



Merry  
Christmas

December 25, 2023

# *The Festival of Christmas*

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*From the beginning, the solution to sin was the flesh and blood of God.*

## HYMN

*Angels from the Realms of Glory* | #114

## GOSPEL READING

Luke 2:1–20

## HYMN

*O Come, All Ye Faithful* | #133

## INVOCATION

P: The Word became flesh and lived among us,

**C: and we have seen his glory,**

P: the glory he has as the only-begotten from the Father,

**C: full of grace and truth.**

P: Glory to God in the highest

**C: and on earth peace, good will toward mankind!**

P: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

## CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

P: Friends in Christ, let us confess our sins to God our Father, because Jesus Christ came to earth as a human being for us, to take away our sins.

**C: Lord God, our heavenly Father, I confess that I have sinned against you, not only in my words and actions, but also in my secret thoughts and desires which I cannot fully know or understand, but which you know completely. I am sorry that I have displeased you, and repent of the evil I have done. For the sake of your dear Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, have mercy on me, forgive my sins, and graciously help me in my weakness. Amen.**

## KYRIE

*tune: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

Lord, have mercy on your world,  
Glorious King with flags unfurled,  
Christ have mercy, hear our plea,  
Sinners to your manger flee.  
Lord, have mercy on mankind  
May your grace on us e'er shine,  
That we may your people be  
Here and in eternity.  
Hark! the herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn king!"

P: Lift up your hearts unto God! Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy upon us, and has given his only-begotten Son to die for us, and for his sake forgives us all our sins. To all who believe on his name he gives the power to become the children of God, and has promised them his Holy Spirit. He who believes and is baptized will be saved. Grant this, Lord, unto us all. Amen.

## GLORIA

*tune: Angels from the Realms of Glory*

Glory, blessing, praise eternal!  
Thus the choir of angels sings,  
Honor, riches, pow'r, dominion!  
Thus its praise creation brings.  
Come and worship,  
Come and worship;  
Worship Christ, the new-born King

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Almighty God, grant that the birth of your only Son in the flesh may set us free from our old slavery to sin. We pray through your incarnate Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

## OLD TESTAMENT READING

Micah 5:2–4

*The prophet foretold a new ruler from Bethlehem—but one who is more than a mere human being. He will gather God’s people from the ends of the earth to live securely.*

<sup>2</sup> “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.”

<sup>3</sup> Therefore Israel will be abandoned until the time when she who is in labor bears a son, and the rest of his brothers return to join the Israelites. <sup>4</sup> He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth.

## HYMN

*Joy to the World* | #138

## GOSPEL READING

John 1:1–18

*The Light that defeated darkness in the beginning of creation now defeats the darkness in our hearts to re-create us as children of God.*

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was with God in the beginning. <sup>3</sup> Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. <sup>4</sup> In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. <sup>8</sup> He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

<sup>9</sup> The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. <sup>11</sup> He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. <sup>12</sup> Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—<sup>13</sup> children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.

<sup>14</sup> The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

<sup>15</sup> (John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, “This is the one I spoke about when I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’ ”)

<sup>16</sup> Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. <sup>17</sup> For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

## HYMN

*From Heaven Above to Earth I Come* | #123: v. 1, 13–15

## SERMON

Galatians 4:4–7

*God fulfilled his garden promise by sending a Savior for mankind who was part of mankind.*

<sup>4</sup> But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup> to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. <sup>6</sup> Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “*Abba, Father.*” <sup>7</sup> So you are no longer a slave, but God’s child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.

## HYMN

*Rejoice, Rejoice This Happy Morn* | #142

## STATEMENT OF FAITH—ATHANASIAN CREED

*The ancient church wrote this creed to define the minimum belief necessary to be considered Christian. This morning we will use only the second half of this lengthy creed: that Jesus is true God and true man and that he is our Savior.*

P: Let us confess our holy faith in the words of the Athanasian Creed:

**C: It is necessary for eternal salvation that one also faithfully believe the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Therefore it is the true faith that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is at once God and a human being. He is God, begotten from the substance of the Father before all ages, and a human being, born from the substance of his mother in this age. He is perfect God and a perfect human being, composed of a rational soul and human flesh. He is equal to the Father with respect to his divinity, less than the Father with respect to his humanity.**

