

The Wonder of
CHRISTMAS



Grace

LUTHERAN CHURCH

Christmas Day – December 25th, 2022

+ In Nomine Jesu +

HYMN:

CW21 Blue #354 (1-2,4) Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful

*Oh, come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant,
Oh, come ye, oh, come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him, Born the King of angels.
Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come, let us adore him,
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

*God from true God, and Light from Light eternal,
Born of a virgin, to earth he comes,
Only begotten Son of God the Father.
Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come, let us adore him,
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

*Yea, Lord, we greet thee, Born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be all glory giv'n,
Word of the Father, Now in flesh appearing.
Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come, let us adore him,
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

Invocation

M: In the name of the Father and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

M: Christ made his dwelling among us to reconcile us to God.

C: **For this reason, he had to be made just like us in every way,**

M: in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. (Heb 2:17)

C: **And God made him who had no sin to be sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corth. 5:21)**

M: Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.

GRACE CHOIR

The First Noel

Introduction

"The great mystery of the manger is that God should be able to translate deity into humanity without discarding the deity or distorting the humanity." – John Philipps

"What does this mean?" "How can this be?" Those were questions that Joseph and Mary asked when the angel Gabriel appeared to them and asked them to envision God's plan of salvation.

"What does this mean?" "How can this be?" Those were the questions that people asked for centuries as they read the prophecies where God "pictured" who the Savior was and what he was coming to do.

"What does this mean?" "How can this be?" Those are the questions we still ponder when we read the centerpiece and cornerstone of Christmas prophecy. "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14) That's why we still sing about this "Great and Mighty Wonder". That's why we ask "What Child Is This?" That's why we wonder, "Mary did you know?"

No one could comprehend the magnitude of what this prophecy's fulfillment meant. IMMANUEL. God came to live with us... the invisible, all-powerful, all knowing, present everywhere, eternal God became visible to us when John says "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us... No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known."

This is the great truth of Christmas. This is the miracle of the incarnation. This is the miracle of God taking on humanity. This is the miracle of our salvation. It defies human understanding. It defies human explanation. It is a great and mighty WONDER.

HYMN

CW21 Blue #349 A Great and Mighty Wonder

A great and mighty wonder, A glorious mystery:

A virgin bears an infant Who veils his deity.

Repeat the hymn again: "To God on high be glory And peace on earth to men."

The Word becomes incarnate And yet remains on high,

And cherubim sing anthems To shepherds from the sky.

Repeat the hymn again: "To God on high be glory And peace on earth to men."

Since all he comes to ransom, By all be he adored,

The infant born in Bethl'em, The Savior and the Lord.

Repeat the hymn again: "To God on high be glory And peace on earth to men."

I Wonder... How Can This Be?

The prophecies foretold the coming of the Jesus.

Narrator: Did you know that it's already been more than two thousand years since that first Christmas? Imagine how many things have changed since then! You may not know much about what life was like in Bethlehem two thousand years ago, but tonight we will journey back to that first Christmas. We will peer into the manger with Joseph & Mary and the shepherds and see the prophecies fulfilled. *"Isaiah had foretold it; In words of promise sure"*.

Congregation: **"The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14)**

Narrator: From God's first promise to send a Savior who would crush the serpent's head, to the fulfillment of that promise more than 4000 years later; God repeatedly assured every generation that He would keep his promise. Through the prophecies God pointed the world to Jesus who *"came to save his people; From earth's dark night of sin."*

Congregation: **"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned." (Isaiah 9:2)**

Narrator: The Messiah. In hundreds of Messianic Prophecies God defined who the Savior was, what the Savior would do, and even where the Savior would be born.

Congregation: **"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times." (Micah 5:2)**

Narrator: The Messiah. In hundreds of Messianic Prophecies God assured every generation that he would send One who would save his people from their sins and give us a peace that surpasses all human understanding.

Congregation: **"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6)**

*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 oxen now are feeding?
Good Christians, fear; For sinners here
The silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce him through; The cross he'll bear for me, for you.
Hail, hail the Word made flesh, The babe, the Son of Mary!*

*So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;
Come, peasant, king, to own him.
The King of kings Salvation brings;
Let loving hearts enthrone him.
Raise, raise the song on high; The virgin sings her lullaby.
Joy, joy, for Christ is born, The babe, the Son of Mary!*

I Wonder... Is There Room Enough and Welcome There for Me?"

Christ the Savior is born!

Children: “In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ² (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³ And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.” Luke 2:1-7

HYMN

CW21 Blue #345 “Where Shepherds Lately Knelt”

*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.*

*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,
A still, small voice to cry one day for me.*

*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,
A child, a son, the Prince of Peace for me.*

I Wonder... Have You Heard the Good News?

The shepherds hear and see and tell.

