

GOOD SHEPHERD EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH

Kearney, Nebraska Sunday, December 24, 2017

WELCOME TO GOOD SHEPHERD!

We are so happy you could join us today! If we can assist you in any way with questions about our confession of faith, spiritual struggles, understanding our liturgical service, or any other need, please let us know. It is our prayer that the Gospel of Jesus Christ will strengthen and comfort you.

For your convenience, **Listening Devices** are available for those who need assistance in hearing the service. Please speak with an usher if you need one. A **Nursery** is also available and is equipped with a speaker so that a minimal amount of the service is missed. The nursery is located in the hallway just off the entryway (first door on left).

ABOUT CHRISTMAS EVE



Historically the Festival of Christmas has been truly celebrated on Christmas Day (as we will do tomorrow morning). However, throughout the history of the Church, the Festival of Christmas, like the festival of Easter, has been celebrated with a vigil. The word "vigil" is derived from a Latin word meaning, "watchfulness." Our English word "vigilant," is another derivative of this word. Throughout the season of Advent, we were encouraged to prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ and to keep watch—that is, to be vigilant in preparing for the coming of Christ. Tonight, we see the culmination of the Advent season as we "keep watch" for Christmas Day.

In modern times, vigils have been used to commemorate or observe an important or tragic event or the death of a notable or significant person. They are usually celebrated in a muted and calm way, and often involve the use of candles.

In the Christian Church vigils have been used in very much the same way. However, the focus has always been and will always be on Christ. Traditionally the Christmas Vigil has been celebrated late in the evening so that the end of the service coincides with the changing from December 24th to December 25th at midnight. So, tonight, with Christians around the world, we gather once again at the Christmas Vigil, waiting and watching for the coming of Christ as a child in Bethlehem.

ABOUT THE SERVICE OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS

Our worship this evening is an adaptation of *The Festival of Lessons and Carols* service traditionally held at King's College, Cambridge, England, on December 24th every year. The Festival was first held on Christmas Eve, 1918. It was planned by Eric Milner-White, who at the age of thirty-four had just been appointed Dean of King's College after experience as an army chaplain. A revision of the Order of Service was made in 1919, involving rearrangement of the lessons. While almost every year some carols have been changed and some new ones introduced by successive organists, the backbone of the service—the lessons and the prayers—have remained virtually unchanged for nearly 100 years.

SERVING US TONIGHT

Presiding Minister	Pastor Nathanael Seelow
Pianist	Michelle Reinsch

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Once in Royal David's City (CW 50) Tune [IRBY]: Henry J. Gauntlett © 1982 Concordia Publishing House. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

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Cover artwork: Bernardino Luini, Adoration of the Christ Child and Annunciation to the Shepherds, Milan, Italy, circa 1520-1525

Service folder artwork: Steve Erspamer. © 1992 Archdiocese of Chicago. All rights reserved.

ABOUTTHE COVER

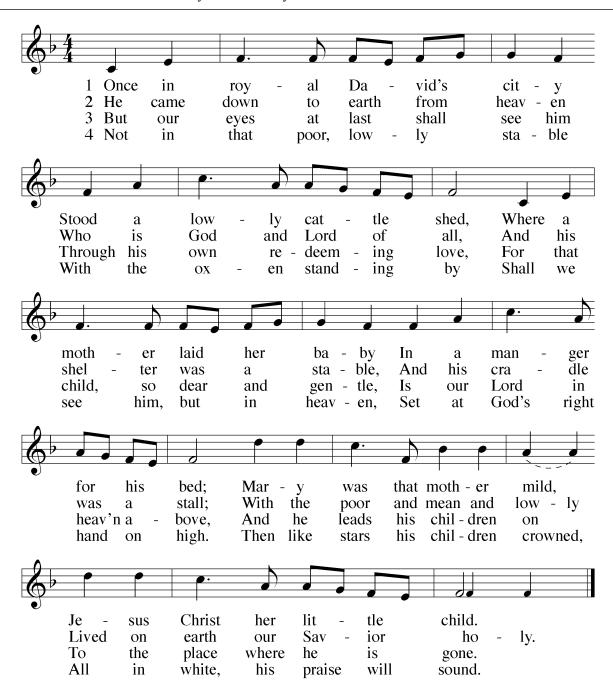
Through the opening in the upper third of the composition we witness The Annunciation to the shepherds. The delicate archangel Gabriel appears in a halo of light proclaiming the arrival of the Messiah to the startled herdsmen. In the foreground, the first shepherd to arrive offers a lamb to the family, symbolizing Christ's future sacrifice for mankind.

