



# *Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church*

*The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod*

**A BIBLICAL, CONFESSIONAL AND TRADITIONAL CONGREGATION IN THE CHICAGO REGION  
COMMITTED TO MINISTERING TO SINNERS  
WITH THE FORGIVING PRESENCE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

---

## THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

DECEMBER 24, 2024

### ✠ A CANDLELIGHT SERVICE OF LESSONS & CAROLS ✠

This service is patterned after the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, first held on Christmas Eve 1918 at King's College in Cambridge, England. Their annual service is broadcast worldwide on the BBC. Our service utilizes the same Scripture readings and prayers, while the carols and choral anthems have been customized to adhere to the Lutheran Confessions and this congregation.

As the church is shrouded in darkness and quiet this night, so was the world on the eve of the first Christmas. But this darkness and quiet were more than the dark and quiet of a small rural town in Bethlehem, they were spiritual. Certainly, there were some faithful people like Simeon and Anna who waited patiently and continued to look and watch for the promised Messiah, but for the most part the world and even the nation of Israel had neglected the promise of old given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and continually retold through the prophets.

The semi-darkness of our church tonight also serves to remind us that we too live in spiritual darkness. As individuals we have neglected to anxiously wait and watch for the promised Messiah-- though this time it will be in the glory of His second coming. Our birth took place in the darkness of sin and we have continued to live with the darkness of sin as an ever-present problem.

Gradually the light will come to the church this night--not in a burst of glory but quietly and humbly as was the coming of the Christ child. The church will be brought to full light just as the Christ child, the "Light of the world" brightly illumines the hearts and minds of His people through Word and Sacrament.

By the illumination of just a few lights, symbolic of the hope of the Old Testament people who waited ever so patiently for the coming of the promised Messiah, the choir and congregation will sing "Once in Royal David's City". The Christmas Eve service will then begin. The transformation from darkness to light is symbolic of the Gospel. "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined." (Isaiah 9:2)

As you wait for the service to begin, silently reflect on the great mystery of this moment. May God's Service tonight be one which brings forth in you, child-like faith in Christ and gratitude towards God the Father who through the Holy Spirit has brought the glorious light of the Gospel into your life.



---

**Organist** – Christine Stocker

**Choir** – Jolene Delaney, Jasmine Fritsch, Nathan Geschke, Ruth Ogden, Kevin Pape, Angela Pruet, Dawn Rouser, Ron Ruisz, Joan Sturm, Julie Zimmer,

**Readers** – Scott Collins, Ed Cruz, Nathan Geschke, Jesse Pape, Kevin Pape, Ron Ruisz, Kelly Stewart, Emily Zimmer

Crucifer – Scott Collins

Bible Bearer – Kelly Stewart

Preacher – Rev. David Zimmer





O Jesus Christ, Thy manger is  
My paradise at which my soul reclineth.  
For there, O Lord, Doth lie the Word  
Made flesh for us; herein Thy grace forth shineth.  
He whom the sea And wind obey  
Doth come to serve the sinner in great meekness.  
Thou, God's own Son, With us art one,  
Dost join us and our children in our weakness.  
Thy light and grace Our guilt efface,  
Thy heav'nly riches all our loss retrieving.  
Immanuel Thy birth doth quell  
The pow'r of hell and Satan's bold deceiving.  
Thou Christian heart, Whoe'er thou art,  
Be of good cheer and let no sorrow move thee!  
For God's own Child, In mercy mild,  
Joins thee to Him; how greatly God must love thee!  
Remember thou What glory now  
The Lord prepared thee for all earthly sadness.  
The angel host Can never boast  
Of greater glory, greater bliss or gladness.  
The world may hold Her wealth and gold;  
But thou, my heart, keep Christ as thy true treasure.  
To Him hold fast Until at last  
A crown be thine and honor in full measure.

