

St. John's Lutheran Church & School



The Fourth Sunday in Advent

24 December 2023

As We Gather

This year's special Advent services focused on "The Stars of Christmas." Over the weeks we considered "The Stars of Abraham," "The Star of Jacob." and "The Star of David." On this Christmas Eve morning, we worship our incarnate King as we consider "The Stars of Bethlehem." Just who the "Stars" are may surprise you! Like all Christians literally all over the world, we are gathering this day and tomorrow to celebrate the birthday of our God, the Creator, who became a creature, in order to be our Savior!

Bell

Prelude

"Cantabile"

A.

Guilmant

356 The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came



1 The an - gel Ga - bri - el from heav - en came,
2 "For know a bless - ed moth - er thou shalt be,
3 Then gen - tle Mar - y meek - ly bowed her head;
4 Of her, Em - man - u - el, the Christ, was born



With wings as drift - ed snow, with eyes as flame:
All gen - er - a - tions laud and hon - or thee;
"To me be as it pleas - eth God," she said.
In Beth - le - hem all on a Christ - mas morn,



"All hail to thee, O low - ly maid - en Mar - y,
Thy son shall be Em - man - u - el, by seers fore - told,
"My soul shall laud and mag - ni - fy God's ho - ly name."
And Chris - tian folk through - out the world will ev - er say:



Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy." Glo - ri - a!
Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy." Glo - ri - a!
Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy, Glo - ri - a!
"Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy." Glo - ri - a!

Stand

Opening Versicles

- L This is the day which the Lord has made;
C **let us rejoice and be glad in it.**
- L From the rising of the sun to its setting,
C **the name of the Lord is to be praised.**
- L Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth.
C **Our God shall come; He does not keep silence.**
- L Prepare the way of the Lord.
C **Make His paths straight.**
- L Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the skies rain down
righteousness.
C **Let the earth open, that salvation may sprout forth.**
- L From the rising of the sun to its setting,
C **the name of the Lord is to be praised.**
- C **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Kneel

Confession and Absolution

- P So that we may experience the peace of sins forgiven, let us come before
our Lord with humble hearts as we confess together:
- C **Gracious Father, we all have sinned and fallen short of Your glory. By
what we have done and by what we have failed to do, we have broken
Your commands and have not accomplished Your plans for our lives.**
- P Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace,
You alone give us the redemption and the restoration, the absolution and

the ability to follow Your Word. Through the work of Jesus, the Word made flesh, do for us what is impossible apart from You.

- C **Forgive us, renew us, and lead us so that we may follow Your plan for our lives and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.**

- P In the mercy of our gracious Father, Jesus came into this world, journeying from the crib to the cross, from the tomb and to His throne of glory in order to secure our forgiveness according to God's plan of salvation. Receive His assurance of pardon this day as we celebrate Jesus' coming to save us. As a called and ordained servant of Christ and by His authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

- C **Amen.**

Stand

Old Testament Canticle

LSB 261

Refrain



☐ The Lord God is my strength and my song, and
He has be - come my sal - va - tion.
With joy will you draw wa - ter from the
wells of sal - va - tion. And you will say in that
day: "Give thanks to the Lord, call up - on His name,

make known His deeds a - mong the peo - ples, pro -

claim that His name is ex - alt - ed."

Refrain
The Lord God is my strength and my song, and

He has be - come my sal - va - tion.

Sing prais - es to the Lord, for He has done

glo - rious - ly; let this be made known in all the

earth. Shout, and sing for joy, O in -

hab - i - tants of Zi - on, for great in your midst is the

Ho - ly One of Is - ra - el.

Refrain
The Lord God is my strength and my song, and

He has be - come my sal - va - tion.

Glo - ry be to the Fa - ther and to the Son

and to the Ho - ly Spir - it;

as it was in the be - gin - ning, is now, and will

be for - ev - er. A - men.

Refrain

The Lord God is my strength and my song, and

He has be - come my sal - va - tion.

Sit

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

L A reading from 2 Samuel, the seventh chapter.

¹Now when the king lived in his house and the LORD had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, ²the king said to Nathan the prophet, “See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent.” ³And Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you.”

⁴But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, ⁵“Go and tell my servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house to dwell in? ⁶I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling. ⁷In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?”’” ⁸Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. ⁹And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, ¹¹from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. . . .

