



THE FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2020

Thank you for joining us for this service of Lessons and Carols,

We hope that you and your congregation are well during these terrible days. We pray for the safety and health of all throughout our world, our nation, and our Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod as we each struggle with isolation, fear, anger, and disappointment. Many of us, for the first time in our lives, did not gather for Christmas Eve worship service. Many of us miss our families, our friends, our traditions, and a myriad of things that bring us joy.

But one thing we can depend upon is the hope of the Good News of Jesus, the savior born in a manger. Our prayer for you this day is that this service of lessons and carols will remind you of God's love, of the testimony of scripture, and of the promise of Jesus and his love.

Our worship leaders today are members of your synod staff. Our musicians serve congregations throughout the synod.

May the blessings of this Christmas season be yours.



**SOUTHWESTERN
PENNSYLVANIA
SYNOD**
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN
CHURCH IN AMERICA



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**
God's work. Our hands.

Introduction and Welcome – *Rev. Peter D. Asplin, Assistant to the Bishop*

The Christmas Proclamation – *Rev. Melissa Stoller, Director for Evangelical Mission and Assistant to the Bishop*

Many ages from the time when God created the heavens and the earth
and then formed man and woman in his own image;
long after the great flood, when God made the rainbow shine forth as a sign of the covenant;
twenty-one centuries from the time the promise was given to Abraham and Sarah;
thirteen centuries after Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt and Miriam danced in freedom;
eleven hundred years from the time of Ruth and the judges;
one thousand years from the anointing of David as king,
in fulfillment of the times and years and months and days discerned by the prophets;
in the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad;
the seven hundred and fifty-second year from the foundation of the city of Rome;
the forty-second year of the reign of Octavian Augustus;
while the whole world enjoyed a span of peace,
Jesus Christ, eternal God and Son of the eternal Father,
desiring to sanctify the world by his most merciful coming,
being conceived by the Holy Spirit and nine months of growth in the womb of Mary his mother was
born in Bethlehem of Judea—
now in our own times is the nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, God made flesh.

Opening Prayer – *Bishop Kurt F. Kusserow*

The Lord Be with You.

And also with you.

Almighty God, you have filled us with the new light of the Word who became flesh and lived among us. Let the light of our faith shine in all we do; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Children's Sermon

"The List of Jeremy Quist" by Carol Greene

Pastor Peter Asplin

Lessons and Carols

Isaiah 9:2-7 God promises a king

Sandy Delorenze, Administrative Assistant to the Bishop

²The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness —
on them light has shined.

³You have multiplied the nation,

you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.

⁴For the yoke of their burden,
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors
and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

⁶For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.

He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Lo, how a rose e'er blooming ELW 272

*Natalie DiBenedetto Director of Music and Organist
Trinity Lutheran, Gibsonia, Pastor Tony Schneck*

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

- 1 Lo, how a rose e'er blooming
from tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming
as seers of old have sung,
it came, a flow'r so bright,
amid the cold of winter,
when half-spent was the night.
- 2 Isaiah had foretold it,
the rose I have in mind;
with Mary we behold it,
the virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright,
she bore to us a Savior,
when half-spent was the night.

3 This flow'r, whose fragrance tender
with sweetness fills the air,
dispels with glorious splendor
the darkness everywhere.
True man, yet very God,
from sin and death he saves us
and lightens ev'ry load.

4 O Savior, child of Mary,
who felt our human woe;
O Savior, king of glory,
who dost our weakness know:
bring us at length, we pray,
to the bright courts of heaven
and into endless day.

Text: German carol, 15th cent.; tr. Theodore Baker, 1851-1934, sts. 1-2; Harriet R. Krauth, 1845-1925, st. 3; John C. Mattes, 1876-1948, st. 4

Micah 5:2-5a The king will come from Bethlehem
Bob Cairns, Synod Accountant

²But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.

³Therefore he shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labor has brought forth;
then the rest of his kindred shall return
to the people of Israel.

⁴And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.
And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great
to the ends of the earth;

⁵and he shall be the one of peace.