*text by Paul Gerhardt (LSB 372)*

+ *In Nomine Jesu* +



**THE CHURCH IS LEFT IN DARKNESS**



**THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL IS SYMBOLICALLY BROUGHT INTO THE CHURCH**

As the angels brought glad tidings of the birth of the Savior to the shepherds, now a small flame, symbolizing Christ, is brought into the darkened church. We are reminded that Christ, the light of the world, has come.



**"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."**

***JOHN 8:12***

## ✠ SERVICE OF LIGHT ✠

*After the Christ Candle is placed in the wreath, the congregation rises and turns toward the Narthex. The attention of the congregation is directed to the Processional Cross.*

### Once in Royal David's City (Verses 1 & 2 - Choir) (Verses 3-5 - Congregation)



1 Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y Stood a  
2 He came down to earth from heav - en, Who is  
3 For He is our child - hood's pat - tern, Day by  
4 And our eyes at last shall see Him, Through His  
5 Not in that poor, low - ly sta - ble With the



low - ly cat - tle shed, Where a moth - er laid her  
God and Lord of all, And His shel - ter was a  
day like us He grew; He was lit - tle, weak, and  
own re - deem - ing love; For that child so dear and  
ox - en stand - ing by Shall we see Him, but in



ba - by In a man - ger for His bed: Mar - y  
sta - ble, And His cra - dle was a stall; With the  
help - less, Tears and smiles like us He knew; And He  
gen - tle Is our Lord in heav'n a - bove; And He  
heav - en, Set at God's right hand on high. Then like



was that moth - er mild, Je - sus Christ her lit - tle child.  
poor and mean and low - ly Lived on earth our Sav - ior ho - ly.  
feels for all our sad - ness, And He shares in all our glad - ness.  
leads His chil - dren on To the place where He is gone.  
stars His chil - dren, crowned, All in white, His praise will sound!

Text and tune: Public domain

## ✠ BIDDING PRAYER, LORD'S PRAYER, AND BLESSING ✠

*SAINT MATTHEW 6:9-13*

**P** In the Name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** **Amen.**

**P** Beloved in Christ, be it this Christmas Eve our care and delight to prepare ourselves to hear again the message of the angels; in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, and the Babe lying in a manger.

Let us read and mark in Holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our disobedience unto the glorious Redemption brought us by this Holy Child; and let us make this Sanctuary, dedicated to the Divine Shepherd of our souls, glad with our carols of praise:

But first let us pray for the needs of His whole world; for peace and goodwill over all the earth; for unity and brotherhood within the Church He came to build, and especially in the United States of America, in our home state of Illinois, and throughout Bolingbrook and the surrounding communities:

And because this of all things would rejoice His heart, let us at this time remember in His name the poor and the helpless, the cold, the hungry and the oppressed; the sick in body and in mind and them that mourn; the lonely and the unloved; the aged and the little children; all who know not the Lord Jesus, or who love Him not, or who by sin have grieved His heart of love.

Lastly let us remember before God all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore and in a greater light, that multitude which no man can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom, in this Lord Jesus, we for evermore are one.

**P** These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the throne of heaven, in the words which Christ Himself has taught us:

**C** **Our Father, who art in heaven ...**

**P** The Almighty God bless us with His grace: Christ give us the joys of everlasting life: and unto the fellowship of the citizens above may the King of Angels bring us all.

**C** **Amen.**

*please be seated*

✠ FIRST LESSON ✠

GENESIS 3:8-19

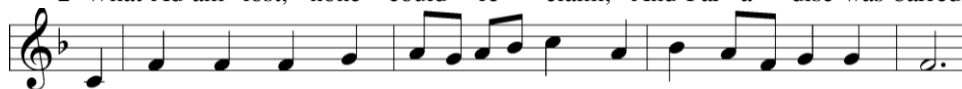
*God proclaims to Adam that because of his sin, he and his wife, Eve have lost holiness and paradise. Yet, Adam's seed, who is Christ, will crush the serpent's head.*



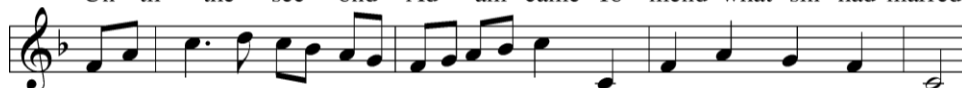
**Carol - O Sing of Christ**



1 O sing of Christ, whose birth made known The kind-ness of the Lord,  
2 What Ad-am lost, none could re - claim, And Par - a - dise was barred



E - ter - nal Word made flesh and bone So we could be re - stored.  
Un - til the sec - ond Ad - am came To mend what sin had marred.



