

## St. Mark Lutheran Church and School

3930 S. 19th Street, Lincoln, NE 68502 [www.stmarklincoln.org](http://www.stmarklincoln.org)  
School website—[www.stmarkles.org](http://www.stmarkles.org) (phone) 402-423-1497

### Pastor

Joel Vogel  
Cell (740) 350-3261

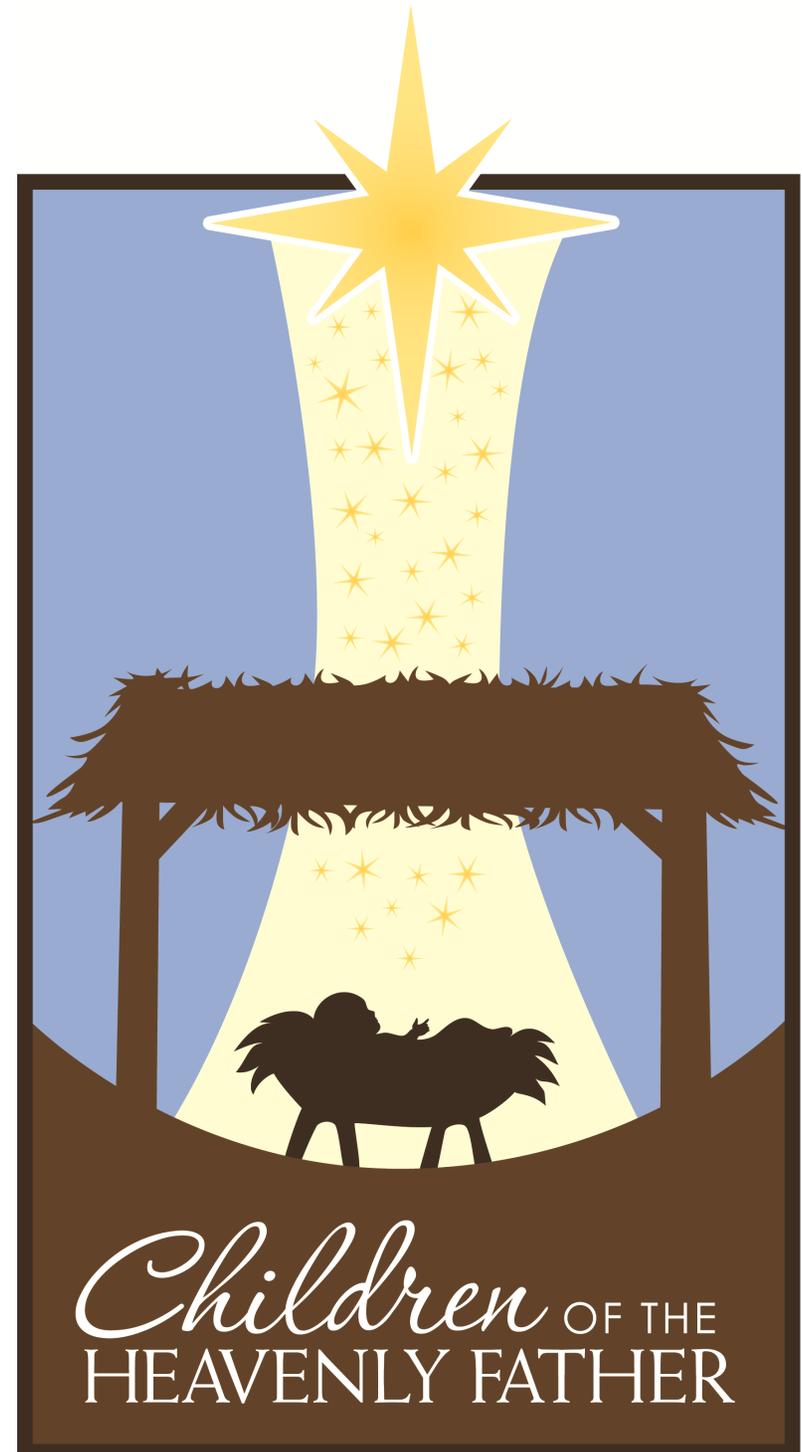
### Teachers

Jeremiah Drews (4-8, Principal)  
Cell (402) 480-1940  
Eva Van Egmond (K-3)  
Cell (920) 210-9813

