

LARGE PRINT



**Christmas Eve
6:00pm December 24, 2020**



ROCK OF AGES

LUTHERAN CHURCH

Reaching Out in Rim Country with Rock-Solid Hope in Jesus

Welcome! We are glad that you have

joined us to celebrate the birth of the Christ child. Our service is printed for you in its entirety in this worship folder.

- May the message you hear today fill your heart with peace and joy from knowing that Jesus Christ is our Savior from sin.
- Everyone is encouraged to keep extra space from those outside your family. Feel free to use any of the **extra chairs** in the front area and in the entry.
- **Gift bags** for children will be distributed after

worship. Please be sure to pick one up on your way out of the building.

- **Large print** service folders and **hearing assistance** devices are available.
- **Restrooms** are located at the far ends of the entry area.
- **Children's activity bags**, quiet toys, and a changing table are available from the nursery in entry area.
- We are part of a world-wide Christian body and support the gospel ministry of the WELS. We'd love to share more with you. Contact our pastor today. You can also visit wels.net





Lessons and Carols

*An adaptation of a traditional English
Christmas Eve Service*

Hymn

Once in Royal David's City

Christian Worship 50

**1 Once in royal David's city
Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby
In a manger for his bed;
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.**

**2 He came down to earth from heaven
Who is God and Lord of all,
And his shelter was a stable,
And his cradle was a stall;
With the poor and mean and lowly
Lived on earth our Savior holy.**

3 But our eyes at last shall see him

**Through his own redeeming love,
For that child, so dear and gentle,
Is our Lord in heav'n above,
And he leads his children on
To the place where he is gone.**

**4 Not in that poor, lowly stable
With the oxen standing by
Shall we see him, but in heaven,
Set at God's right hand on high.
Then like stars his children crowned,
All in white, his praise will sound.**

Stand

Exhortation and Prayer

Beloved in Christ: In this Christmas season it is our duty and delight to hear again the message of the angels and, in heart and mind, to go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us, the Christ-child, lying in a manger.

Let us read and learn in Holy Scripture the story of the loving purposes of God from the first days after our fall, and into the birth and glorious redemption brought to us by this Holy Child. Let us hear how peace was lost, and how peace is restored.

But first, let us pray, for this is good and right. Heavenly Father, we pray for ourselves and all people who worship you and your Son this holy night. By your holy Word, lead us to say with the angels,

Glory to God in the highest!

We pray for your blessing upon the people of our city, our state, our nation, and our world.

Glory to God in the highest!

We pray for the poor and helpless, the cold and hungry, the sick and sad, that you would give them the joy of your salvation and the comfort of your presence.

Glory to God in the highest!

We pray for unbelievers and enemies of the Church, that through your Law and Gospel you would lead them to recognize your Son as their only hope for eternal life.

Glory to God in the highest!

Finally, we remember before you all those who rejoice with us in heaven, who live in greater light and beauty than we, that multitude which no one can number, who died in faith, and now praise you in your heavenly temple. We confess that we are united with them and with one another.

Glory to God in the highest!

We humbly offer up these prayers and praises in the words that Christ himself taught us.

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. Lead us not

into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Be seated

First Lesson *God Promises a Needed Gift*

Genesis 3:8-15

Humanity's separation from God dates to the beginning of time, to the fall into sin by the first humans, Adam and Eve. As tragic as this was, the account ends with God's promise of a stunning gift—that the woman's offspring, Christ, would ultimately defeat Satan and restore us to God.



⁸They heard the voice of the LORD God, who was walking around in the garden during the cooler part of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

⁹The LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"

¹⁰The man said, "I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid

myself.”

¹¹God said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?”

¹²The man said, “The woman you gave to be with me—she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

¹³The LORD God said to the woman, “What have you done?”

The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

¹⁴The LORD God said to the serpent:

Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all the livestock, and more than every wild animal. You shall crawl on your belly, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. ¹⁵I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He will crush your head, and you will crush his heel.

Hymn **Now Sing We, Now Rejoice**

Christian Worship 34

**Now sing we, now rejoice,
Now raise to heav'n our voice;**

**He from whom joy streameth
Poor in a manger lies;
Not so brightly beameth
The sun in yonder skies.
Thou my Savior art!
Thou my Savior art!**

**2. Come from on high to me;
I cannot rise to thee.
Cheer my wearied spirit,
O pure and holy Child;
Through thy grace and merit,
Blest Jesus, Lord most mild,
Draw me unto thee!
Draw me unto thee!**

**3. Now through his Son doth shine
The Father's grace divine.
Death o'er us had reigned
Through sin and vanity;
He for us obtained
Eternal joy on high.**

**May we praise him there!
May we praise him there!**

**4. Oh, where shall joy be found?
Where but on heav'nly ground?
Where the angels singing
With all his saints unite,
Sweetest praises bringing
In heav'nly joy and light.
Oh, that we were there!
Oh, that we were there!**

Second Lesson - *God's Gift is Described*

Isaiah 11:1-9

Striking symbolic language describes the gift more than 700 years before it was given.



