

**Christmas Eve Service**  
**Bethlehem Lutheran Church**  
**Ossian, Indiana**  
December 24, 2023

**Preservice Music**

**Choir:** *“Bereite dich Zion” (“Prepare Thyself Zion” sung in German)*

**The First Promise of a Savior:** Genesis 3:15

**Processional Hymn** *“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”* LSB 357 (Please stand and face the processional cross.)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>1. O come, O come, Emmanuel,<br/>And ransom captive Israel,<br/>That mourns in lonely exile here<br/>Until the Son of God appear.<br/>Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel<br/>Shall come to thee, O Israel!</p>                 | <p>2. O come, Thou Branch of Jesse’s tree,<br/>Free them from Satan’s tyranny<br/>That trust Thy mighty power to save,<br/>And give them vict’ry o’er the grave.<br/>Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel<br/>Shall come to thee, O Israel!</p>      |
| <p>3. O come, Thou Key of David come,<br/>And open wide our heav’nly home<br/>Make safe the way that leads on High<br/>And close the path to misery.<br/>Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel<br/>Shall come to thee, O Israel!</p> | <p>4. O come, Thou Dayspring from on high,<br/>And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;<br/>Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,<br/>And death’s dark shadows put to flight.<br/>Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel<br/>Shall come to thee, O Israel!</p> |

**The Invocation**

P: In the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

**Confession of Sins**

P This world has been made dark by our own sin and rebellion against God. We are by nature children of wrath and darkness. We have sinned against God and one another in thought, word, and deed. As the day is far spent and the darkness is here, let us speak the truth of the darkness of our own sin.

*(Silence for reflection upon God’s Law and one’s own sin)* P We confess:

**C I confess to God Almighty, before the whole company of heaven and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned in thought, word, and deed by my fault, by my own fault, by my own most grievous fault; wherefore I pray God Almighty to have mercy on me, forgive me all my sins, and bring me to everlasting life. Amen.**

**Forgiveness of Sins**

P It is only from the Father’s divine goodness, mercy, and love that His only-begotten Son has shined upon us. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Light of lights and very God of very God, from heaven above came down to take on our human flesh, bear our sin, and be our Savior. The Father has given you His greatest gift – His eternally-begotten only Son, Jesus Christ, who was born in the manger, who died on the cross for you as the Savior of the world, and who rose victorious over death for you. It is for his sake that your sins are forgiven. It is in the stead of Christ and by his authority, that I, as his called and ordained servant, forgive you your sin in the Name of the Father, and of the T Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**C. Amen.**

**The Introit** (Sung responsively with the choir.)

*The Lord | said to me,\**

*“You are my Son; today I have be | gotten you.*

*As for me, I have | set my King\*  
on Zion, my | holy hill.”*

**The earth is the Lord’s and the full | ness thereof,\*  
the world and those who | dwell therein.**

**Who shall ascend the hill | of the Lord?\***  
**who shall stand in His | holy place?**

*He who has clean hands and a | pure heart,\**

*who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not  
swear de- | ceitfully.*

*He will receive blessing | from the Lord\**

*and righteousness from the God of his sal- | vation.*

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;**

**As it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now and will be forever. | Amen.**

*The Lord | said to me,\**

*“You are my Son; today I have be | gotten you.*

*As for me, I have | set my King\*  
on Zion, my | holy hill.”*

(Please be seated.)

**The First Lesson:** Isaiah 64:1-9

Homily: *Heaven and Earth*

Collect

**HYMN:** *Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming*

1. *Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming  
From tender stem hath sprung!  
Of Jesse’s lineage coming  
As prophets long have sung,  
It came a flow’ret bright,  
Amid the cold of winter,  
When half spent was the night.*

2. **Isaiah ‘twas foretold it,  
The rose I have in mind;  
With Mary we beheld it,  
The virgin mother kind.  
To show God’s love aright,  
She bore to us a Savior,  
When half spent was the night.**

3. *This flow’r whose fragrance tender  
With sweetness fills the air,  
Dispels with glorious splendor  
The darkness everywhere  
True man, yet very God.  
From sin and death He saves us  
And lightens every load.*

**The Second Lesson:** Ezekial 34:11-16

Homily: *The Good Shepherd*

Collect

**HYMN:** *Hark the Glad Sound*

1. Hark the glad sound! The Savior comes,  
The Savior promised long;  
Let ev'ry heart prepare a throne  
And ev'ry voice a song.
2. He comes the pris'ners to release,  
In Satan's bondage held.  
The gates of brass before Him burst,  
The iron fetters yield.
3. He comes the broken heart to bind,  
The bleeding soul to cure,  
And with the treasures of His grace  
To enrich the humble poor.
4. Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,  
Thy welcome shall proclaim,  
And heav'n's eternal arches ring  
With Thy beloved name.