Luini worked in and near Milan. His Adoration exemplifies north Italian naturalism in the Virgin's solid features, tendency for rounded, full forms, and earthy muted colors, and in the attention to incidental detail like the baby's make-shift straw bed and the carefully described canteen on the back wall. The Virgin's long, serene face and heavily lidded eyes recall the work of Leonardo, who resided in the city in the 1490s and whose work Luini copied and admired.

A SERVICE OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS

OPENING HYMN Once in Royal David's City

CW 50



INVOCATION

Please stand.

M In the name of the Father and of the

Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

- We light four Advent candles and the Christ candle remembering Jesus, the Son of God and Son of Mary. He came to share our humanity.
- We remember Jesus, whose name means Savior. He came to save his people from their sins.
- M We hear his call to give him a place in our hearts.
- We light these candles as a sign of our joy and hope.
- M Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest.
- Through your Word and Spirit may our souls be blessed.



HYMN & O Lord, How Shall I Meet You

CW 18 (1,2)

Unring the hymn, four Advent candles and the Christ candle are lit.

O Lord, how shall I meet you,
How welcome you aright?
Your people long to greet you,
My Hope, my heart's Delight.
O Jesus, let your Word be
A lamp to light my way,
To show me how to please you,
To guide me ev'ry day.

Love caused your incarnation;
Love brought you down to me.
Your thirst for my salvation
Procured my liberty.
Oh, love beyond all telling
That led you to embrace
In love, all love excelling,
Our lost and fallen race!

EXHORTATION AND PRAYER

M Dear people of God, as we gather for this Vigil on the eve of the Incarnation of our Lord, it is our duty and delight to hear again the message of the angels and, in heart and mind, to go to 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 into sin to the glorious redemption brought to us by this holy child.

But first, let us pray for people all over the world who would delight with us to know the good news of Jesus Christ and who would join with us in singing his praises:

We pray for the people of Kearney and for all those in our own congregation.

And, because this would please our Lord, we remember in his name the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry and the oppressed, the sick and those who are sad, the lonely and the unloved, and the elderly and the little children. We especially remember all those who do not know the Lord Jesus, those who do not love him, and those who by sin have grieved his heart of love.

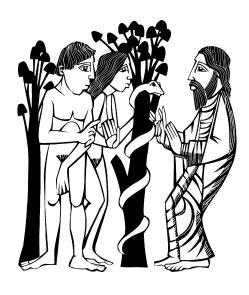
Finally, we remember before God all those who rejoice with us in heaven, who live in greater light than we, that multitude which no one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, who died in faith, and who live before the throne of God and praise him each day in his temple. We confess that we are united with them as we are united with one another.

Now hear us as we pray in the name of Christ, and as he has taught us:

 \mathbf{C} 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.

e Be seated.

FIRSTLESSON & Genesis 3:8-15





HEY 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.

- 9 The LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"
- The man said, "I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid myself."
- п God said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?"
- 12 The man said, "The woman you gave to be with me—she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate it."
- ¹³ The LORD God said to the woman, "What have you done?"

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

- 14 The 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.
- 15 I 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.
- M The Word of the Lord.

- I Let the earth now praise the Lord,
 Who has truly kept his word
 And at last to us did send
 Christ, the sinner's help and friend.
- 4 Welcome, O my Savior, now! Joyful, Lord, to you I bow. Come into my heart, I pray; Oh, prepare yourself a way.

- 5 Crush for me the serpent's headThat, set free from doubt and dread,I may cling to you in faith,Safely kept through life and death,
- 6 And, when you shall come again As a glorious king to reign, I with joy may see your face, Freely ransomed by your grace.

SECOND LESSON & Genesis 22:15-18



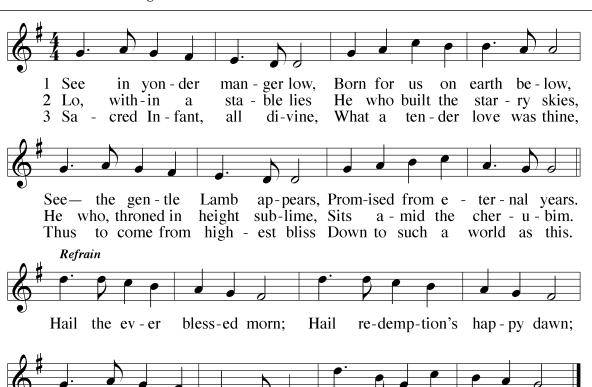
HE ANGEL OF THE LORD CALLED TO ABRAHAM a second time from heaven ¹⁶ and said, "I have sworn by myself, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷ I will bless you greatly,

and I will multiply your descendants greatly, like the stars of the sky and like the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the city gates of their enemies. ¹⁸ In your seed all the nations of the earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice."