¹⁶And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.”

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 89:1-5



- A ¹I will sing of the steadfast love of the LORD, for- | ever;*
with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all gener- |
ations.
- C ²For I said, “Steadfast love will be built up for- | ever;*
in the heavens you will establish your | faithfulness.”
- A ³You have said, “I have made a covenant with my | chosen one;*
I have sworn to David my | servant:
- C ⁴**I will establish your offspring for- | ever,*
and build your throne for all gener- | ations.”**
- A ⁵Let the heavens praise your wonders, | O LORD,*
your faithfulness in the assembly of the | holy ones!

Reading

Romans 16:25–27

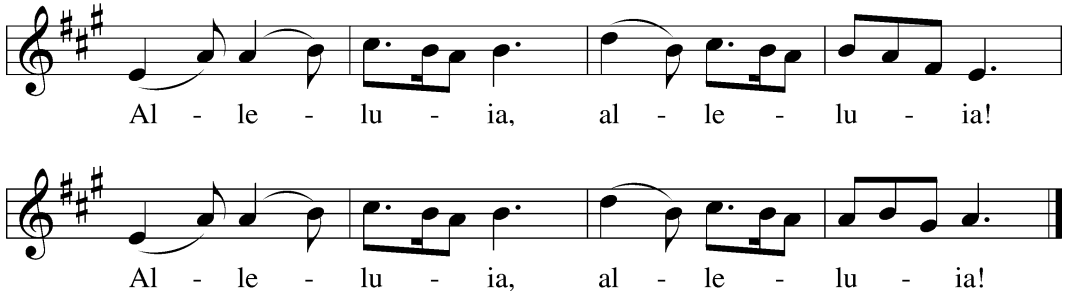
- A The Epistle is from Romans, chapter 16.

²⁵Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages ²⁶but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— ²⁷to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

- A This is the Word of the Lord.
C **Thanks be to God.**

Stand

952 Alleluia — II



Text: Traditional

Tune: Fintan O'Carroll, d. 1977

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Reading

Luke 1:26–38

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the first chapter.

C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" ²⁹But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name 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 father David, ³³and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

³⁴And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

³⁵And the angel answered 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 called holy—the Son of God. ³⁶And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

Responsory

- L Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch.
- C **This is the name by which He will be called: The Lord Is Our Righteousness.**
- L He shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.
- C **This is the name by which He will be called: The Lord Is Our Righteousness.**
- L Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.
- C **This is the name by which He will be called: The Lord Is Our Righteousness.**

Apostles' Creed

- C I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.

And 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.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

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.

Sit Children's Message



Hymn

Someone Special

Jaroslav J. Vajda, 1919–2008

EISENBERG
Carl F. Schalk



1. Some-one Spe-cial, I know who: that some-one, my
2. Some-one Spe-cial, that you are, to cre-ate the
3. Some-one Spe-cial, who would give his own Son that
4. Some-one Spe-cial, who would send his good Spir-it
5. Some-one Spe-cial— God and man, you were there when



God, is you! Who could make a world like this
Christ-mas Star, her-ald-ing the Sav-ior's birth,
all might live, and by him would set us free
for a Friend, Faith Cre-a-tor, Light and Guide,
I be-gan, you'll be there when I de-part,



and a heav-en full of bliss. Some-one spe-cial
bring-ing peace and joy to earth. Some-one spe-cial
from all sin and mis-er-y. Some-one spe-cial
al-ways stand-ing by my side. Some-one spe-cial
for you live with-in my heart. Some-one spe-cial—



I must be, since you made it all for me!
I must be, since you made that Star for me!
I must be, since you gave your Son for me!
I must be, since you gave that Gift to me!
now I see, that some-one is real-ly me.

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Sermon

“The Stars of Bethlehem”

Pastor Weidler

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

Matthew 2:1-2

*“I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches.
I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”*

Revelation 22:16

“Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life.”