### This Week at St. Mark

- Monday - Worship w/ Lord's Supper 7:00 pm  
Wednesday - Bible Class Lexington Assisted Living Center 3:30 pm  
Thursday - Christmas Eve Worship Service 7:00 pm  
Friday - Christmas Day Worship Service 10:00 am  
- Snow Removal—Joshua Van Egmond  
Saturday - Church Cleaning: Sec. 1 T. Hans Sec. 2 Fanning  
Sec. 3 M. Hawkins

**January Meal** - Every year St. Mark is asked to help with one service event at Nebraska Lutheran High School. This year we will be helping four area churches furnish and serve a meal for the January 9<sup>th</sup> Nebraska Lutheran Cheer Camp and basketball games. Monetary donations will allow us to purchase the groceries needed to prepare this meal. If you are interested in helping support our area Lutheran high school in this way, please give your donations to Carol Hans or any one of our Ladies Aid members. Checks should be made payable to *St. Mark Ladies Aid*. Your help is greatly appreciated!



**Children of the Heavenly Father**  
**A Children's Christmas Service**  
by Gregory C. A. Lyon and Luke C. Werre

**Pre K—8:** “Oh, Come, Little Children”  
Oh, come, little children, oh, come, one and all,  
To Bethlehem haste, to the manger so small.  
God’s Son for a gift has been sent you this night  
To be your Redeemer, your joy and delight.

He’s born in a stable for you and for me;  
Draw near by the bright gleaming starlight to see,  
In swaddling clothes lying, so meek and so mild,  
And purer than angels, the heavenly child!

See Mary and Joseph with love-beaming eyes  
Are gazing upon the rude bed where he lies.  
The shepherds are kneeling, with hearts full of love  
While angels sing loud hallelujahs above.

Kneel down and adore him with shepherds today.  
Lift up little hands now and praise him as they  
Rejoice that a Savior from sin you can boast,  
And join in the song of the heavenly host.

**Pastor Vogel:**  
In the name of the Father and of the Son (+) and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Sermon**  
Text: 1 John 3:1  
Theme: He became a child to make us children of God!

**Pastor Vogel**  
Oh, to be young again! Wouldn't it be great to have that youthful energy that just doesn't quit? Wouldn't it be nice to wake up in the morning without all the aches and pains that you've become so accustomed to? Wouldn't it be nice to have the doctor say to you, "You know, you could really stand to add a few pounds"? Wouldn't it be nice to live life carefree rather than stress over deadline after deadline? There comes a point in life that you finally come to the realization, "I'm not a kid anymore." But the blessings of being children go beyond the physical benefits. Jesus tells us to have faith like that of a little child. In today's Christmas service, you are going to see that childlike faith on display. You are going to see children proclaiming a truth that does not change with age: "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord." Through their proclamation of the gospel to us, may the Holy Spirit strengthen our faith to be children of the heavenly Father.

**St. Mark News and Notes**

**Nursery** At St. Mark, we love children and encourage their worship, too! In the foyer, we have some children's busy bags hanging from hooks that you are most welcome to use in church. If your child becomes restless during the service and you feel you both could just use a little break, you're welcome to use our nursery. Ask an usher to lead you to the nursery. If you need a private place to feed your baby, there is a chair downstairs in the women's restroom along with a changing table. Most of us have or have had young children, so you're with caring people who understand what it's like to have little ones.

**Goody Bags**—There are goody bags for the children that they can pick up on the way out of the service this morning.

**School Project**—Please take time to check out the 3rd and 4th grade National Parks Projects in the narthex. They did a great job.

