

FIRST SUNDAY of CHRISTMAS
Northeastern Minnesota Synod - ELCA
December 27, 2020



PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP - ELW hymn # 283 "O Come, All Ye Faithful" vs.

O Come, all ye faith-ful, joy-ful and tri-um-phant!
O come ye, O come ye to Beth-le-hem;
come and be-hold him, born the king of an-gels;
O come, let us a-dore him, O come, let us a-dore him,
O come, let us a-dore him, Christ the Lord!

WELCOME & APOSTOLIC GREETING - Bp. Amy?

Welcome to worship this morning. This year has been unlike any we've experienced in our lifetimes. Our regular worship services have undergone many changes including how we gather together to celebrate Christ's birth.

As we journey together as the Northeastern Minnesota Synod into the New Year, we want to recognize the incredible effort put in by all who preach and lead worship, edit videos and mail out printed copies of worship. It is to this hard work that we as your synod staff have offered up this worship service for the First Sunday of Christmas. While we may be worshipping in a different format, we worship the Word become flesh together in the promise that Jesus gave to us that "wherever two or three are gathered in my name, I am in your midst." You are invited to sing, pray, be nurtured by scripture and to light an Advent candle at the start of each segment during the Sermon in Scripture, Prayer and Song. Come, let us worship Christ, the Lord!

L: The grace and peace of Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, be with you all.

C: **And also with you.**

HYMN OF PRAISE - ELW hymn # 267 "Joy to the World" vs. 1, 3 & 4

Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re-ceive its king;
let ev-'ry heart pre-pare him room and heav'-n and na-ture sing,
and heav'-n and na-ture sing, and heav'n, and heaven and na-ture sing.

No more let sin and sorrow grow - nor thorns in-fest the ground;
he comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found,
far as, far as, the curse is found

He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the na-tions prove
the glories of his righ-teous-ness and wonders of his love, and won-ders of his love,
and won-ders, and won-ders of his love.

SERMON IN SCRIPTURE, REFLECTION/PRAYER AND SONG

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Come to Us

A reading from Galatians chapter 4, verses 4-7

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child, then also an heir, through God.

Prayer/Reflection - Let us pray.

Lord, you came as you promised. We look back on that event with wonder. What a change it made in the world. We even date our years from your birth. We are your people. We take our name from yours. We belong to you. We trust that your death for us makes us right with God. We know that, because you live, we too shall live beyond our deaths. But we have not seen your face, and you have promised that we will. Will it be soon? We do so hope. We long for that day. Fears and frustrations, pains and uncertainties show us how much we need you. **Come, Lord Jesus.**

Song - ELW hymn # 286 "Your Little Ones, Dear Lord" vs. 1 & 3

Your little ones, dear Lord, are we, and come your low-ly bed to see;
en-light-en ev-'ry soul and mind, that we the way to you may find.

Oh, draw us whol-ly to you, Lord, and to us all your grace ac-cord;
true faith and love to us im-part, that we may hold you in our heart.

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Be with Us

A reading from Romans chapter 8, verses 35, 37-39

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or period, or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Prayer/Reflection - Let us pray.

Lord, you have given us an inward joy that none can extinguish, for you have told us and shown us that your love for us is sure. We do not ask for trouble or doubt or persecution, though they may be good for us. We know we will have to endure our share of troubles, pain and grief. But we are forever grateful that we need face none of these things alone. For today, we ask that you would make your presence known to those of our community who most need you: our bereaved, our ill, our discouraged, our weak, our tempted, our bitter ones. Grant them all renewed assurance of your love and care. **Come, Lord Jesus.**

Song - ELW hymn # 282 "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear" verses 3 & 4

And you, be-neath life's crush-ing load, whose forms are bending low,
who toil a-long the climb-ing way with pain-full tips and slow;
look now, for glad and gold-en hours come swift-ly on the wing;
oh, rest be-side the wea-ry road and hear the an-gels sing!

For lo! The days are has-t'ning on, by prophets seen of old,
when with the ev-er-cir-cling years shall come the time fore-told,
when peace shall o-ver all the earth its an-cient splendors fling,
and all the world give back the song which now the an-gels sing.

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Empower Us

A reading from Romans 8, verses 15-17

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ - if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

Prayer/Reflection - Let us pray.

Lord, what must it be like for you, seeing and hearing and suffering with all the injured, all the sick, all the hungry, all the homeless, all the jobless, all the bereaved of the world? Sometimes even one is more than we can bear. We bow before your boundless capacity to handle it. Lord, we covet just a little bit of what is yours in endless degree: patience, pity, love, mercy, forgiveness, understanding, and generosity. Expand our hearts so we develop a deeper ability to share the suffering of others. Lord, grant that in our dealings with others we err on the side of too much generosity, too much compassion, too much empathy, rather than too little. Since we go out in your name and for your sake, make us more Christ-like as our days go by. **Come, Lord Jesus.**

Song - ELW hymn # 279 "O Little Town of Bethlehem" v. 2 & 4

For Christ is born of Mar-y, and gathered all a-bove
while mortals sleep, the an-gels keep their watch of won-d'ring love.
O morn-ing stars, to-geth-er pro-claim the ho-ly birth,
and prais-es sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!