Philippians 2:14-16a

Stand

Exchange of Peace

All may share a sign of God's peace

Offertory Anthem

“Lift Up Your Heads, O Gates”

Sam Batt Owens

LIFT UP YOUR HEADS, O YE GATES;
AND BE YE LIFT UP, YE EVERLASTING DOORS;
AND THE KING OF GLORY SHALL COME IN.
WHO IS THIS KING OF GLORY? THE LORD STRONG
AND MIGHTY, THE LORD MIGHTY IN BATTLE.
LIFT UP YOUR HEADS, O YE GATES;
EVEN LIFT THEM UP, YE EVERLASTING DOORS;
AND THE KING OF GLORY SHALL COME IN.
WHO IS THIS KING OF GLORY? THE LORD OF HOSTS,
HE IS THE KING OF GLORY. SELAH.

PSALM 24:7-10



370 What Child Is This



1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, On Mar - y's lap is
2 Why lies He in such mean es - tate Where ox and ass are
3 So bring Him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; Come, peas - ant, king, to



sleep - ing? Whom an - gels greet with an - thems sweet While
feed - ing? Good Chris - tian, fear; for sin - ners here The
own Him. The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; Let



shep - herds watch are keep - ing? This, this is
si - lent Word is plead - ing. Nails, spear shall
lov - ing hearts en - throne Him. Raise, raise the



Christ the king, Whom shep - herds guard and an - gels sing;
pierce Him through, The cross be borne for me, for you;
song on high, The vir - gin sings her lul - la - by;



Haste, haste to bring Him laud, The babe, the son of Mar - y!
Hail, hail the Word made flesh, The babe, the son of Mar - y!
Joy, joy, for Christ is born, The babe, the son of Mar - y!

Text: William C. Dix, 1837–98
Tune: English, 16th cent.
Text and tune: Public domain

Prayer

- L In peace let us pray to the Lord:
C **Lord, have mercy.**
- L For the gift of divine peace and of pardon, with all our heart and with all our mind, let us pray to the Lord:
C **Lord, have mercy.**
- L For the holy Christian Church, here and scattered throughout the world, and for the proclamation of the Gospel and the calling of all to faith, let us pray to the Lord:
C **Lord, have mercy.**
- L For this nation, for our cities and communities, and for the common welfare of us all, let us pray to the Lord:
C **Lord, have mercy.**
- L For seasonable weather and for the fruitfulness of the earth, let us pray to the Lord:
C **Lord, have mercy.**
- L For those who labor, for those whose work is difficult or dangerous, and for all who travel, let us pray to the Lord:
C **Lord, have mercy.**
- L For all those in need, for the hungry and homeless, for the widowed and orphaned, and for all those in prison, let us pray to the Lord:
C **Lord, have mercy.**
- L For the sick and dying and for all those who care for them, let us pray to the Lord:
C **Lord, have mercy.**
- L For . . . [additional bids for prayer may be inserted here] . . . let us pray to the Lord:
C **Lord, have mercy.**
- L Finally, for these and for all our needs of body and soul, let us pray to the Lord:
C **Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.**

Collect of the Day

- L Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C **Amen.**

Collect for the Word

- L Blessed Lord, You have caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning. Grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn, and take them to heart that, by the patience and comfort of Your holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C **Amen.**

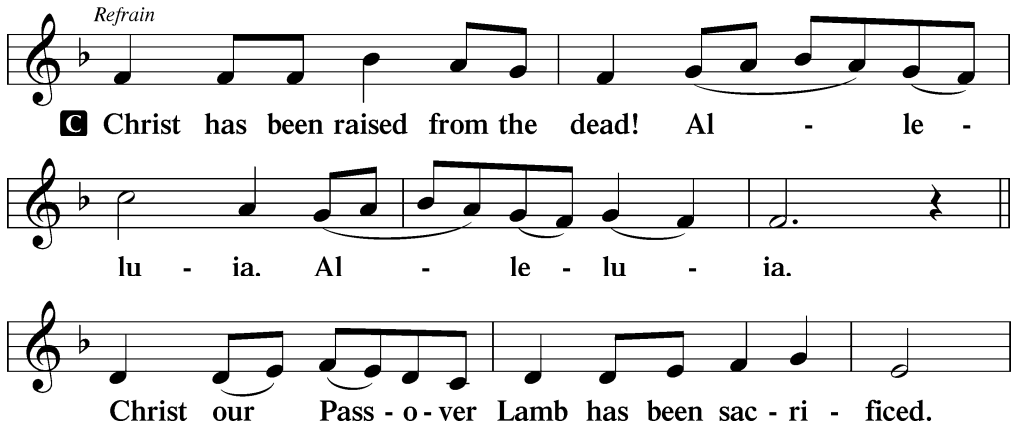
Morning Prayer

- C **I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me.**

New Testament Canticle

LSB 266

Refrain



C Christ has been raised from the dead! Al - le -
lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.
Christ our Pass - o - ver Lamb has been sac - ri - ficed.