M The Word of the Lord.

CAROL See in Yonder Manger Low

CW 58 (1-3)



Sing through all Je - ru - sa-lem, "Christ is born in Beth-le-hem!"



HE PEOPLE WALKING IN DARKNESS have seen a great light.

On those living in the land of the shadow of death, the light has dawned...

⁶ For to us a child is born.

To us a son is given.

The authority to rule will rest on his shoulders.

His name will be called:

Wonderful Counselor,

Mighty God,

Everlasting Father,

Prince of Peace.

7 There will be no limit to his authority and no end to his peace.

He will rule on David's throne

and over his kingdom to establish it and to uphold it with justice

and with righteousness from now on and forever.

The zeal of the LORD of Armies will accomplish this.

M

The Word of the Lord.

CAROL The People that in Darkness Sat

CW 90

- The people that in darkness sat
 A glorious light have seen;
 The light has shone on them who long
 In shades of death have been,
 In shades of death have been.
- To us a child of hope is born,
 To us a son is giv'n,
 And on his shoulders ever rests
 All pow'r in earth and heav'n,
 All pow'r in earth and heav'n.
- 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.

- 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.
- 5 Lord Jesus, reign in us, we pray,
 And make us yours alone,
 For you are with the Father and
 The Spirit ever one,
 The Spirit ever one.





SHOOT WILL SPRING UP from the stump of Jesse, and a Branch from his roots will bear fruit.

² The 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 of the fear of the LORD.

- ³ He will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, nor will he render decisions based on what his ears hear,
- ⁴ but with righteousness he will judge the poor, and he will render fair decisions in favor of the humble of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of his lips he will kill the wicked.
- ⁵ Righteousness will be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his hips.
- ⁶ The 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.
- ⁷ The cow and the bear will graze.
 Their young ones will lie down together.
 The lion will eat straw like the cattle.
- ⁸ The nursing child will play near a cobra's hole, and the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den.
- ⁹ They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

M The Word of the Lord.





FIFTH LESSON & Micab 5:2-4

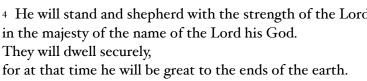
UT YOU, BETHLEHEM EPHRATHAH,

though you are small among the clans of Judah,

out of you will come the one to be ruler in Israel.

His goings forth are from ancient times, from eternity."

- ³ Therefore he will surrender them until the time she who is in labor gives birth to a child. Then the remainder of his brothers will return to the children of Israel.
- 4 He 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,





- 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.
 - For Christ is born of Mary, And, gathered all above,
 While mortals sleep, The angels keep Their watch of wond'ring love.
 O morning stars, together Proclaim the holy birth,
 And praises sing To God the King And peace to all the earth.
- 3 How silently, how silently The wondrous gift is giv'n!
 So God imparts To human hearts The 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.
 - 4 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!

SIXTH LESSON & Luke 1:26-35,38

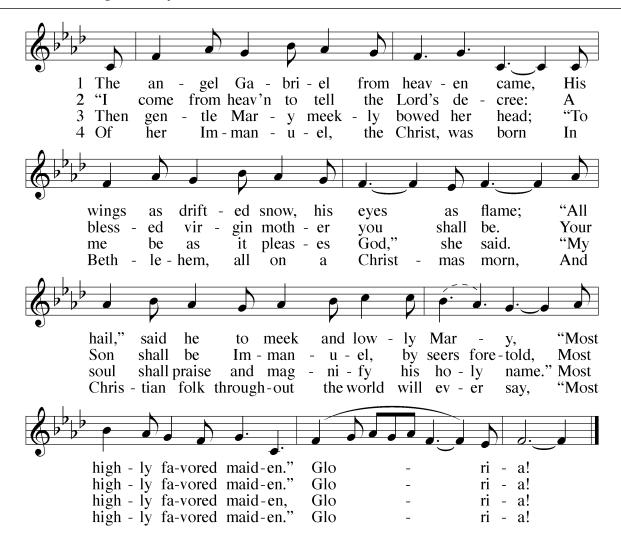


N THE SIXTH MONTH, THE ANGEL Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin pledged in marriage to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with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

- ²⁹ But she was greatly troubled by the statement and was wondering what kind of greeting this could be.
- ³⁰ The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, because you have found favor with God. ³¹ Listen, you will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus. ³² He 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. ³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will never end."
- 34 Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"
- ³⁵ The 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.
- Then Mary said, "See, I am the Lord's servant. May it happen to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.