**The Third Lesson:** Isaiah 40: 1-8

Homily: *The Way of the Lord*

Collect

**HYMN with the Choir:** *All My Heart This Night Rejoices* (Choir sings 2 and 4)

1. All my heart again rejoices  
As I hear far and near  
Sweetest angel voices.  
"Christ is born!" their choirs are singing  
Till the air everywhere  
Now with joy is ringing.
2. *Hear! The Conqueror has spoken:*  
*"Now the foe, sin and woe,*  
*Death and hell are broken!"*  
*God is man, man to deliver,*  
*And the Son now is one*  
*With our blood forever.*
3. Should we fear our God's displeasure  
Who to save, freely gave  
His most precious treasure?  
To redeem us He has given  
His own Son from the throne  
Of His might in heaven.
4. *Softly from His lowly manger*  
*Jesus calls one and all,*  
*"You are safe from danger,*  
*Children from the sins that grieve you*  
*You are freed; all you need*  
*I will surely give you."*
5. Come, then, banish all your sadness!  
One and all, great and small,  
Come with songs of gladness.  
We shall live with Him forever  
There on high in that joy  
Which will vanish never.

**The Fourth Lesson:** Luke 1: 26-28

Homily: *The Annunciation*  
Collect

**HYMN:** *The Angel Gabriel From Heaven Came*

- 1. The angel Gabriel from heaven came,  
With wings as drifted snow, with eyes as flame:  
“All hail to thee, O lowly maiden Mary,  
Most highly favored lady.” Gloria!
- 2. “For now a blessed mother thou shalt be,  
All generations laud and honor thee;  
Thy Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,  
Most highly favored lady.” Gloria!
- 3. Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head;  
“To me be as it pleaseth God,” she said.  
“My soul shall laud and magnify God’s holy Name.”  
Most highly favored lady. Gloria!
- 4. Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born  
In Bethlehem all on a Christmas morn,  
And Christian folk throughout the world will ever say:  
“Most highly favored lady.” Gloria!

**The Fifth Lesson:** Matthew 1:18-25

Homily: *God With Us*  
Collect

**HYMN by the Choir:** *Let Our Gladness Have No End*

1. Let our gladness have no end alleluia!  
For to earth did Christ descend, alleluia!  
On this day God gave us  
Christ His Son to save us;  
Christ His Son to save us.

2. Prophetied in days of old, alleluia!  
God has sent Him as foretold, alleluia!  
On this day God gave us  
Christ His Son to save us;  
Christ His Son to save us.
3. Into flesh is made the Word, alleluia!  
He, our refuge and our Lord, alleluia!  
On this day God gave us  
Christ His Son to save us;  
Christ His Son to save us;

**Sixth Lesson:** Luke 2: 1-7

Homily: *Birth of Our Lord*  
Collect

**HYMN by the Choir:** *Gentle Mary Laid Her Child*

- Gentle Mary laid her Child  
Lowly in a manger;  
There He lay, the Undefined,  
To the world a stranger.  
Such a babe in such a place,  
Can He be the Savior?  
Ask the saved of all the race  
Who have found His favor.

2. Angles sang about His birth,  
Wise Men sought and found Him;  
Heaven’s star shone brightly forth  
Glory all around Him.  
Shepherds saw the wondrous sight,  
Heard the angels singing,  
All the plains were lit that night,  
All the hills were ringing.
3. Gentle Mary laid her Child  
Lowly in a manger;  
He is still the Undefined  
But no more a stranger.  
Son of God of humble birth,  
Beautiful the story;  
Praise His name in all the earth;  
Hail the King of glory!

The Seventh Lesson: Luke 2:8-20

Homily: *Good News for All*  
Collect

**HYMN:** Silent Night

1. 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,  
Heavenly 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.

**CHOIR:**

*Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht!  
Alles schläft, einsam wacht  
Nur das traute, hochheilige Paar.  
Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar,  
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh,  
Schlaf in Himmlischer Ruh.*

**HYMN:** *The People That in Darkness Sat*

1. The people that in darkness sat  
A glorious light have seen:  
The light has shined on them who long  
In shades of death have been,  
In shades of death have been.
2. To us a Child of hope is born,  
To us a Son is giv’n,  
And on His shoulder ever rests  
All pow’r in earth and heaven,  
All pow’r in earth and heaven.
3. His Name shall be the Prince of Peace,  
The everlasting Lord,  
The Wonderful, the Counselor,  
The God by all adored,  
The God by all adored.
4. His righteous government and pow’r  
Shall over all extend;  
On judgment and on justice based,  
His reign shall have no end,  
His reign shall have no end.

**THE MEANING OF THE SECOND ARTICLE** (Please stand.)

**I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity,  
and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary is my Lord.**

Who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins from death and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death,

That I may be His own, and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness,

Even as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity.

This is most certainly true. (Please be seated.)

#### The Offering

The Prayers (Please stand.)

The Lord's Prayer (Please stand.)

#### The Benediction

The Closing Hymn: **LSB 386:** *Now Sing We Now Rejoice*

#### Postlude

Preaching/Liturgist: Pastor Samuel Wirgau

The Crucifer: Volunteer

The Torch Bearers: Volunteers

The Choir: Bethlehem Junior Choir

Kantor: Richard Brinkley

