



A Welcoming Christ-Centered Community

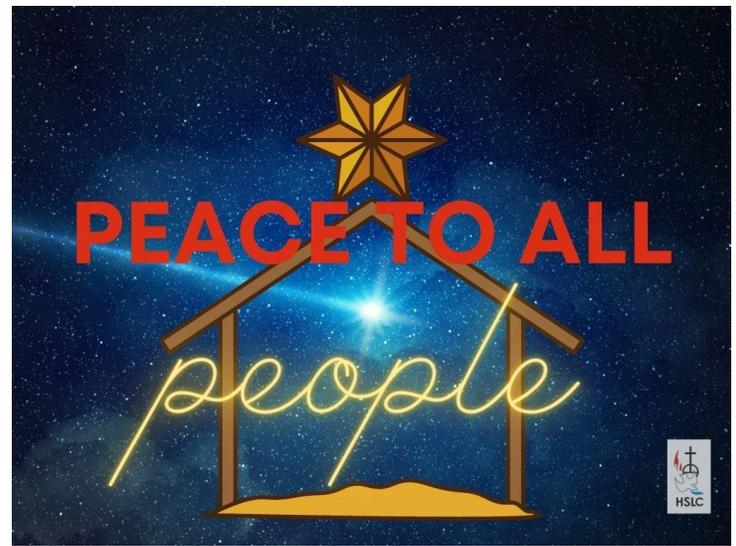
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The stories and songs of Christmas invite us to worship wherever we are. In our homes and around the world, we are united with our loved ones by the Spirit of God in worship. Come let us adore Christ whose promises of hope, peace, joy and love resound in our troubled world.



December 24, 2021 – Christmas Eve

And did it happen? – a poem from Cloth for the Cradle

And did it happen
that in a stable long ago,
a weary couple,
who no one wanted to know,
should choose a manger,
in spite of the danger,
to hold and hallow the Lord below?

And did it happen
that in the stillness of the night,
the woman laboured
to let God see the light,
and bathed and dressed him,
breastfed and blessed him,
the Word incarnate whose time was right?

And did it happen
that news of this first reached the poor,
compelled by angels
to tiptoe to the
door and see no trappings,
just linen wrappings,
a baby for certain and God for sure?

And did it happen
that all of this was meant to be,
that God from distance
should choose to be set free
and show uniqueness
transformed by weakness,
that I might touch him and he touch me?

Welcome

Song “Hear the Angels” (W&P 57)

Prayer of the Day

First Reading

Isaiah 9:2-7

²The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. ³You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. ⁴For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their

oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. ⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Song “Angels from the Realms of Glory” (ELW 275)

Psalm 96: 1-4,7-13

¹O sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. ²Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day. ³Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples. ⁴For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; he is to be revered above all gods. ⁷Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. ⁸Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts. ¹¹Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it; ¹²let the field exult, and everything in it. Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy ¹³before the Lord; for he is coming, for he is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with his truth.

Song “The First Noel” (ELW 300) verses 1, 2, 4

Second Reading

Titus 2:11-14

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

Song “’Twas the Moon of Wintertime” (ELW 284)

Gospel Reading

Luke 2:1-20

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of

Pastor: Rev. Trish Schmermund (she, her, hers)

Associate Pastor: Rev. Lindsey Jorgensen-Skakum (they, them, theirs) *on parental leave*

Musician: Kathy Robinson (she, her, hers)

Council President: Toby Schneider (he, him, his)

Ministers: Every Member

Video Editor/Live Streaming: Anton Chell

Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Sermon – Rev. Trish Schmermund

Song "What Child is This" (ELW 296)

A Christmas Creed

I believe in Jesus Christ and in the beauty of the gospel begun in Bethlehem.

I believe in the one whose spirit glorified a little town; and whose spirit still brings music to persons all over the world, in towns both large and small.

I believe in the one for whom the crowded inn could find no room, and I confess that my heart still sometimes wants to exclude Christ from my life today.

I believe in the one who the rulers of the earth ignored and the proud could never understand; whose life was among common people, whose welcome came from persons of hungry hearts.

I believe in the one who proclaimed the love of God to be invincible:

I believe in the one whose cradle was a mother's arms, whose modest home in Nazareth had love for its only wealth, who looked at persons and made them see what God's love saw in them, who by love brought sinners back to purity, and lifted human weakness up to meet the strength of God.

I confess my ever-lasting need of God: The need of forgiveness for our selfishness and greed, the need of new life for empty souls, the need of love for hearts grown cold. I believe in God who gives us the best of himself. I believe in Jesus, the son of the living God, born in Bethlehem this night, for me and for the world. Amen.

The Prayers

In our homes and in our hearts we are gathered by God who knows no bounds. We gather to pray for ourselves, all of creation, and in gratitude for all that God is.

Song "Night of Silence" (W&P 101, verse 1)

God of all people, these days feel wintery and unfriendly as we strive to make sense of the changes we encounter. As you came to Bethlehem, we learn that you enter our lives in small ways, into the muck and mire of our messy ways and you bring gifts of hope, love and peace.

Move us to unite what is broken between us. Call us to generosity as we think of the lost, lonely, underhoused, hungry. Be with those who are near death or who grieve. Teach us to be with those broken in spirit and to share the abundance of your peace.

Song "Night of Silence" (W&P 101, verse 2)

God of creation, open our ears to hear the voices of the night, the winds, the sky and seas. Remind us of the deep connectedness between us and the earth and guide us to live with peace in this place. May we be inspired by the diversity all around us to value life in its many shapes and colours.

Be with those who work to better our lives, community leaders, volunteers, dreamers and doers. Enliven us all to unity that your peace may be known.

Song "Night of Silence" (W&P 101, verse 3)

Holy Spirit among us, we pray for all who are on our hearts this Christmas. Continue to guide us as you did the shepherds. Without you we are lost; bring us back into the fold of your love and encourage us to follow You by the light of Christ. May we be peace bearers and sharers with all we meet. Inspired by the babe of Christmas may we remember the entirety of Jesus' life and love as we pray in the way he taught us:

The Lord's Prayer - *contemporary spoken*

Blessing

Song "Silent Night" (ELW 281)

Sharing of the Peace

Dismissal

Family Photo Slide Show

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Merry Christmas

*From the pastors, staff and council of
Holy Spirit Lutheran Church*