

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE Dec 24.2020 5pm Service with Holy Communion

Preparing for worship:

We will have Holy Communion together - separately this worship time. You will need either wine or grape juice and bread of some kind. You may use what cups & plates you have. Here is a list: a white cloth, large cup or individual ones, a large paten(plate) for bread or small, depending on the size of your family. A cross and your Advent Wreath. This evening you may also add a white candle for Christmas.

Good evening – welcome to worship this evening

The Liturgy is from the Lutheran Book of Worship beginning on p.78, and the modified prayers this evening are based on those from Sundays & Seasons.

Announcements

GATHERING TOGETHER

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Hymn: LBW 45, ELW 283 - O Come All Ye Faithful

The Lord be with you – and also with you

Let us pray:

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Thomas is Lighting the Advent Wreath Candle

Alistar and Madeleine are placing the baby Jesus and the shepherds in the manger scene.

Children's video

THE WORD

The Old Testament lesson is from **Isaiah 9: 2-7**

Psalms 96 is found on page 261

The New Testament lesson is from **Titus 2:11-14**

Please rise for the gospel lesson.

Holy, Holy, Holy, our hearts adore you. Our hearts are glad to say the words: you are Holy God.

Gospel: **Luke 2:1-14**

Sermon ~ Rev. Norine Gullons

The first Christmas sermon was a marvel of simplicity! The angel who announced the birth of Jesus to the shepherds on the fields of Bethlehem was a messenger of few words. "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all people; for to you is born this day in the city of David - a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you - you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in manger." In these simple words everything that needed to be said -was said.

We are reminded and remember this evening the story of God's living form born as an infant. Born to two teenaged unmarried parents, scared witless in a dark stable that smelled of manure. So we ponder this thought -does it really matter whether our personal lives are in order to receive God's love? God comes to us! Right into our messes and stresses, our storms and our struggles. To us as unprepared as we are to receive Him.

Joseph and Mary travelled to Bethlehem, Joseph's ancestral home, for a census registration. Joseph had to obey the political rules of his day, even as God's plan was beginning to unfold a different kind of kingdom. God's work unfolds – not despite life's other tasks – but in the midst of them.

Many of you know what it is like to leave your home and travel and return to the town or the family of your birth. Depending on the circumstance that brings you home - some undertake the journey home with fear and trepidation and sorrow – others with joy – some out of obligation and others by choice. Like Mary and Joseph you take the journey in the midst of life's other challenges and events. You go to particular places, sometimes to the home of your birth, to join in a gathering of people often soaked in memories and traditions. It is often in those places and in those moments that God's work unfolds.

Mary and Joseph sought shelter for the birth of their baby - but there was no room in the inn. Even though things did not go as planned, new life broke forth. Jesus, God's work, arrived in the midst of intense political events. The important message of Christmas is that even when things do not go as we plan - God still arrives. We tend to forget the scary nature of this first Christmas – that it was all about things that were unexpected in unexpected places. Christ arrived and was laid in a manger, in a cattle stall. If the Son of God can arrive in such circumstances so can the gifts of light and joy, grace and hope, love and mystery.

The baby has been born! Christmas is not just one day but rather a season of the heart. We have been preparing with faithful watching and now the Christ child is among us. His birth is central to our faith. We celebrate the arrival and

contemplate the meaning for us- as individuals and as part of our individual families and as part of our family of faith.

The angel's message was and still is for everyone. God came unexpectedly at night to those who were simply going about their daily occupations. The shepherds did not withdraw from the world to seek holiness- they were simply going about their tasks.

The next 12 days of Christmas gives us time to think about the ways that we have seen God move unexpectedly in our own lives, this past year. Perhaps a moment when you least expected - but found that moment to be Holy.

The shepherds were probably tired, tending their sheep at night. Unobtrusively the angels terrified them with the announcement of God's presence. God shows up in small and sometimes in very ordinary ways, right in the middle of what we are doing.

God whispers to us again tonite. *"Do not be afraid – I am bringing you great news of great joy; for to you is born this day in the city of David - a savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you - you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in manger."* In these simple words everything that needs to be said - was said. Amen

Hymn: LBW 41, ELW 279 - O Little Town of Bethlehem

Our Response

The Apostles' Creed:

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead.*
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

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

Prayers of the People led by Joy Statham

Joining our voices with the song of the angels, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need. *A brief silence.*

The shepherds sing, "Jesus Christ is born!" Let your church throughout the world proclaim this good news, over the hills and everywhere. Unite the voices of all your faithful people in songs of praise and rejoicing. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Heaven and nature sing, "Joy to the world!" Give respite to flocks, fields, and those who tend them. Come near to us in the beauty of nighttime, the shining of the stars, and the hush of a world at rest. May our wonder at your creation rouse our care for all the earth. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

The angels sing, "Peace on earth!" Come quickly to still the strife of this world. Hush the noise of war and violence in places of unrest. Inspire leaders of nations to seek lasting peace and sustainable provision for all in their care. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Mary sings melodies of comfort to her newborn child. Bring rest and reassurance to those facing struggles this night. Shelter travelers and those without homes. Console those who lie awake due to pain or anxiety, or grief. Heal those who are sick or hurting *especially the Witt family, Chris & Kathy, Ed & Rosemary, the Roberts family, Fred, Gladys, Joe & Shelley. We also pray for our friends: Annie,*

Joan, Leslie, Ron K., Tere B., Lorraine, Barb, Diane & family, Gilbert and Claudette.
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Love sings through the sound of a new baby's cry. Bless new parents and expectant parents. Comfort those who long for children, especially those running out of hope or options. Surround families of every shape and size with your love and care. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

The heavenly chorus sings, "Glory to God in the highest!" We give you thanks for all the saints who have proclaimed your glory in word and deed. Let us join them this night in joyful praise around your eternal throne. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

God of mercy, come quickly to us with grace upon grace as we lift these and all our prayers to you, in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

THE PEACE OF CHRIST BE WITH YOU ALWAYS.

HYMN OF LIGHT: LBW 65, ELW 281 - SILENT NIGHT HOLY NIGHT

THE MEAL

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

The Word is revealed in a manger, in simple bread and wine. Come meet Christ in this meal.

DIALOGUE P88

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE -

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious

resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life .And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.
Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

The Lord's Prayer

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.

Please take this time now at home to share the Lord's Supper with each other.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We give you thanks, gracious God, that you have once again fed us with the healing power of this gift of life of Christ. Through this mystery, send us forth to proclaim your promise to a world in need, through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

HYMN: LBW 39 ELW 267 - Joy to the World

Blessing

May the Lord God, who has called you out of darkness to be servants of light, grant you the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, and the peace of the Christ Child. In the name of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus.
Thanks be to God.

Hymn during Communion: LBW 71 ELW 289 - Angels We Have Heard on High