Up - on our frail hu - man-i - ty God's fin - ger chose to trace  
For when the time was full and right God sent His on - ly Son;



The full-ness of His de - i - ty, The i - con of His grace.  
He came to us as life and light And our re - demp-tion won.

Text: © 1996 Stephen P. Starke, admin. Concordia Publishing House. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110001069  
Tune: Public domain



✠ SECOND LESSON ✠

GENESIS 22:15-18

God promises to faithful Abraham that in his Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.



**Carol - Let Our Gladness Have No End**



1 Let our glad - ness have no end, al - le - lu - ia!  
2 Proph - e - sied in days of old, al - le - lu - ia!



For to earth did Christ de - scend, al - le - lu - ia!  
God has sent Him as fore - told, al - le - lu - ia!

*Refrain*



On this day God gave us Christ, His Son, to save



us; Christ, His Son, to save us.

Text and tune: Public domain

✠ THIRD LESSON ✠

ISAIAH 9:2-7

The prophet inspired by the Holy Spirit foretells the coming of the Savior 700 years before His birth.



369 Where Shepherds Lately Knelt



1 Where shep-herds late - ly knelt and kept the an - gel's word,  
2 In that un - like - ly place I find Him as they said:  
3 How should I not have known I - sa - iah would be there,



I come in half - be - lief, a pil - grim strange - ly stirred;  
Sweet new - born babe, how frail! And in a man - ger bed:  
His proph - e - cies ful - filled? With pound - ing heart I stare:



But there is room and wel - come there for me,  
A still, small voice to cry one day for me,  
A child, a son, the Prince of Peace for me,



But there is room and wel - come there for me.  
A still, small voice to cry one day for me.  
A child, a son, the Prince of Peace for me.

Tune: © 1986 GIA Publications, Inc. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110001069  
Text: © 1986 Concordia Publishing House. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110001069

## ✠ FOURTH LESSON ✠

ISAIAH 11:1-9

*God, through the prophet Isaiah, proclaims peace between God and man.*



### Carol - Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming



1 Lo, how a rose e'er bloom-ing From ten-der stem hath  
3 This flow'r, whose fra-grance ten-der With sweet-ness fills the



sprung! Of Jes-se's lin-eage com-ing As proph-ets long have  
air, Dis-pels with glo-rious splen-dor The dark-ness ev-'ry-



sung, It came, a flow-'ret bright, A-mid the  
where. True man, yet ver-y God, From sin and



cold of win-ter, When half-spent was the night.  
death He saves us And light-ens ev-'ry load.

Text and tune: Public domain



## ✠ FIFTH LESSON ✠

LUKE 1:26-38

*The Archangel Gabriel pronounces to the Virgin Mary that she would conceive and become the mother of Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God.*

### Carol - O Little Town of Bethlehem



1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, How still we see thee lie!  
 2 For Christ is born of Mar - y, And, gath - ered all a - bove  
 3 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly The won - drous gift is giv'n!  
 4 O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - hem, De - scend to us, we pray;



A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep The si - lent stars go by;  
 While mor-tals sleep, the an - gels keep Their watch of won-d'ring love.  
 So God im-parts to hu - man hearts The bless - ings of His heav'n.  
 Cast out our sin, and en - ter in, Be born in us to - day.