**Although he is God and a human being, nevertheless he is not two but one Christ.**

**However, he is one not by the changing of the divinity in the flesh but by the taking up of the humanity in God. Indeed, he is one not by a confusion of substance but by a unity of person. For, as the rational soul and the flesh are one human being, so God and the human being are one Christ.**

**He suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose from the dead, ascended into the heavens, is seated at the right hand of the Father, from where he will come to judge the living and the dead. At his coming all human beings will rise with their bodies and will give an account of their own deeds. Those who have done good things [accomplished only through faith] will enter into eternal life, and those who have done evil things into eternal fire.**

**This is the Christian faith; a person cannot be saved without believing this firmly, and faithfully.**

## **OFFERING**

*The teaching and evangelism work of King of Grace is supported entirely by donation. You can support this work by giving a gift in the offering plate or at [www.kingofgracelutheran.com/give](http://www.kingofgracelutheran.com/give).*



## **LORD'S PRAYER**

*tune: It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*

**Our Father, Lord on heav'n's high throne, most holy be your name.**

**Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth—in heaven the same.**

**Give us this day the food we need; forgiven may we be;**

**Into temptation do not lead; from evil set us free.**

**Yours is the kingdom; unto you in grateful love we bow;**

**And yours the pow'r; Lord, let us view your mighty presence now.**

**The glory yours; your praise be sung by angel hosts and men**

**In ev'ry land, by ev'ry tongue forevermore! Amen.**

## PREFACE TO THE LORD'S SUPPER

P: Blessed are you, O Lord our God, king of all creation, for you have had mercy on us and given your only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. In your righteous judgment you condemned the sin of Adam and Eve, who ate the forbidden fruit, and you justly barred them and all their children from the tree of life. Yet, in your great mercy, you promised salvation by a second Adam, your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, and made his cross a life-giving tree for all who trust in him. We give thanks to you for the redemption you have prepared for us through Jesus Christ. Grant us your Holy Spirit, that we may faithfully eat and drink of the fruits of his cross and receive the blessings of forgiveness, life, and salvation that come to us in his body and blood. Amen.

## SANCTUS

*tune: As with Gladness Men of Old*

**Holy, holy, holy Lord  
God of hosts, by all adored:  
Heav'n and earth cannot contain  
All the glory of your name!  
With the heav'nly host we sing  
Highest praises to our King:**

**Hail! Hosanna! Endless fame  
Be to him who, in God's name,  
Now draws nigh with us to dwell,  
Jesus, our Immanuel!  
Hail! Hosanna! Praises be  
To the Lord eternally!**

## CONSECRATION, DISTRIBUTION, AND RECEPTION

### DISTRIBUTION HYMN

*Praise God the Lord, Ye Sons of Men | #148*

### NUNC DIMITTIS

*tune: Thou Light of Gentile Nations*

**Let us, O Lord, be faithful  
Like Simeon to the end,  
So that his prayer exultant  
May from our hearts ascend.  
"O Lord, now let thy servant  
Depart in peace, I pray.  
Since I have seen my Savior  
And here beheld his day."**

**My Savior, I behold thee  
With faith's enlightened eye;  
Of thee no foe can rob me,  
His threats I can defy.  
Within thy heart abiding,  
As thou, O Lord in me,  
Death can no longer frighten  
Nor part my soul from thee.**

**PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

P: Let us pray: O God the Father, the fountain and source of all goodness, who in loving kindness sent your only-begotten Son into the flesh, we thank you that on the basis of his work you have given us pardon and peace in this Sacrament. We ask you not to abandon your children but always to rule our hearts and minds by your Holy Spirit, so that we may be empowered constantly to serve you. We pray through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one true God, now and forever. Amen.

**HYMN** *The Happy Christmas Comes Once More* | #143: v.1, 5–6, 9

**BENEDICTION** *tune: O Little Town of Bethlehem*

*P: Now may the good Lord bless and keep,  
His love in you increase;  
Lift up his face with shining grace,  
And grant eternal peace.*

**C: To Father, Son, and Spirit,  
Eternal One-in-Three,  
Be thanks and praise through all our days  
And to eternity!**

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**Preacher**.....Pastor Aaron Ferkenstad | **Liturgist**.....Pastor Bernt Tweit  
**Organist** .....Karen Merseth | **Piano** .....Johnny Moldstad, Mia Moldstad  
**Flute** .....Ann Werner