A shoot will spring up from the stump of Jesse, and a Branch from his roots will bear fruit. ²The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him: the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of

the LORD. ³He will be delighted with the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, nor will he render decisions based on what he hears with his ears, ⁴but with righteousness he will judge the poor, and he will render fair decisions in favor of the oppressed on the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath from his lips he will put the wicked to death.

⁵Righteousness will be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his hips. ⁶The wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the young goat, the calf, the young lion, and the fattened calf together, and a little child will lead them. ⁷The cow and the bear will graze together, and their young ones will lie down together. The lion will eat straw like the cattle. ⁸The nursing child will play near a cobra's hole, and the weaned child will put his hand into a viper's den. ⁹They will not hurt or destroy anywhere on my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

Hymn

Joy to the World

Christian Worship 62

**♪ Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let ev'ry heart prepare him room
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.**

**2. Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ,
While fields and floods,
rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**

**3. No more let sins and sorrows grow
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow
Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as the curse is found.**

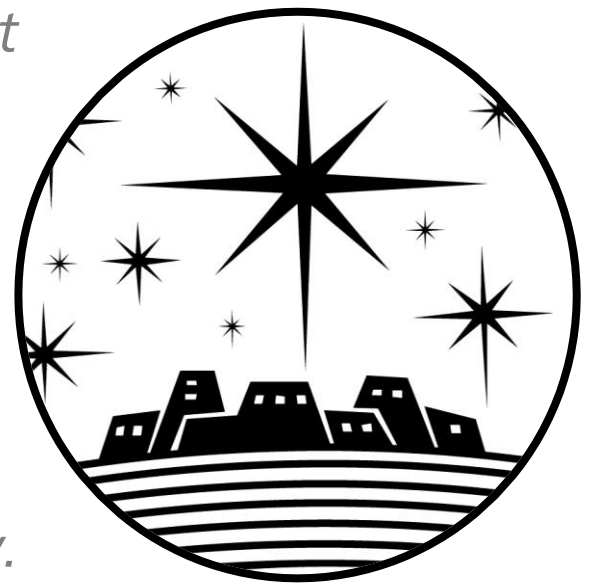
**4. He rules the world with truth and grace
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness
And wonders of his love,
And wonders of his love,
And wonders, wonders of his love.**

Third Lesson – *God reveals where his gift*

will appear

Micah 5:2-4

God wants there to be no doubt about his gift. Through prophecy he reveals the exact tiny village where Jesus would be born. The wonder of fulfilled prophecy continues to convince people about the validity of God's gift even today.



But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, from you, will go out the one who will be the ruler for me in Israel. His goings forth are from the beginning, from the days of eternity.

³Therefore the LORD will give them up, until the time when the woman who is in labor bears a child. Then the remaining survivors from his brothers will return to the people of Israel. ⁴He will stand and shepherd with the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. They will dwell securely, for at that time he will be great to the ends of the earth.

Carol O Little Town of Bethlehem

Christian Worship 65

*Not to a palace in a city does God send his gift,
but to an obscure village. "How silently the
wondrous gift is given" (stanza 2).*

**♪ 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.**

**How silently, how silently
the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts t
he 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.**

**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!**



Fourth Lesson - *God's Gift Comes*

Through a Miracle

Luke 1:26-38

So many of God's ways of intervening in our world are beyond our understanding. We are

blessed to receive God's gift when, like Mary, we humbly accept God's plan and marvel at it.

In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin pledged in marriage to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women."

²⁹But she was greatly troubled by the statement and was wondering what kind of greeting this could be.

³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, because you have found favor with God. ³¹Listen, you will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will never end."

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

³⁵The angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be

called the Son of God. ³⁶Listen, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age even though she was called barren, and this is her sixth month. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible for God."

³⁸Then Mary said, "See, I am the Lord's servant. May it happen to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

Hymn

Noel

Sung by 4 For Christ

Fifth Lesson - *the Gift is "God with Us"*

Matthew 1:18-25

The first lesson described the human race's separation from God. God's gift to end this separation is his Son, Immanuel—"God with us."