Yet in thy dark streets shin - eth The ev - er - last - ing light.  
 O morn-ing stars, to - geth - er Pro - claim the ho - ly birth,  
 No ear may hear His com - ing; But in this world of sin,  
 We hear the Christ - mas an - gels The great glad tid - ings tell;



The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee to-night.  
 And prais - es sing to God the king And peace to all the earth!  
 Where meek souls will re - ceive Him, still The dear Christ en - ters in.  
 O come to us, a - bide with us, Our Lord Im - man - u - el!

Text and tune: Public domain

✠ SIXTH LESSON ✠

LUKE 2:1-7

*St. Luke proclaims the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*



THE NATIVITY by GARIB DIHIÉ (1860 - 1923)

**Carol - Away in a Manger**



1 A - way in a man - ger, no crib for a bed,  
 2 The cat - tle are low - ing, the ba - by a - wakes,  
 3 Be near me, Lord Je - sus; I ask Thee to stay



The lit - tle Lord Je - sus laid down His sweet head.  
 But lit - tle Lord Je - sus, no cry - ing He makes.  
 Close by me for - ev - er and love me, I pray.



The stars in the sky — looked down where He lay,  
 I love Thee, Lord Je - sus! Look down from the sky,  
 Bless all the dear chil - dren in Thy ten - der care,



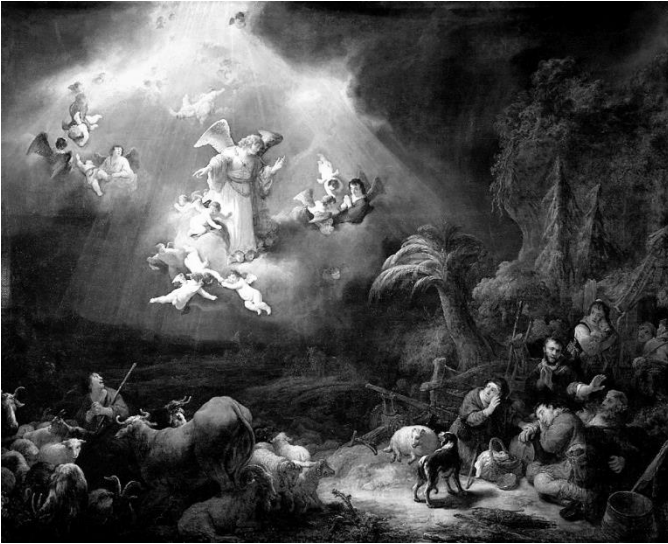
The lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.  
 And stay by my cra - dle till morn - ing is nigh.  
 And take us to heav - en to live with Thee there.

Tune and text: Public domain

✠ SEVENTH LESSON ✠

LUKE 2:8-16

*The angels proclaim the birth of "Christ the Lord" to the shepherds.*



**Carol - It Came upon the Midnight Clear**



1 It came up-on the mid-night clear, That glo - rious song of old,  
3 All you, be - neath your heav - y load, By care and guilt bent low,



From an - gels bend - ing near the earth To touch their harps of gold:  
Who toil a - long a drea - ry way With pain - ful steps and slow:



"Peace on the earth, good-will to all, From heav'n's all - gra - cious king."  
Look up, for gold - en is the hour, Come swift - ly on the wing,



The world in sol - emn still - ness lay To hear the an - gels sing.  
The Prince was born to bring you peace; Of Him the an - gels sing.

Text and tune: Public domain



✠ EIGHTH LESSON ✠

MATTHEW 2:1-12

*The Magi go to Bethlehem to worship the Christ child.*

Carol - 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 and tune: Public domain

✠ NINTH LESSON ✠

JOHN 1:1-14

*Saint John reveals the great mystery of the Incarnation.*



**Carol - Now Sing We, Now Rejoice**



1 Now sing we, now re - joice,	Now raise to heav'n our voice;
2 Come from on high to me;	I can - not rise to Thee.
3 Now through His Son doth shine	The Fa - ther's grace di - vine.
4 Oh, where shall joy be found?	Where but on heav'n - ly ground?



