



*The Word became flesh and lived among us,
and we have seen his glory*

- John 1:14

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church

The Nativity of Our Lord: Christmas Day – December 25, 2014

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*We welcome you to St. John Lutheran Church. We are delighted to have you worship with us this morning. Should you have no permanent church-home in this community, why not consider making this one your own? Please sign the guest book as you leave worship today or the attendance pad in the pew. You are most welcome here at St. John! Most elements of our service can be found in the bulletin, everything else is in the hymnal. Page refers to the numbered pages towards the front of the hymnal, hymns are bold and towards the back. Please rise when there is an *, congregational responses are in **bold**, and underlined elements of the service are found in the hymnal.*

HOLY COMMUNION

The Nativity of Our Lord: Christmas Day – December 25, 2015

On this Christmas morning the people of God gather to celebrate the birth of the Word made flesh, Christ our Lord. Luke recounts the familiar story of shepherds and angels; John's gospel tells of the Word that dwells among us, full of grace and truth. The meaning of Christmas is made clear: the light shines in the darkness. It is in the liturgy that we encounter the Word made flesh—in the people of God gathered together as the body of Christ, and in the meal around the holy table. We go forth to be bearers of light as we proclaim this good news to all the ends of the earth.

PRELUDE: *The Holly and the Ivy* – Herbert Sumsion

ANNOUNCEMENTS

***CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God,
the Maker of heaven and earth,
the Word made flesh,
the Lord and giver of life.

Amen.

Let us come into the light of Christ,
confessing our need for God's mercy.

God of peace,

**we confess that we are not at peace—
with others or with ourselves.**

**We bring to you all that tears us apart:
discord in our families,
violence in our world,
our own conflicted hearts.**

In your mercy, mend us.

Reconnect us to one another and to you.

**Let peace reign over all the earth,
through the Prince of peace,
our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.**

In the Word who has come to dwell with us,
God has given us grace upon grace:
forgiveness that is stronger than our sins,
love that can heal every broken heart.
Hear this word of God's pardon and peace:
in the name of + Jesus our Savior,
you are free from all your sins.
Rise, shine, for your light has come.
Amen.

GATHERING SONG #269: *Once in Royal David's City

***GREETING**

Today Christ is born:

Alleluia, alleluia!

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,

the love of God,

and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

***GLORY TO GOD**



All glo - ry be to God on high and peace to all on earth;
Lord Christ, you are the Lamb of God, who takes our sin a - way;
You are the Ho - ly One, Most High, Lord Je - sus Christ, a - lone,



Lord God, al - might - y Fa - ther, King, we praise you for your worth.
now seat - ed at the Fa - ther's side, have mer - cy when we pray.
you and the Ho - ly Spir - it with the Fa - ther on his throne.

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray.

Almighty God,

you gave us your only Son to take on our human nature

and to illumine the world with your light.

By your grace adopt us as your children and enlighten us with your Spirit,

through Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and Lord,

who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and forever.

Amen.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 52:7–10

A messenger races home to Jerusalem with the marvelous words: "Your God reigns!" In comforting the people, God proves to be the best brother or sister (redeemer) they have ever known. Everyone will witness the victory (salvation) of God.

⁷How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of the messenger who announces peace,
who brings good news,
who announces salvation,
who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."