O little town of Bethlehem ELW 279, LBW 41

John Thickey, Organist

Nancy DeJohn, Vocalist

St. John's Lutheran Church of Perrysville, Pastor Michael Robinson

O Little Town of Bethlehem

- 1 O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by;
yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.
- 2 For Christ is born of Mary,
and, gathered all above
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the king,
and peace to all the earth!
- 3 How silently, how silently
the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming;
but, in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still
the dear Christ enters in.
- 4 O holy child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin, and enter in,
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
the great glad tidings tell;
oh, come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Immanuel!

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835-1893

Luke 1:26-35, 38 The annunciation to Mary

Patty Davidson,

Lutheran Seniorlife Deployed Staff to SWPA Synod Health Ministries

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your

womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁸Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

The angel Gabriel from heaven came ELW 265, WOV 632

Jay McDowell, Director of Music Ministry

Faith Lutheran Church, Upper St. Clair, Pastor Ron Weyrha

The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came

- 1 The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
with wings as drifted snow, with eyes as flame:
"All hail to thee, O lowly maiden Mary,
most highly favored lady." Gloria!
- 2 "For know a blessed mother thou shalt be,
all generations laud and honor thee;
thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,
most highly favored lady." Gloria!
- 3 Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head;
"To me be as it pleaseth God," she said.
"My soul shall laud and magnify God's holy name."
Most highly favored lady, Gloria!
- 4 Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born
in Bethlehem all on a Christmas morn,
and Christian folk throughout the world will ever say:
"Most highly favored lady." Gloria!

Text: Basque carol; para. Sabine Baring-Gould, 1834-1924

Luke 2:1-7 The birth of Jesus

Carol Ruckert, Receptionist and Administrative Assistant

¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Away in a Manger LBW 67

Jeff Donnelly, Music Director

St. Paul Lutheran Church, Monessen

Mid-Mon Valley Lutheran Parish, Pastor Matt Stabe, Pastor Frank Zeman

Away in a Manger

- 1 Away in a manger, no crib for his 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 poor baby wakes,
 but little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.
 I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky
 and stay by my cradle till 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 fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

Text: North American, anonymous, 19th cent.

Luke 2:8-16 *The shepherds go to see the Savior*

Marty Burkett, Administrative Assistant for Stewardship

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see — I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

Angels, from the realms of glory ELW 275, LBW 50

Valerie Rodell, Organist

St. James Lutheran, Youngstown, Pastor Sarah Rossing

Angels, from the Realms of Glory

- 1 Angels, from the realms of glory,
wing your flight o'er all the earth;
once you sang creation's story,
now proclaim Messiah's birth:
Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king.
- 2 Shepherds, in the fields abiding,
watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing,
yonder shines the infant light.
Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king.
- 3 Sages, leave your contemplations,
brighter visions beam afar;
seek the great desire of nations,
you have seen his natal star.
Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king.
- 4 All creation, join in praising
God, the Father, Spirit, Son,
evermore your voices raising
to the eternal Three in One.
Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king.

Text: James Montgomery, 1771–1854, alt., sts. 1–3; Salisbury Hymn Book, 1857, st. 4

Luke 2:21–38 *Jesus receives his name*

Deacon Beth Caywood, Director, Synod Resource Center

²¹After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

²²When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³(as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), ²⁴and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

²⁵Now 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. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷Guided 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, ²⁸Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

²⁹"Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
according to your word;

³⁰for my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel."

³³And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴Then 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 ³⁵so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed — and a sword will pierce your own soul too."

³⁶There 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, ³⁷then as a widow to the age of eighty- four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸At 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.

Jesus, what a wonderful child ELW 297, TFF 51

Regina Shafer, Organist

St. Peter's Lutheran, Uniontown, Pastor Jim Engel

Jesus, What a Wonderful Child

Jesus, Jesus, oh, what a wonderful child.

Jesus, Jesus, so holy, meek, and mild;
new life, new hope the child will bring.

Listen to the angels sing:

"Glory, glory, glory," let the heavens ring!

Text: African American traditional, alt.

Matthew 2:1-11 The magi follow the star

Lauren Wolcott, Synod Communicator

¹In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ²asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." ³When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

⁶'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

⁷Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." ⁹When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother;

and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

What child is this ELW 296, LBW 40

Becky Panzak, Organist and Voice

Pastor Jim Arter, Voice

First Lutheran Church, Leechburg, Pastor Jim Arter

What Child Is This

- 1 What child is this, who, laid to rest,
 on Mary's lap is sleeping?
 Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
 while shepherds watch are keeping?
 This, this is Christ the king,
 whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
 haste, haste to bring him laud,
 the babe, the son of Mary!