Raised from the dead, He will nev - er die a - gain.

Death has no more do - min - ion o - ver Him.

Refrain
Christ has been raised from the dead! Al - le -

lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

Dy - ing, Christ dies to sin, once for all. Liv - ing, He

lives to God. Count your - selves as dead to

sin and a - live to God in Christ Je - sus, our Lord.

Refrain
Christ has been raised from the dead! Al - le -

lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

Blessing

- L Let us bless the Lord.
C **Thanks be to God.**

Benediction

LSB 267

- L The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the T Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless and preserve us.
C **Amen.**

Announcements

Postlude.

“Fugue in D”

J. Pachelbel

Acknowledgments

Service of Prayer and Preaching from Lutheran Service Book

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Serving in Worship

Homilist: Rev. Ronald Weidler

Liturgist: Rev. Mark Stapleton

Readers: The Zimmer Family

Director of Music: Mr. Gregory Ceurvorst

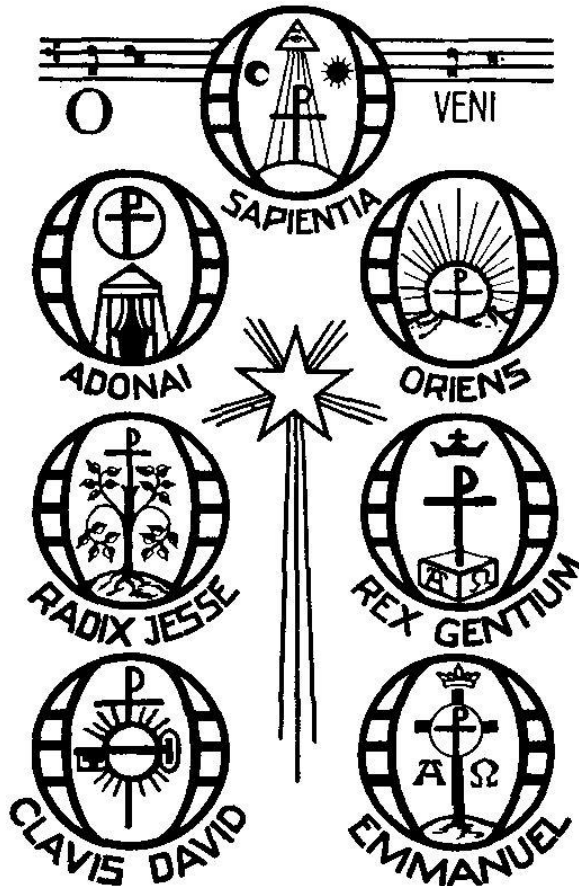
Flowers

are given to the Glory of God in celebration of Christ's birth.

Mission Notes

SUNDAY SCHOOL
 TRUTH TRAVELERS (JR HIGH)
 ADULT BIBLE STUDY
 BIBLE STUDY/SMALL GROUP
 BIBLE STUDY/SMALL GROUP
 WOMENS' SMALL GROUP
 GRIEFSHARE
 WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY
 CHOIR PRACTICE
 CONFIRMATION CLASS
 PICKLEBALL
 BIBLE STUDY/SMALL GROUP
 TRIP ORDER

Sundays, 9:25, Music Rm (Second Floor)
 Sundays, 9:25AM, Youth Rm (Basement)
 Sundays, 9:25AM, Heritage Rm
 Sundays, 6PM, Offsite
 Mondays, 7PM, Zoom
 Tuesdays, 8:45AM, Heritage Rm
 Tuesdays beginning September 26, 1:00 – 2:30PM, Heritage Rm
 Wednesdays, 9AM, Heritage Rm
 Wednesdays following 7pm Advent Midweek Services 2nd Floor, Music/Choir Rm
 Wednesdays, 6:00PM, Heritage Rm
 Thursdays, 6:30PM, Gym
 Thursday, 7PM, Offsite
 January 8 and 22





Equipping ♦ Engaging ♦ Encouraging

St. John's Lutheran Church and School

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