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ took place. His mother, Mary, was pledged in marriage to Joseph. Before they came together, she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Joseph, her husband, was a



righteous man and did not want to disgrace her. So he decided to divorce her privately. ²⁰But as he was considering these things, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

²²All this happened to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ²³"Look, the virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son. And they will name him Immanuel," which means, "God with us."

²⁴When Joseph woke up from his sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him. He took Mary home as his wife, ²⁵but he was not intimate with her until she gave birth to her firstborn son. And he named him Jesus.

Hymn Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel

Christian Worship 23

**1. Oh, come, oh, come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here**

**Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!**

**2. Oh, come, O Root of Jesse, free
Your own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell your people save,
And bring them vict'ry o'er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!**

**3. Oh, come, O Dayspring from on high,
And cheer us by your drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!**

**4. Oh, come, O Key of David, come,
And open wide our heav'nly home.
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!**

Sixth Lesson *-God's Gift Arrives*

Luke 2:1-7

In a fulfillment of the prophecy in tonight's third lesson, God uses the mighty powers of this world to accomplish his will and to deliver his gift to an otherwise doomed world.

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.

²This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governing Syria. ³And everyone went to register, each to his own town. ⁴And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the town of Nazareth, into Judea, to the town of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was from the house and family line of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, his wife, who was pledged to him in marriage and was expecting a child.



⁶And so it was that while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son, wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no

room for them in the inn.

Song

Away in a Manger

Christian Worship 63

First stanza sung by Rock of Ages Preschool children

Second Stanza by 4 For Christ

All join stanza 3

♪ Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

2. The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,
And stay by my side until 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 take us to heaven to live with you there.**

Seventh Lesson – God’s Gift is

Celebrated

Luke 2:8-20

The angels can’t help but celebrate God’s gift. The shepherds eagerly spread the word of this gift as announced by the angels. We join them, glorifying and praising God for all that we have come to know about God’s great gift.

There were in the same country shepherds staying out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock at night. ⁹An angel of the Lord appeared to 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 behold, I bring you good news of great joy, which will be for all people: ¹¹Today in the town of David, a Savior was born for you. He is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this will be a sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” ¹³Suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude from the heavenly army, praising God and saying, ¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward

mankind.”

¹⁵When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Now let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.”

¹⁶So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they had seen him, they told others the message they had been told about this child. ¹⁸And all who heard it were amazed by what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Carol Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Christian Worship 61

**♪ Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all you nations rise,**

**Join the triumph of the skies;
With th' angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"**

**2. Christ, by highest heav'n adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold him come,
Offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail th' incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with us to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel!
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"**

**3. Hail, the heav'nly Prince of Peace!
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Ris'n with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that we no more may die,**

**Born to raise us from the earth,
Born to give us second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"**

Sermon

Romans 8:32

THE GREATEST GIFT

Indeed, he who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also graciously give us all things along with him?

Offering

Moved by God's love in Christ, we offer him our first and best gifts, purely out of thanks to him. Our offerings go to support the gospel ministry of our congregation and our church body, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Today the offerings can be placed on the table as you enter or exit.

Offering Hymn

Go, Tell It On the Mountain

Sung by Rock of Ages Children's choir

Stand

Prayer

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 as our Redeemer, so may we also behold him with sure confidence when he shall come to be our judge; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Blessing

May he who by his incarnation gathered things earthly and heavenly into one, fill us with such joy that comes with the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins and the hope of eternal life. And the blessing of God Almighty—the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit— be upon you and remain with you always.

Amen.

Carol

Silent Night

Christian Worship 60

♪ **Silent night! Holy night!**
All is calm, all is bright,
Round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

2. Silent night! Holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar;
Heav'nly hosts sing, Alleluia;
Christ, the Savior, is born!
Christ, the Savior, is born!

3. Silent night! Holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

**Worship opportunities during the 12 days
of Christmas**



**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25 AT 9:00
AM**

Christmas Day Song Service

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27 AT 9:00
& 11:15 AM**

Song Service II

FRIDAY, JANUARY 1 AT 9:00 AM

New Year's Day Service

**SUNDAY JANUARY 3 AT 9:00 &
11:15 AM**

Sunday Service

Presiding Minister: Pastor Tom Barthel
Music: Keyboard, Jeni Strickland; 4 For Christ;
Mandolin, Peter Barthel
Preservice violin, Lydia & Phineas Barthel;

Acknowledgments

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