- 2 Why lies he in such mean estate
 where ox and ass are feeding?
 Good Christian, fear; for sinners here
 the silent Word is pleading.
 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 Mary!

- 3 So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;
 come, peasant, king, to own him.
 The King of kings salvation brings;
 let loving hearts enthrone him.
 Raise, raise the song on high,
 the virgin sings her lullaby;
 joy, joy, for Christ is born,
 the babe, the son of Mary!

Text: William C. Dix, 1837-1898

Matthew 2:13-18 The slaughter of the holy innocents

Pastor Peter Asplin, Assistant to the Bishop

¹³Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." ¹⁴Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, ¹⁵and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

¹⁶When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. ¹⁷Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

¹⁸"A voice was heard in Ramah,
wailing and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."

Angels We Have Heard on High ELW 289, LBW 71

Recorded by the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians (alcm.org)

Used with permission

Angels We Have Heard on High

1 Angels we have heard on high,
sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply,
echoing their joyous strains.

Refrain

Gloria in excelsis Deo;
gloria in excelsis Deo.

2 Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
which inspire your heav'nly song? Refrain

3 Come to Bethlehem and see
him whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn king. Refrain

Text: French carol; tr. H. F. Hemy, *The Crown of Jesus Music*, 1864

John 1:1-14 The mystery of the incarnation

Bishop Kurt F. Kusserow

¹In 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.

Of the Father's love begotten ELW 295, LBW 42

Agoston Solczi, Organist

St. Paul Lutheran, Sewickly, Pastor Ryan Kobert

Of the Father's Love Begotten

- 1 Of the Father's love begotten
ere the worlds began to be,
he is Alpha and Omega,
he the source, the ending he,
of the things that are, that have been,
and that future years shall see,
evermore and evermore.
- 2 Oh, that birth forever blessed,
when the virgin, full of grace,
by the Holy Ghost conceiving,
bore the Savior of our race,
and the babe, the world's redeemer,
first revealed his sacred face,
evermore and evermore.
- 3 This is he whom seers in old time
chanted of with one accord,
whom the voices of the prophets
promised in their faithful word;
now he shines, the long-expected;
let creation praise its Lord
evermore and evermore.
- 4 Let the heights of heav'n adore him;
angel hosts, his praises sing;
pow'rs, dominions, bow before him
and extol our God and King;
let no tongue on earth be silent,
ev'ry voice in concert ring
evermore and evermore.
- 5 Christ, to thee, with God the Father,
and, O Holy Ghost, to thee,
hymn and chant and high thanksgiving
and unwearied praises be:
honor, glory, and dominion,

and eternal victory
evermore and evermore! Amen.

Text: Marcus Aurelius Clemens Prudentius, 348-413; tr. composite

Responsive Prayer – *Deacon Beth Caywood*

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to God's people on earth.
Blessed are you, Prince of peace.
You rule the earth with truth and justice.
Send your gift of peace to all nations of the world.
Blessed are you, Son of Mary.
You share our humanity.
**Have mercy on the sick, the dying,
and all who suffer this day.**
Blessed are you, Son of God.
You dwell among us as the Word made flesh.
**Reveal yourself to us in word and sacrament
that we may bear your light to all the world.**

Lord's Prayer – *Pastor Melissa Stoller*

Our Father in heaven,
 hallowed be your name,
 your kingdom come,
 your will be done,
 on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
 as we forgive those
 who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
 and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
 and the glory are yours,
 now and forever. Amen.

Blessing and Dismissal – *Bishop Kusserow*

Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.
May you be filled with the wonder of Mary,
the obedience of Joseph,
the joy of the angels,
the eagerness of the shepherds,
the determination of the magi,

and the peace of the Christ child.
Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you now and forever.
Amen.

Our thanks to all the musicians, clergy and the synod staff for participating in this liturgy.

Liturgy Copyright © 2020 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.
Used by permission, Augsburg Fortress liturgies license SAS006189

Most hymns in public domain, others published under
OneLicense A-707784
Videos shared with permission of musicians and congregations.

Scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright © 1989
National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All
rights reserved worldwide.