He from whom joy stream - eth	Poor in a man - ger lies;
Cheer my wea - ried spir - it,	O pure and ho - ly Child;
Death was reign - ing o'er us	Through sin and van - i - ty
Where the an - gels sing - ing	With all His saints u - nite,



Not so bright - ly beam - eth	The sun in yon - der skies.
Through Thy grace and mer - it,	Blest Je - sus, Lord most mild,
Till He o - pened for us	A bright e - ter - ni - ty.
Sweet - est prais - es bring - ing	In heav'n - ly joy and light.



Thou my Sav - ior art!	Thou my Sav - ior art!
Draw me un - to Thee!	Draw me un - to Thee!
May we praise Him there!	May we praise Him there!
Oh, that we were there!	Oh, that we were there!



## ✠ HOMILY & CONCLUSION ✠

Homily

Offering

***Choir "See In Yonder Manger Low" John A. Behnke***



Lighting of the Candles

As Saint John states at the opening of His Gospel, Christ is "the Light of the world." As we conclude our celebration of His birth this evening, the light of Christ will be passed from the pastor to the ushers to the congregation. To ensure proper safety and avoid dripping wax, please tip your unlighted candle to light it from your neighbor's lighted candle. Once your candle has been lit, do not tip it. Candles can be blown out following the closing hymn.

Collect & Blessing

- P** The Lord be with you.  
**C** **And with your spirit.**

**P** O God, who makes us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of Your only Son, Jesus Christ: Grant that as we joyfully receive Him for our Redeemer, so we may with sure confidence behold Him, when He shall come to be our judge; who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** **Amen.**

**P** Christ, who by His incarnation gathered into one things earthly and heavenly, grant you the fullness of inward peace and goodwill, and make you partakers of the divine nature; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always.

**C** **Amen.**



# Closing Hymn

## Carol - Silent Night, Holy Night - (Choir Sings Stanza 2)



1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm,  
2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake  
3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God,  
all is bright Round yon vir - gin moth - er and child.  
at the sight; Glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far,  
love's pure light Ra - diant beams from Thy ho - ly face  
Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and mild, Sleep in heav - en - ly  
Heav'n - ly hosts sing, Al - le - lu - ia! Christ, the Sav - ior, is  
With the dawn of re - deem - ing grace, Je - sus, Lord, at Thy  
peace, Sleep in heav - en - ly peace.  
born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!  
birth, Je - sus, Lord, at Thy birth.

Tune and text: Public domain

- 4 Silent night! Holy night!  
Wondrous star, lend thy light;  
With the angels let us sing,  
Alleluia to our King;  
Christ, the Savior, is born!  
Christ, the Savior, is born!

✠ SOLI DEO GLORIA ✠

*Silent Night, Holy Night*: Text by Joseph Mohr. Music by Franz Gruber. Setting by Hal H. Hopson; © 2002 H.W. Gray Company; all rights assigned to and controlled by Alfred Music Publishing Company, Inc. All rights reserved.

**As you leave tonight please place your candles in the box provided in the narthex.  
Please be very careful so as not to spill wax on the carpet or the pews.**

***Please join us tomorrow***  
***Christmas Day, for the 8:30 am. Divine Service.***

***Tradition speaks of a letter written by St. Ignatius, a  
disciple of St. John to Mary, the Mother of our Lord. Here  
is their exchange:***

To Mary the Christ-bearer, her Ignatius. You ought to strengthen and console me, a neophyte and disciple of your John, from whom I have learned many things about your Jesus, things wondrous to tell, and I am dumbfounded at hearing them. My heart's desire is to be assured about these things that I have heard, by you who were always so intimately close to Jesus and shared his secrets. Fare you well, and let the neophytes who are with me be strengthened in the faith, by you, through you, and in you.

To my beloved fellow disciple Ignatius, this humble handmaid of Christ Jesus. The things you have heard and learned from John are true. Believe them, hold on to them, be steadfast in carrying out your Christian commitment and shape your life and conduct on it. I will come to you with John to visit you and those who are with you. Stand firm and do manfully in the faith. Do not let the hardships of persecution shake you, and may your spirit be strong and joyful in God your salvation. Amen.