

10:00 AM SERVICE

Christmas Day

DECEMBER 25, 2017



A Christmas Story

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Welcome! We are so happy that you are here with us today. Our desire is to be like another home for you. We encourage you to register your name on the fellowship pad which you will find at the end of the row where you are sitting. If you are new to Grace or to the area and are looking for a church home, we hope you will consider joining our family here at Grace. A Fellowship Hour is held after the Worship Service, and we invite you to stay for a few minutes so we can get acquainted.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION is celebrated in our worship service today. This meal is weird and wonderful: weird because we actually believe that the bread and wine are the Body and Blood of Jesus the Christ; wonderful because Jesus is with us. **Children** who have not been instructed in the meaning of the Sacrament may come to the Lord's Table with their parents for a blessing but are asked to fold their arms across their chests to indicate they are to receive a blessing. If you are not a member of the LCMS, please talk with the pastor before communion.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE COMMUNION: The wine is made available in both the individual glasses and the common cup. Following the distribution of the bread, the individual cups will be offered. Then the common cup will be offered to those who do not have an individual cup in their hand. The acolyte will then gather the individual glasses. ***For those who have an intolerance to wine, grape juice is lighter colored in the individual communion glasses.*** Those who find it difficult to walk to the altar can be communed in the pew. Please inform the usher of your need.

ATTENDANCE BOOKS PLEASE BE SURE TO PASS ALONG THE RED ATTENDANCE BOOKS IN YOUR ROW AND ENCOURAGE EVERYONE TO SIGN IT. THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT PART OF OUR MINISTRY OF CARE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP.

Exodus, A Christmas Story

Are you kidding me?! What in the world does Exodus have to do with Christmas? You will be surprised, because when we look at the Christmas story from the Gospel of Matthew, you will see how Matthew's Christmas story is a mirror image of Exodus. Matthew is saying to us: Remember the last time God saved his people? Well, it's happening again.

Today: Joy to you and me, the Lord has come! In Bethlehem's manger we behold the Savior of the world, our Savior from sin and death. We celebrate today and all days, for the Father sends His Son to bring us life, peace and eternal joy.

(Asterisks (**)) indicate that the congregation stands)

**** THE OPENING HYMN**

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

*It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold.
Peace on the earth good will to men, from heavn's all-gracious King!
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.*

*Still through the cloven skies they come with peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heav'nly music floats O'er all the weary world.
Above its sad and lowly plains they bend on hovering wing,
And ever o'er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.*

*All you, beneath your heavy load, by care and guilt bent low.
Who toil along a drea-ry way with pain-ful steps and slow:
Look up, for golden is the hour, come swiftly on the wing,
The Prince was born to bring you peace; of Him the angels sing.*

*For lo, the days have come to pass by prophets seen of old,
When down into the circling years came Christ as was foretold.
His word of peace shall to the earth God's ancient promise bring,
And all who take this gift will hear the song the angels sing.*

**** THE INVOCATION AND CALL TO WORSHIP**

*Pastor: We worship You, O God, on this Christmas morning in the name of the
Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

PEOPLE: AMEN.

Pastor: The word became flesh,

PEOPLE: AND MADE HIS DWELLING AMONG US.

*Pastor: Behold, there were shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over
their flock by night.*

**PEOPLE: AN ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED TO THEM, AND THE GLORY
OF THE LORD SHONE AROUND THEM, AND THEY WERE
TERRIFIED.**

Pastor: And the angel said to them,

**PEOPLE: 'FEAR NOT, FOR BEHOLD, I BRING YOU GOOD NEWS OF GREAT
JOY THAT WILL BE FOR ALL THE PEOPLE,**

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

PEOPLE: AND THIS WILL BE A SIGN FOR YOU: YOU WILL FIND A BABY WRAPPED IN SWADDLING CLOTHES AND LYING IN A MANGER.

Pastor: And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying;

PEOPLE: GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND ON EARTH PEACE ON THOSE ON WHOM HIS FAVOR RESTS.'

**** THE PASSING OF THE PEACE**

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you all.

PEOPLE: AND ALSO WITH YOU.

*(We greet one another with the handshake of peace and with the words
"The Peace of the Lord be with you.")*

**** THE HYMN OF PRAISE**

The First Noel

*The first Noel, the angel did say,
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so deep. (CHORUS)*

**NOEL, NOEL, NOEL, NOEL,
BORN IS THE KING OF ISRAEL.**

*They looked up and saw a star
Shining in the east, beyond them far.
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night. (CHORUS)*

*And by the light of that same star
Three Wise Men came from country far;
To seek for a King was their intent,
And to follow the star wherever it went (CHORUS)*

*This star drew nigh to the northwest,
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest,
And there it did both stop and stay,
Right over the place where Jesus lay. (CHORUS)*

*Then entered in those Wise Men three,
Full rev'rently upon their knee,
And offered there in His presence
Their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense. (CHORUS)*

*Then let us all in one accord
Sing praises to our heav'nly Lord,
That hath made Heav'n and earth of naught,
And with His blood mankind hath bought. (CHORUS)*

THE CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

During Confession we take time to slow down and realize how we have lost God's Great Story of goodness. We have served ourselves and our interests above God.

