them far; and to the earth it gave great light, and so it continued both day and night.

Refrain

SCENE FIVE – A LITTLE CHILD WILL LEAD THEM Matthew 2:9-11

N: The reading from Matthew continues: ⁹When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

SKIT

W1: Can YOU help us? We are looking for Jesus...

W2: Born in Bethlehem of Judah...

W3: And his Mother is Mary. I think her full name is Mary Christmas.

N: Wait, I know who you are, you are WE THREE KINGS, from that Christmas Song – *We Three Kings of Orient Are*.

W3: Well, thanks for the complement, but we are not KINGS, we are scholars.

W1: And so we come, bringing gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

W2: There was one other who wanted to come with us to bring gifts, but he was very unreasonable.

W3: Yes - His gift for the king was TUBE SOCKS and FRUITCAKE!

N: Yuck!

W1: So now we continue. We must go and bring our gifts and worship the king. Can you help us?

N: Well, if I remember the story right, if you follow the star, you will find the one you are looking for - Jesus Christ, the king.

HYMN

“The First Noel”

**And by the light of that same star, Three Wise Men came from country far;
To seek for a king was their intent, and to follow the star wherever it went.**

Refrain

**This star drew near to the Northwest, o’er Bethlehem it took its rest;
And there it did both stop and stay right over the place where Jesus lay.**

Refrain

**Then entered in those Wise Men three, full rev’rently upon their knee
and offered there in his presence their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense.**

Refrain

SCENE SIX – LOST AND FOUND

Matthew 2:12

N: The reading from Matthew concludes: ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

SKIT

W2: We have traveled far and near. We have come to find a king.

W3: And what we have learned is that this isn’t just any king.

W1: No – it is God’s only Son. Jesus Christ.

W2: He comes to the earth as a baby.

W3: He comes to save the world.

W1: He is the gift. The gift of love.

W2: The gift of hope.

W3: The gift of peace.

W1: The gift of God, for everyone.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

P: Shouting out with joy and thanksgiving from the mountain top for the Christ child born among us, we pray for the church, the world, and all of God’s creation. God Emmanuel, we pray for the church gathered together tonight to join with all the angels in heaven singing your praise. Look with favor upon all your children, bless us with your grace, and help us show your love. Merciful Redeemer, your light has come to scatter the darkness. We pray that we respond to your promises, and boldly live out our mission to love Jesus by serving others. Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy, through Jesus Christ, Our Lord

C: AMEN!

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.

HYMN OF REFLECTION

“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.**

The congregation is invited to stand

BENEDICTION

P: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord look upon you with favor and grant you peace, in the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

“Go Tell It on the Mountain”

Refrain

**Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and ev'ry-where.
Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!**

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

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

SENDING

P: Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus. And Merry Christmas to you all!

C: Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

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"for unto us
a child is

born...
and his
name shall
be called

Wonderful!

Isaiah 9:6

