



Merry Christmas

December 25, 2023

10:00a

Concordia Lutheran Church, Conover

AS WE GATHER

What is true Christmas weather? Reading the words of well-known hymns and carols, one might conclude that cold weather and wintry precipitation were being experienced in Bethlehem when Jesus was born, especially considering such titles as “The Snow Lay on the Ground” and “See amid the Winter’s Snow.” While the weather on that first Christmas is certainly up for debate, the fact of the birth itself is not. It is a blessed fact! Hymn writer Edward Caswell exclaims, “Sing through all Jerusalem: Christ is born in Bethlehem!” (*LSB* 373). The songs of praise from the angelic host when our Lord was born are echoed in our hymns and carols. Paul encouraged the Ephesians to be “singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart” (Ephesians 5:19). Whatever the weather may be outside, today is a day for singing to the Lord—with all your heart!

PRELUDE

We stand.

OPENING HYMN **“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”** **380**

INVOCATION

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

C Amen.

OPENING SENTENCES *Isaiah 60:1; 9:2; 2 Corinthians 4:6*

P Arise, shine, for your light has come,

C and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

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

C those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.

P For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,”

C has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION

P Let us come before our loving Father, confident of His forgiveness for Jesus' sake.

Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination

P Let us confess our sins to God, our heavenly Father.

C Almighty God, heavenly Father, we poor sinners plead guilty before You of all sins. We are by nature sinful people. Time and again, we have lived as if You did not matter and as if we mattered most. We have not honored the name of the Lord Jesus, the newborn King whose birth we celebrate this day, as we should. We have not walked in the brightness of Your light. Our thoughts and desires have been stained by sin. We are sorry for all of these our transgressions, and we ask for Your grace. It is our sincere desire to do better in our lives.

P God be merciful to you and strengthen your faith. In the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

HYMN OF PRAISE

"Now Sing We, Now Rejoice"

386



1 Now sing we, now re - joice,	Now raise to heav'n our voice;
2 Come from on high to me;	I can - not rise to Thee.
3 Now through His Son doth shine	The Fa - ther's grace di - vine.
4 Oh, where shall joy be found?	Where but on heav'n - ly ground?



He from whom joy stream - eth	Poor in a man - ger lies;
Cheer my wea - ried spir - it,	O pure and ho - ly Child;
Death was reign - ing o'er us	Through sin and van - i - ty
Where the an - gels sing - ing	With all His saints u - nite,



Not so bright-ly beam-eth The sun in yon-der skies.
 Through Thy grace and mer-it, Blest Je-sus, Lord most mild,
 Till He o-pened for us A bright e-ter-ni-ty.
 Sweet-est prais-es bring-ing In heav'n-ly joy and light.



Thou my Sav-ior art!	Thou my Sav-ior art!
Draw me un-to Thee!	Draw me un-to Thee!
May we praise Him there!	May we praise Him there!
Oh, that we were there!	Oh, that we were there!

Text and tune: Public domain

COLLECT OF THE DAY

P Let us pray.

O God who has given us grace at this time to celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, the light of the world, we thank You for the countless blessings that He has brought to us and to our world. We ask that our worship bring joy to You and that Your life-giving light be shown forth through us; this we ask through Jesus Christ, the newborn Babe and our eternal King and Lord.

C Amen.

We sit.

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Isaiah 52:7-10

How beautiful upon the mountains
 are the feet of him who brings good news,
 who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness,
 who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."
 The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice;
 together they sing for joy;
 for eye to eye they see the return of the LORD to Zion.
 Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem,
 for the LORD has comforted his people; he has redeemed Jerusalem.
 The 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.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE READING

Hebrews 1:1-6

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

For to which of the angels did God ever say,

“You are my Son, today I have begotten you”?

Or again,

“I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son”?

And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says,

“Let all God’s angels worship him.”

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

We stand.

GOSPEL CANTICLE “Let Our Gladness Have No End” 381



1 Let our glad - ness have no end, al - le - lu - ia!
2 Proph - e - sies in days of old, al - le - lu - ia!
3 See, the love - liest bloom - ing rose, al - le - lu - ia!
4 In - to flesh is made the Word, al - le - lu - ia!



For to earth did Christ de - scend, al - le - lu - ia!
God has sent Him as fore - told, al - le - lu - ia!
From the branch of Jes - se grows, al - le - lu - ia!
He, our ref - uge and our Lord, al - le - lu - ia!

Refrain



On this day God gave us Christ, His Son, to save



us; Christ, His Son, to save us.

Text and tune: Public domain

GOSPEL**John 1:1-14**P The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 1st chapter.C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to You, O Christ.***We sit.***HYMN OF THE DAY****“What Child Is This”****370****SERMON**

Pastor Michael Geml

*We stand.***CATECHISM***The Second Article of the Creed*

C **I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

P What does this mean?

C I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

PREFACE

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Lift up your hearts,

C We lift them to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God,

C It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

P Blessed are You, Lord God Almighty, for You have sent Your Son, Jesus, to bring the fullness of divine light to shine on us with all of its beauty and grace. We bless You for the joy of this day and for the blessed fellowship we share at Your Table of grace where we receive His body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins. Grant that we walk in Your light at all times as we journey on this earth, to which our Savior was willing to come, until we rejoice in the light eternal of Your heavenly kingdom. This we ask in the saving name of Jesus.

C Amen.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

PROCLAMATION OF CHRIST *1 Corinthians 11:26; Revelation 22:20*

P As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.

C Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

P O Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, in giving us Your body and blood to eat and to drink, You lead us to remember and confess Your holy cross and passion, Your blessed death, Your rest in the tomb, Your resurrection from the dead, Your ascension into heaven, and Your coming for the final judgment. So remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

LORD’S PRAYER

PAX DOMINI

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C And also with you.

We sit.

DISTRIBUTION	“Once in Royal David’s City”	376
	“See amid the Winter’s Snow”	373

We stand.

DISMISSAL

POST COMMUNION COLLECT

P Let us pray.

You have come unto us, O Father, in the precious body and blood of Christ, our Lord. Grant that we who have received Your salvation rejoice in You all our days; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

BENEDICTION

CLOSING HYMN

“Go Tell It on the Mountain”

388

POSTLUDE