Narrator: And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them,

Congregation: “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

Narrator: Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

Congregation: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”

HYMN

CW21 Blue #346 “Angels We Have Heard on High”

1. *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.

2. ***Come to Bethlehem and see, Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee, Christ the Lord, the newborn King.***

Refrain.

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Narrator: When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another,

Congregation: **“Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”**

Narrator: So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. Luke 2:8-16

Congregation: **When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told. (Luke 2:17-20)**

CHILDREN’S SONG

“Go, Tell It on the Mountain”

Accompaniment: Craig & Melissa Baker

Go, tell it on the mountain, Over the hills, and ev'rywhere;
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...

Go, tell it on the mountain, Over the hills, and ev'rywhere;
Go, tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born.

The shepherds feared and trembled, When lo, above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus, That hailed our Savior's birth...

Go, tell it on the mountain, Over the hills, and ev'rywhere;
Go, tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born.

Down in a lowly manger The humble Christ was born;
And God sent us salvation That blessed Christmas morn...

Go, tell it on the mountain, Over the hills, and ev'rywhere;
Go, tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born.

I Wonder... Where Is the One Who Has Been Born a King?

The Wise Men seek the Christ child.

Congregation: After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem ² and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." "On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. (Matthew 2:1-2,11)

HYMN

CW #56 (2 verses) "Gentle Mary Laid Her Child"

*Gentle Mary laid her child Lowly in a manger;
There he lay, the undefiled, To the world a stranger.
Such a babe in such a place --Can he be the Savior?
Ask the saved of all the race Who have found his favor.*

*Angels sang about his birth; Wise men sought and found him.
Heaven's star shone brightly forth, Glory all around them.
Son of God, of humble birth, Beautiful the story;
Praise his name in all the earth, Hail the King of glory!*

The Offering

The Prayer of the Church for Christmas Eve

M: Heavenly Father, to whom glory is sung in the highest and peace is proclaimed to people on earth, give to Your Holy Church the peace of sins forgiven and Your continued favor and merciful good will. On Christmas night You sent the angels to preach the good news of Jesus' birth. Give to all pastors of our Church courage to lead us boldly to the Christ Child. Fill us with joy that we may each make known the glad tidings concerning this Child, that more may be given faith to confess Him as Lord.

Congregation sings: CW21 Blue #350 (1)

*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 th' angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"*

M: Merciful God, we thank You for the joys of family and friends this season, together with the abundance of Your blessings. Open our hearts and homes that we may be Your instruments of love and charity. Remember, we pray, the homeless, hungry, and oppressed, and give them hope. Protect the lonely and homebound of our congregation. Grant peace and healing to the sick and suffering and those in the hospital. Guide the journeys of those who travel. Comfort those who mourn. Create a new and contrite heart in the erring and faith in those who have not heard the good news. Let Your glory dwell among us, and let mercy, truth, and justice prevail everywhere, that throughout our land people may come to know Jesus, our Immanuel.

Congregation sings: CW21 Blue #333 (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;
Oh, come to us, Abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!*

M: Lord God, make a manger in the hearts of all who have gathered that they may treasure up and ponder the marvelous gift of salvation. We remember with thanksgiving all those who have died in the faith. In the birth of Your Son, O God, who have clothed us with eternal life. Let our joy be great!

Congregation sings: CW21 Blue #353 (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.*

M For all these things and whatever else You would have us ask, we implore You to hear us gracious Father, through Jesus Christ our Savior, whom together with the Holy Spirit we praise, one God, now and forever.

*Our Father in heaven, all praise to your name!
Your kingdom among us, your will done the same
By mortals and angels. Come, Lord, reign alone;
Oh, hear us and bless us from heaven's high throne.*

*The bread that we yearn for provide us each day;
As we forgive others, our sins take away;
In times of temptation, to lead us be near;
From evil deliver your children most dear.*

*For yours is the kingdom; o'er all things you reign.
And yours is the power; all things you maintain.
To you be the glory, resounding again
From all of creation, forever! Amen.*

The Blessing

- M: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
C: those who lived in deepest night, have seen a brilliant sight.
M: Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.
C: The greatness of his influence and of his peace will never end.
M: Therefore, go out into the world with great joy,
C: glorifying and praising God for all the things you have heard and seen.
M: May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the determination of the magi, and the peace of the Christ child who God sent because he loved us dearly!
M: The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious unto you.
The Lord look upon you with His favor and give you peace.

1.) Stille nacht! Heilige nacht!
Alles schläft, einsam wacht,
Nur das traute hochheilige Paar
Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar,
Schlaf in Himmlischer Ruh!
Schlaf in Himmlischer Ruh!

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.

2.) Silent night! Holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight;
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly 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.

Organists for the service are Marilyn Baer and Olivia Baker.
Flautists for the service are Olivia Baker and Lilly Glasheen.
Accompaniment: Craig & Melissa Baker