

*Focus on Christ
this Season*



***Candlelight Service
2025***

Welcome to this service celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. May your hearts be filled with the joy and peace that is found only in knowing the great act of love that happened that night.

Hymn #102 - Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful

1. Oh, come, all ye faithful, triumphantly sing;
Come, see in the manger our Savior and King
To Bethlehem hasten with joyful accord;
Oh, come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

2. True Son of the Father, He comes from the skies;
To be born of a virgin He doth not despise.
To Bethlehem hasten with joyful accord;
Oh, come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

3. Hark, hark, to the angels all singing in heaven,
"To God in the highest all glory be given!"
To Bethlehem hasten with joyful accord;
Oh, come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

4. To Thee, then, O Jesus, this day of Thy birth
Be glory and honor through heaven and earth,
True Godhead incarnate, omnipotent Word!
Oh, come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

Pastor: In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Congregation: Amen.

Confession (Psalm 51)

All: Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!

P: For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your

sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

C: Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.

P: Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

C: Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice. Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

Absolution: Ephesians 2:1-5, Psalm 66:16-20

P: And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved.

C: Come and listen, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me. I cried out to him with my mouth; his praise was on my tongue.

P: If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened; but God has surely listened and heard my voice in prayer.

C: Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love for me!

Hymn #87 - Joy to the World, the Lord is Come

1. Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room
And heaven and nature sing.

2. Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let men their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy.

3. No more let sins and sorrows grow
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found.

4. He rules the world with truth and grace
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness
And wonders of His love.

First Lesson - Isaiah 9:2-7

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shone.

³You have multiplied the nation;
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,

as they are glad when they divide the spoil.

⁴ For the yoke of his burden,
and the staff for his shoulder,
the rod of his oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

⁵ For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult
and every garment rolled in blood
will be burned as fuel for the fire.

⁶ For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷ Of the increase of his government and of peace
there will be no end,
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,
to establish it and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time forth and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Psalm 96

P: Oh sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth!

C: Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day.

P: Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!

C: For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised;

P: He is to be feared above all gods.

C: For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the Lord made the heavens.

P: Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

C: Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength!

P: Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts!

C: Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth!

P: Say among the nations, "The Lord reigns!"

C: Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity."

P: Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;

C: let the sea roar, and all that fills it; let the field exult, and everything in it!

P: Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before the Lord, for he comes, for he comes to judge the earth.

C: He will judge the world in righteousness, and the peoples in his faithfulness.

Second Lesson - Titus 2:11-14

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ¹² training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, ¹³ waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

Hymn #85 (1-5, 15) From Heaven Above to Earth I Come

1. "From heav'n above to earth I come
To bear good news to ev'ry home;
Glad tidings of great joy I bring,
Where-of I now will say and sing:

2. "To you this night is born a child
Of Mary, chosen virgin mild;
This little child, of lowly birth,
Shall be the joy of all the earth.

3. "This is the Christ, our God and Lord,
Who in all need shall aid afford;
He will Himself your Savior be
From all your sins to set you free.

4. "He will on you the gifts bestow
Prepared by God for all below,
That in His kingdom, bright and fair,
You may with us His glory share.

5. "These are the tokens ye shall mark:
The swaddling-clothes and manger dark;
There ye shall find the infant laid
By whom the heavens and earth were made."

15. Glory to God in highest heaven,
Who unto us His Son hath given!
While angels sing with pious mirth
A glad new year to all the earth.

SERMON

2nd half of the Athanasian Creed: (TLH 53)

Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe faithfully the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For the right faith is that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man;

God of the Substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and Man of the substance of His mother, born in the world;

Perfect God and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul of human flesh subsisting.

Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead and inferior to the Father as touching His manhood;

Who, although He be God and Man, yet He is not two, but one Christ:

One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking the manhood into God;

One altogether; not by confusion of substance, but by unity of Person.

For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and Man is one Christ;

Who suffered for our salvation; descended into hell; rose again the third day from the dead;

He ascended into heaven; He sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty; from whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies and shall give an account of their own works.

And they that have done good shall go into everlasting life; and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire.

This is the catholic faith; which except a man believe faithfully and firmly, he cannot be saved.

*We worship the **LORD** with our **Offerings***

Responsive Prayer for Christmas Eve

P: Oh gracious and almighty Father, we praise you that you kept your ancient promises by sending your everlasting Son in human flesh.

C: On this holy night, receive our thanks and devotion, our songs and prayers.

P: You sent Jesus as a lowly child to demonstrate your concern for all, the weak and lonely, the troubled and frightened, the timid and helpless. No one is overlooked by your ever-seeking eyes. No one is excluded from your upholding arms. No one is denied the comfort and help of your outstretched hand.

C: Bless us with a childlike faith in the divine assurance that you love and care for us always.

P: You sent Jesus as the Savior of the world to deliver all from the curse of sin, the power of death, and the torment of hell. He took our place. He was born under the law to set us free. He became the innocent lamb of sacrifice. He came to die and rise again in order that we might live eternally. Firmly implant this good news in our hearts, and fill us with an eager desire to spread the Word concerning what we have heard tonight.

C: May all who hear the message, in every nation under heaven, be amazed and believe what is told to them about the child.

P: You sent Jesus as the light of the world to drive out all darkness that would rob us of the full life that you intend for us. May the "joy that will be for all people" be our joy. May the "on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" be our peace. May the treasure that Mary pondered in her heart be our treasure.

C: For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

(Light Candles)

Responsive Reading of Luke 2

P: In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ And all went to be registered, each to his own town.

C: ⁴ And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David,

P: ⁵ to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

C: ⁶ And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Away in a Manger

**1 Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the sky--looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**

**2 The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.
I love Thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.**

**3 Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
And take us to heaven to live with Thee there.**

P: ⁸ And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear.

C: ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.”

P: ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

C: ¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

Hymn #103 - To Shepherds as They Watched by Night

1. To shepherds as they watched by night

**Appeared a host of angels bright;
 Behold the tender Babe, they said,
 In yonder lowly manger laid.**

**2. At Bethlehem, in David's town,
As Micah did of old make known;**

**'Tis Jesus Christ, your Lord and King,
Who doth to all salvation bring.**

All: ¹⁵ When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶ And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger.

P: ¹⁷ And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them.

C: ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰ And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Hymn #94 - Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

**1 Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"**

**3 Hail, the heav'nly Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Risen with healing in his wings.
Mild He leaves His throne on high,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"**

Prayer of the Day

P: Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true light. Grant that as we have known on earth the wonder of that light, we may also behold him in all his glory in the life to come; through your only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Benediction

Hymn #646 - 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 Thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord at Thy birth,
Jesus, Lord at Thy birth.**

Silent Prayer

**BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH
"CHRIST IS OUR CORNERSTONE"**

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