(Take a moment of silent reflection upon our need for God's forgiveness)

Pastor: The shepherds shook with fear that night as the heavens opened and God came down. There, in the fields, their dirty, unholy, imperfect lives intersected with the holiness of God. As you and I come face to face with God's divinity, it is appropriate for us to confess our unholy and imperfect lives too.

PEOPLE: WE CONFESS, THAT LIKE THOSE BETHLEHEM SHEPHERDS, OUR LIVES ARE STAINED WITH SIN. OUR WORDS, OUR BEHAVIOR, OUR THOUGHTS CARRY WITH THEM THE GUILT AND SHAME OF OUR SIN. WE ADMIT THAT ALL TOO OFTEN WE WANDER THROUGH LIFE THINKING WE CAN MAKE IT ON OUR OWN. FORGIVE US, WE PRAY. PROCLAIM YOUR CLEANSING WORD OF TRUTH ON US AGAIN THIS DAY, O JESUS.

Pastor: "Do not fear," the angel said. "For I bring you good news of great joy. Today is born a Savior who is Christ the Lord." Brothers and sisters in Christ, all your sins have been forgiven and all your stains have been washed clean. May you now know the peace that is yours with God through Jesus Christ! This is the good news of Christmas!

PEOPLE: AMEN.

**** THE PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Pastor: Reigning God, whose rule extends to the farthest stars, come to rule within us on this glorious day when the Word becomes flesh once more to dwell among us. We open ourselves to the light and long to offer our lives as a dwelling place for your truth. Speak to us again through the Child of Bethlehem. Reach out to the child in each of us, and hold us in the warmth of love's embrace.

PEOPLE: AMEN.

THE FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 52:7-10

Here we recognize the joy of seeing the messenger of good news, who announces peace and the reign of God, and of knowing God's protection and care.

How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of him who brings good news,
who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness,
who publishes salvation,
who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."
The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice;
together they sing for joy;
for eye to eye they see
the return of the LORD to Zion.
Break forth together into singing,
you waste places of Jerusalem,
for the LORD has comforted his people;
he has redeemed Jerusalem.
The LORD has bared his holy arm
before the eyes of all the nations,
and all the ends of the earth shall see
the salvation of our God.

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord.

PEOPLE: THANKS BE TO GOD.

THE SECOND LESSON

Hebrews 1:1-6

God has spoken to us through God's Son, who is the likeness of God's being, who has been appointed as ruler over all things because of his love of goodness, and whose rule is just and eternal.

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he

appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

For to which of the angels did God ever say,

“You are my Son,
today I have begotten you”?

Or again,

“I will be to him a father,
and he shall be to me a son”?

And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says,

“Let all God's angels worship him.”

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord.

PEOPLE: THANKS BE TO GOD.

**** THE HOLY GOSPEL**

John 1:1-14

The eternal Word who created the world has come into the world as light shining in darkness and has given life – as children of God – to all who believed in him and received him.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord

PEOPLE: PRAISE TO YOU, O CHRIST.

**** THE APOSTLES' CREED**

THE SERMON

Pastor Cris Escher

Go Tell it on a Mountain

**** THE OFFERTORY**

*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit with-in me.
Cast me not away from Your presence, and take not Your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me with Your free Spirit.*

Christmas Song

Let us all With Gladsome Voice

*Let us all with gladsome voice
Praise the God of heaven,
Who, to bid our hearts rejoice,
His own Son hath given.*

*To this vale of tears He comes,
Here to serve in sadness,
That with Him in heavn's fair home
We may reign in gladness.*

*We are rich, for He was poor;
Is not this a wonder?
Therefore praise God evermore
Here on earth and yonder.*

*O Lord Christ, Our Savior dear,
Be Thou Ever near us.
Grant us now a glad new year.
Amen, Jesus, hear us!*

**** THE PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH**

(After each petition)

Pastor: . . . Lord, in your mercy,

PEOPLE: HEAR OUR PRAYER.

**** THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**** THE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

**** THE BLESSING**

*Pastor: May the feet of God walk with you, and his hand hold you tight.
May the eye of God rest on you, and his ear hear you cry.
May the smile of God be for you, and his breath give you life.
May the child of God grow in you, and his love bring you home.*

PEOPLE: AMEN.

**** THE CLOSING HYMN**

Go Tell It on the Mountain

CHORUS

**GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN, OVER THE HILLS AND EV'RY-WHERE;
GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN THAT JESUS CHRIST IS BORN!**

*While Shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,
Behold, throughout the heavens there shone a holy light. (CHORUS)*

*The shepherds feared and trembled when lo, above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth. (CHORUS)*

*Down in a lonely manger the humble Christ was born;
And God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn. (CHORUS)*

**** THE SENDING**

Pastor: Go in the peace of Christmas. Serve the Christ Child.

PEOPLE: THANKS BE TO GOD