M The Word of the Lord.



SEVENTH LESSON Luke 2:1-7



N THOSE DAYS A DECREE WENT out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.

² This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governing Syria. ³ And everyone went to register, each

to his own town. ⁴ And 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. ⁵ He went to be registered with Mary, his wife, who was pledged to him in marriage and was expecting a child.

⁶ And so it was that while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷ And 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.



M The Word of the Lord.



- I 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 cradle until morning is nigh.
- 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.

EIGHTH LESSON Luke 2:8-20



HERE WERE IN THE SAME country shepherds staying out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock at night. 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified! 10 But 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: п Today in the town of David, a Savior was born for you. He is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." 13 Suddenly, 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."
- 15 When 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." 16 So they hurried of fand found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen him, they told others the message they had been told about this child. 18 And all who heard it were amazed by what the shepherds said to them. 19 But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰ And 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.





The Word of the Lord.

- I God rest you merry, gentlemen,
 Let nothing you dismay,
 For Jesus Christ, our Savior,
 Was born on Christmas Day
 To save us all from Satan's pow'r
 When we were gone astray.
 O Tidings of comfort and joy,
 comfort and joy
 O tidings of comfort and joy.
- 2 From God, our heav'nly Father, A blessed angel came; And unto certain shepherds Brought tidings of the same: How that in Bethlehem was born The Son of God by name. Refrain

- 3 "Fear not" then said the angel, "Let nothing you affright; This day is born the Savior, A Babe of glorious might. See death and hell and Satan This child shall put to flight." Refrain
- 4 Now to the Lord sing praises, All you within this place, In Christian faith and charity Each other now embrace, This holy tide of Christmas Reveals to us God's grace. Refrain

NINTH LESSON & John 1:1-14

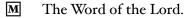
Please stand.



N THE BEGINNING WAS THE Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him everything was made, and without him not one thing was made that

has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and the life was the light of mankind. ⁵ The light is shining in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

- ⁶ There was a man, sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came as an eyewitness to testify about the light so that everyone would believe through him. ⁸ He was not the light, but he came to testify about the light.
- ⁹ The real light that shines on everyone was coming into the world.
- 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not recognize him.
- ¹¹ He came to what was his own, yet his own people did not receive him. ¹² But to all who did receive him, to those who believe in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. ¹³ They were born, not of blood, or of the desire of the flesh, or of a husband's will, but born of God.
- ¹⁴ The Word became flesh and dwelled among us. We have seen his glory, the glory he has as the only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.



e Be seated.





OFFERING

Moved by God's love in Christ, we offer him our first and best gifts, purely out of thanks to him. If you are visiting with us today, please do not feel obligated to give an offering.

PRAYER

Please stand.

When all was still and it was midnight, your eternal Word, O Lord, descended from the almighty throne to dwell among us. May we receive him in the peace of forgiven hearts and proclaim your gracious goodwill to all people on earth, for he is God with us, Emmanuel, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C 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.
 - May the blessing of God Almighty—the Father, the Son, ₹ and the Holy Spirit—be upon you and remain with you always.
- C Amen.

¥ Be seated.

CLOSING HYMN & Silent Night! Holy Night

CW 60

Ushers will come to the end of each pew with a lit candle. Please bring the unlit candle to the flame to light your candle. When blowing the candle out, please cup your hand around the candle to avoid wax being spilled. Please do not allow small children to hold or handle a candle as severe burns from the flame or hot wax may occur.

- 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.
- 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.
- 4 Silent night! Holy night!
 Wondrous star, lend thy light;
 With the angels let us sing,
 Alleluia to our King;
 Christ the Savior is born,
 Christ the Savior is born.

Please join us tomorrow morning!

Festival of Christmas
DIVINE SERVICE WITH HOLY COMMUNION — 10A