

"The Nativity of Our Lord"

December 25, 2023

Christmas Day Service

M: We begin our Christmas worship with the comforting proclamation of the Christmas angel, a message meant for all, a message that lifts our hearts and souls to the greatest heights of joy:

C: Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy! For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord!"

Hymn #34 (vs 1-3)..... "Now Sing We, Now Rejoice"

1 Now sing we, now rejoice,
Now raise to heav'n our voice;
He from whom joy streameth
 Poor in a manger lies;
Not so brightly beameth
 The sun in yonder skies.
 Thou my Savior art!
 Thou my Savior art!

2 Come from on high to me;
 I cannot rise to thee.
Cheer my wearied spirit,
 O pure and holy Child;
Through thy grace and merit,
Blest Jesus, Lord most mild,
 Draw me unto thee!
 Draw me unto thee!

3 Now through his Son doth shine
 The Father's grace divine.
Death o'er us had reigned
 Through sin and vanity;
 He for us obtained
 Eternal joy on high.
May we praise him there!
May we praise him there!

Confession and Absolution

M: Let us come before the Lord and confess our sins.

C: O, Jesus, our brother, You are God in the flesh. This day of Your birth we humbly come to Your manger in repentance. How often we have pushed You out of our lives and said, "There is no room for You in the inn of my heart." We are not worthy to have You dwell with us. Because we have sinned against You in thought, word and deed, we deserve Your punishment, now and in eternity. Forgive us. As we look into Your manger, we see our only hope for deliverance from sin. You alone, as God and man, could bear our sins. You alone, as God and man, could purchase us with Your precious blood. You alone, as God and man, could make peace between man and God. We humbly call out to You for mercy!

M: God's holy Word declares that when the fullness of time had come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Therefore, upon your confession, I declare unto you the gracious forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Jesus, your divine brother in the flesh, has given you the full rights of sons. Amen.

Response of Joy #49..... "Rejoice, Rejoice This Happy Morn"

Rejoice, rejoice this happy morn!
A Savior unto us is born,
The Christ, the Lord of glory.
His lowly birth in Bethlehem
The angels from on high proclaim
And sing redemption's story.
My soul, Extol God's great favor;
Bless him ever For salvation,
Give him praise and adoration.

The Old Testament Lesson.....Isaiah 52:7-10

7How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of a herald, who proclaims peace and preaches good news, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God is king!"
8The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voices. Together they shout for joy, because with both eyes they will see it when the Lord returns to Zion.
9Break out, shout for joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem, because the Lord is comforting his people. He is redeeming Jerusalem.
10The Lord lays bare his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation from our God.

Psalm of the Day.....Psalm 98

M: Sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm/have worked salvation for him.

C: The LORD has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations.

M: He has remembered his love and his faithfulness to the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have, seen the salvation of our God.

C: Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music;

M: make music to the LORD with the harp, with the harp and the sound of singing,

C: with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn— shout for joy before the LORD, the King.

M: Let the sea resound, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.

C: Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy;

M: let them sing before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth.

C: He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples with equity.

Epistle Lesson.....Hebrews 1:1-9

God has spoken to us by his Son.

In the past, God spoke to our forefathers by the prophets at many times and in many ways. 2 In these last days, he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. 3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact imprint of the divine nature. He sustains all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he took his seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

4 The Son became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. 5 For to which of the angels did God ever say:

You are my Son. Today I have begotten you?

And again:

I will be his Father, and he will be my Son.

6 And again, when he brought his firstborn into the world, he said:

Let all God's angels worship him.

7 About the angels he says:

He makes his messengers winds and his ministers flaming fire.

8 But about the Son he says:

God, your throne is forever and ever,

and the scepter of righteousness is the scepter of your kingdom.

9 You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness.

Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of joy beyond your companions.

Hymn #55 (vs 1-2)..... "Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful"

1 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.

2 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.

Explanation of the 2nd Article of the Apostles' Creed

C: I believe that Jesus Christ is true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary; and that He is my Lord, Who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, 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; in order that I might be His own, live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness; even as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true. Amen.

Hymn #36 vs 1, 2 & 4..... "A Great and Mighty Wonder"

1 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."

2 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."

4 Since all he comes to ransom,
By all be he adored,
The infant born in Beth'lem,
The Savior and the Lord.
Repeat the hymn again:
"To God on high be glory
And peace on earth to men."

The Sermon.....Pastor Mark Bartels

John 1:1-14 - The Word became flesh.

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him everything was made, and without him not one thing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of mankind. 5 The light is shining in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

6 There was a man, sent from God, whose name was John. 7 He came as an eyewitness to testify about the light so that everyone would believe through him. 8 He was not the light, but he came to testify about the light.

9 The real light that shines on everyone was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to what was his own, yet his own people did not accept him. 12 But to all who did receive him, to those who believe in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. 13 They were born, not of blood, or of the desire of the flesh, or of a husband's will, but born of God.

14 The Word became flesh and dwelled among us. We have seen his glory, the glory he has as the only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Hymn #68 (vs 1-3)....."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 bright 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 you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.

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

Offering

Prayers

M: Father, we thank You for fulfilling the message You spoke through the prophets to send Your Son to be born of a virgin. We praise You for proclaiming to us the message of Christ, Your Son, born to redeem us. We join the heavenly host of angels in lifting up our voices and shouting for joy at the good tidings of peace which You have brought us. We sing Your praises for comforting us with the message of salvation.

C: Help us spread the good news of a Savior from sin to all the ends of the earth.

M: Son of God, we praise You for coming to earth on the first Christmas. We praise You for living the life we could not live and dying the death we were doomed to die. We thank You for coming to us still today in Word and Sacrament. As we celebrate Your coming to earth to become one of us, help us rejoice with all our hearts. Strengthen our faith. Cause our love to increase and our confidence to grow. Bless all we say and do to the glory of Your name.

C: Lord, hear our prayer.

M: Holy Spirit, through Your Word, give us the blessed conviction that Jesus is the Son of God, and that He was born in Bethlehem to keep the Law of God perfectly in our place and to give His life into death for our redemption.

C: Lord Jesus, open our eyes to behold Your glory as the one and only Son, Who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. Amen.

The 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.

Benediction

M: Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another. Serve the Lord with gladness. The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

Closing Hymn #62 "Joy to the World"

- 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.

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