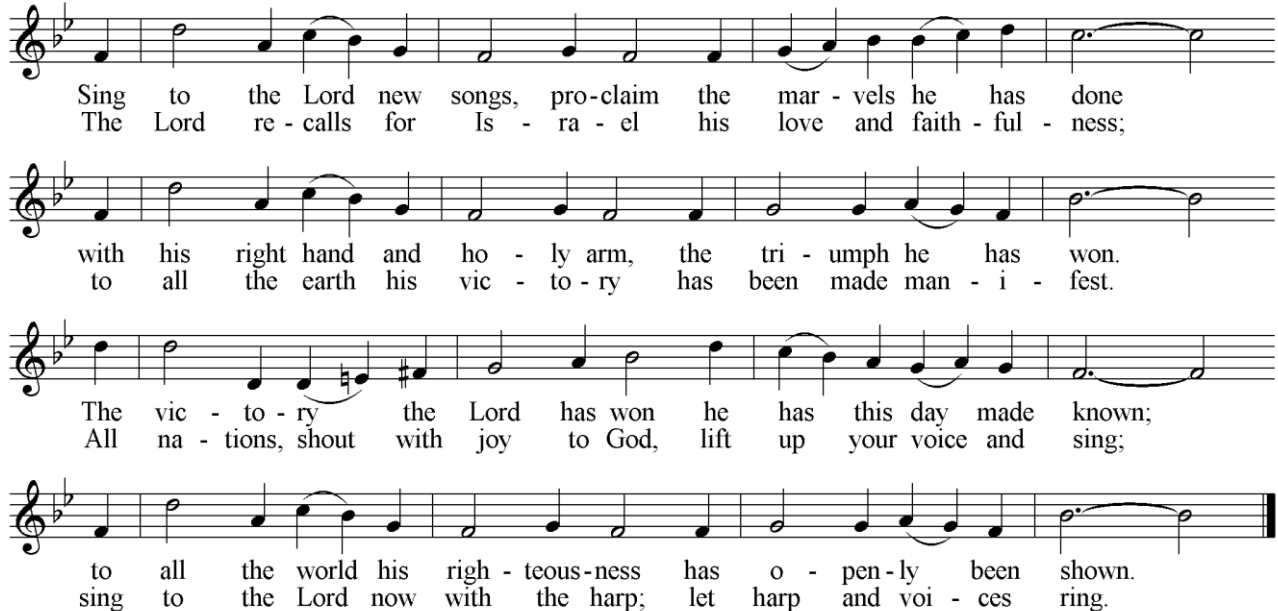
⁸Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices,
together they sing for joy;
for in plain sight they see
the return of the LORD to Zion.

⁹Break forth together into singing,
you ruins of Jerusalem;
for the LORD has comforted his people,
he has redeemed Jerusalem.

¹⁰The LORD has bared his holy arm
before the eyes of all the nations;
and all the ends of the earth shall see
the salvation of our God.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM 98



Sing to the Lord new songs, pro-claim the mar - vels he has done
The Lord re - calls for Is - ra - el his love and faith - ful - ness;

with his right hand and ho - ly arm, the tri - umph he has won.
to all the earth his vic - to - ry has been made man - i - fest.

The vic - to - ry the Lord has won he has this day made known;
All na - tions, shout with joy to God, lift up your voice and sing;

to all the world his righ - teous-ness has o - pen - ly been shown.
sing to the Lord now with the harp; let harp and voi - ces ring.

Text: Psalm 98; para. Christopher L. Webber
Music: Richard S. Willis

CAROL
CMD

SECOND READING Hebrews 1:1–12

This letter opens with a lofty declaration of Jesus' preeminent status as the Son through whom God created the world and through whom our sins are cleansed. God speaks to us now through the Son, who is exalted even above the angels.

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. ³He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

⁵For to which of the angels did God ever say,
"You are my Son;
today I have begotten you"?

Or again,

"I will be his Father,
and he will be my Son"?

⁶And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says,
"Let all God's angels worship him."

⁷Of the angels he says,
"He makes his angels winds,
and his servants flames of fire."

⁸But of the Son he says,
"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever,
and the righteous scepter is the scepter of your kingdom.

⁹You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness;
therefore God, your God, has anointed you
with the oil of gladness beyond your companions."

¹⁰And,
"In the beginning, Lord, you founded the earth,
and the heavens are the work of your hands;

¹¹they will perish, but you remain;
they will all wear out like clothing;

¹²like a cloak you will roll them up,
and like clothing they will be changed.
But you are the same,
and your years will never end."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**



Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Good news of great joy we sing!
Born this day in Da - vid's ci - ty: Christ the Lord, the new-born King.
Glo - ry be to God in hea - ven and God's peace to all the earth.

***GOSPEL READING: John 1:1–14**

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

The prologue to the Gospel of John describes Jesus as the Word of God made flesh, the one who reveals God to be "full of grace and truth."