O ho-ly child of Beth-le-hem, de-scend to us, we pray,
cast out our sin, and en-ter in, be born in us to-day.
We hear the Christ-has an-gels the great glad tidings tell,
oh, come to us, a-bide with us, our Lord Im-man-u-el!

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Use Us

A reading from John chapter 1 verses 14, 16

And 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. From his fulness we have all received, grace upon grace.

Prayer/Reflection - Let us pray.

Lord, we are your community. How much light and grace you have shed on us. We have basked in your light and grace. Every day we store it up and become richer and richer. Lord, help us to also share it, to reflect your light out into a darkened, groping world. Lead others to your city, your treasure house. Make us a place of reconciliation and healing and wellness, a place to which everyone and anyone may come and be welcomed in your name. **Come, Lord Jesus.**

Song - ELW hymn # 296 "What Child is This" vs. 1 & 2

What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar'y-s lap is sleep-ing?
Whom an-gels greet with an-thems sweet while shepherds watch are keep-ing?
This, this is Christ the king, whom shepherds guard and an-gels sing,
haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar-y!

Why lies he in such mean es-tate where ox and ass are feed-ing?
Good Chris-than fear; for sinners here the si-lent Word is plead-ing.
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;
hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar-y!



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Bless Us

A reading from Luke, chapter 2, verses 22-38

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they [Mary and Joseph] brought him [Jesus] up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

*"Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word;
for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel."*

And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed - and a sword will pierce your own soul too."

There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher, She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

Prayer/Reflection - *Let us pray.*

Lord, what a joy, what a privilege to belong to you! We are grateful that you have adopted us, that you call us your people. And we remember now your faithfulness to us, never abandoning us, even when we choose to turn away from you. Thank you for welcoming us back when we finally see what we have done. Bless us continually with the gifts of faithfulness and steadfastness. Keep us from unfaithfulness to you or to others. Especially keep us faithful to those whom you send us. ***Come, Lord Jesus.***

A reading from Luke, chapter 2, verses 39-40

When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they [Mary, Joseph and Jesus] returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. There the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

Song - ELW hymn # 292 "Love Has Come" vs. 1-3

Love has come — a light in the dark-ness! Love shines forth in the Beth-le-hem skies.

See, all heav-en has come to pro-claim it; hear how their song of joy a-ris-es:

Love! Love! Born un-to you, a Sav-ior! Love! Love! Glo-ry to God on high.

Love is born! Come, share in the won-der. Love is God no a-sleep in the hay.

See the glow in the eyes of his moth-er; what is the name her heart is say-ing?

Love! Love! Love is the name she whispers: Love! Love! Je-sus, Im-man-u-el.

Love has come and nev-er will leave us! Love is the life ev-er-last-ing and free.

Love is Je-sus with-in and a-mong us, Love is the peace our hearts are seek-ing.

Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christ-mas. Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Holy God,

everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, wonderful Counselor, at the birth of time your Word brought light into the world, and throughout the ages, you proclaim newness of life. For your wondrous Word, we thank you, O God. **We thank you, O God.**

In the fullness of time, your Word became flesh, to shine in our world's darkness, to speak peace to all peoples, and to welcome us as members of your family. For your loving Word, we adore you. **We adore you, O God.**

Grant us now the gift of your Spirit, that held, nourished, and protected by your Word, we may live as your children, bearing your goodness throughout the world. For your powerful Word, we praise you, O God. **We praise you, O God.**

All glory to you, holy God, now and forever. Amen. **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

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.

DISMISSAL

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,
so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

Lord, let your servants go in peace

to share the love of Christ with all your people!

SENDING HYMN - ELW hymn # 290 - "Go, Tell It on the Mountain" vs. 1 & 3

Refrain

Go tell it on the moun-tain, o-ver the hills and ev-'ry-where;
go tell it on the mountain that Je-sus Christ is born!

While shepherds kept their watch-ing o'er is-lent flocks by night,
be-hold through-out the heavens there shone a ho-ly light. *Refrain*

Down in a lone-ly man-ger the hum-ble Christ was born;
and God sent us sal-va-tion that bless-ed Christ-mas morn. *Refrain*



POSTLUDE

Resources:

Hymns - Augsburg Fortress license # 12335-S

Prayers of the People, Sundays and Seasons, license # 8100471151

Prayer Reflections - *More Real Prayers*, Wendell Frerichs, Centered Life, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN

Prayers of the People, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

A blessed Christmas and New Year from your Northeastern Minnesota Synod Staff! Bishop Amy Odgren, Deacon Brenda Tibbetts, Pastor Rollie Bockbrader, Catherine Anderson and Kathy Wimer.

Thank you to pianist Bailey Conger, Trinity Lutheran Church, Cook.