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY #295: *Of the Father's Love Begotten

***NICENE CREED**

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We 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,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.
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.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Rejoicing with all the faithful, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

Let us pray for new communities of faith and for long-established congregations; for pastors and mission developers, missionaries and teachers, bishops and associates in ministry, those in diaconal ministry; and for all the baptized. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For plants, animals, and people adapting to changing environments; for those affected by storms or droughts; for farmers, ranchers, seafood harvesters, and all whose labor brings food to our tables. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For the people of every nation; for leaders and decision makers; for those who protect the dignity and safety of others; and for peacemakers, especially those whose efforts are met with resistance and fear. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For those who face prejudice, abuse, or neglect; for those who experience depression; for those yearning for light within dark spaces in their lives; for those who grieve; and for all who are sick. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For this assembly; for those who help us to recognize and respond to the needs of our community; for those who lead us in reaching out in love and service to our neighbors. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

With thanksgiving, we remember all who have died and those whose lives have borne witness to your love revealed to us in Christ. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Pondering the mystery of your love, we offer our prayers in the name of Christ, the Word made flesh.
Amen.

***PEACE**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.
And also with you.

OFFERING

OFFERING HYMN #294: *In the Bleak Midwinter*

(All stand for the final stanza as the gifts are brought forward)

***OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray.
Good and loving God,
we rejoice in the birth of Jesus,
who came among the poor to bring the riches of your grace.
As you have blessed us with your gifts,
let them be blessing for others.
With the trees of the field, with all earth and heaven,
we shout for joy at the coming of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

***DIALOGUE**

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

***PREFACE**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ.
In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh
you have opened the eyes of faith
to a new and radiant vision of your glory,
that, beholding the God made visible,
we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see.
And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

***HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might.
Your glo - ry fills heav'n and earth. Ho - san - na in the high - est!
Bless - ed is the one who comes in God's ho - ly name.
Ho - san - na in the high - est! Ho - san - na in the high - est!

***THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

Holy God,

Creator of all and Source of life,
at the birth of time
your word brought light into the world.

In the fullness of time,
you sent your Word, born of Mary,
to shine in our darkness
and to make us your daughters and sons.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore,
his birth and life among us,
his death and resurrection,
we await his coming again
when all things will be restored in him.

By your Spirit bless us and this bread and cup,
that, held and nourished by you,
we may live as your children,
shining with the light of your Son.

Through him all glory and honor is yours,
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,
in your holy Church,
both now and forever.

Amen.

***LORD'S PRAYER**

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

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

The mystery hidden for the ages
is revealed for us in this meal.
Come, behold and receive your God.

COMMUNION

The body of Christ, given for you. **Amen.**
The blood of Christ, shed for you. **Amen.**

In response to Jesus' invitation, all are welcome to come forward and experience the real presence of Christ in the bread and wine of communion. Through this meal, we know forgiveness, life and salvation as the blessings of God's sacramental grace. All are invited forward for communion or a blessing. The area of cups bordered by green tape has grape juice.

COMMUNION SONG: Lamb of God



O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;
O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;
O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;



you suf-fered death our lives to save: have mer-cy now, we pray.
you set us free from guilt and grave: have mer-cy now, we pray.
e - ter - nal peace with God you made: give us your peace, we pray.

COMMUNION HYMN #292: Love Has Come

***POST-COMMUNION BLESSING**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in grace.
Amen.

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray.

We give you thanks, O God,
that in this bread and cup of Christ's very life,
you give us food for our journey.
As you led the magi by a star,
as you brought the holy family home again,
guide us on the way unfolding before us.
Wherever we go, may our lives proclaim
good news of great joy in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

***BLESSING**

May Almighty God, who sent his Son to take on our nature,
bless you this day, scatter the darkness of sin,
and brighten your heart with the light of his holiness.

Amen.

May God, who sent his angels to proclaim the glad news of the
Savior's birth, fill you with joy, and make you heralds of the Gospel.

Amen.

May God, who in the Word made flesh joined heaven to earth
and earth to heaven, give you his peace and favor.

Amen.

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, + the Son, and
the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you forever.

Amen.

SENDING SONG #290: *Go Tell It on the Mountain

***DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE: *Angels, from the Realms of Glory* – Edwin Johnston

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