**Birthday**— Kerri Johnson 12/22, Susan Rehm 12/23  
**Anniversary** — Dwayne & Dorothy Burianek

**THANK YOU FOR SERVING**

**Elders:** Jarod Wilkinson, Jeff Schmidt  
**Ushers:** Dwayne Burianek, Mark Schwede (E), Noel Lee, Tyson Martin (L)  
**Greeters:** Nathan & Katie Flood (E) , Mark Nelson (L)  
**Organist:** Eva Van Egmond

**Coming Events:**

**December 20** — Children's Christmas Service 10:30 am  
**December 24** — Christmas Eve Service 7:00 pm  
**December 25** — Christmas Day Worship 10:00 am  
**December 31** — New Year's Eve Worship 7:00 pm

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**Please remember in your prayers...**

- Joe Merklinger
- Oriah Uecker, Tracy & Curt Jamison's niece
- Sarah Brauer, Margaret Booth's daughter
- Jacob Kander, Jean & Denny Riegsecker's nephew
- Alida Freese, Julie Nelson's mother



**Recessional Hymn:** “Joy to the World” (CW 62)

**Pre K –8 verse 1**

**Cong: verses 2-4**

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.

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.

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.

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.

**Pre K-8:** Hymn: “See in Yonder Manger Low” (CW 58)

See in yonder manger low, Born for us on earth below,  
See—the gentle Lamb appears, Promised from eternal years.

*Refrain:*

Hail the ever blessed morn; Hail redemption’s happy dawn;  
Sing through all Jerusalem, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”

Lo, within a stable lies He who built the starry skies,  
He who, throned in height sublime, Sits amid the cherubim.

*Refrain*

Sacred Infant, all divine, What a tender love was thine,  
Thus to come from highest bliss Down to such a world as this.

*Refrain*

Teach, oh, teach us, holy Child, By thy face so meek and mild,  
Teach us to resemble thee In thy sweet humility.

*Refrain*

#### Part 1: Children of the Heavenly Father Trust His Word

**Ethan Riegesecker:**

Often people will say, “If only I knew then what I know now.” Do you ever wish you could go back to your youth with the years of knowledge and experience you have now? Or would you just prefer youthful ignorance and take life as it comes? Perhaps it might not be a bad thing to go back to what it was like to be a child. Think about it: what has time done to adults? Besides wearing down our bodies physically, it has led people to lose simple trust. But the good news of a child born in Bethlehem for us renews simple, childlike faith so that we accept God’s Word as truth, just as Mary did.

**Cong: Hymn:** “Of the Father’s Love Begotten” (CW 35:1)

Of the Father’s love begotten Ere the worlds began to be,  
He is Alpha and Omega, He the source, the ending he,  
Of the things that are, that have been, And that future years shall see  
Evermore and evermore.

**5-6:** The Announcement of the Christ Child’s Coming

In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”

**5-6:** Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. 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, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.”

**Pre K-K:** “How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”

**5-6:** The angel answered, “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.

**Pre K-K:** “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May it be to me as you have said.” Then the angel left her. (Luke 1:26-35,38)

**5-8:** “Behold, a Branch Is Growing” (CW 47)

Behold, a Branch is growing Of loveliest form and grace,  
As prophets sang, foreknowing; It springs from Jesse’s race  
And bears one little flow’r In midst of coldest winter,  
At deepest midnight hour.

Isaiah had foretold it In words of promise sure,  
And Mary’s arms enfold it, A virgin meek and pure.  
Through God’s eternal will This child to her is given  
At midnight calm and still.

The shepherds heard the story Proclaimed by angels bright,  
How Christ, the Lord of glory, Was born on earth this night.  
To Bethlehem they sped And in the manger found him,  
As angel heralds said.

This flow’r, so small and tender, With fragrance fills the air;  
His brightness ends the darkness That kept the earth in fear.  
True God and yet true man, He came to save his people  
From earth’s dark night of sin.

O Savior, Child of Mary, Who felt our human woes,  
O Savior, King of glory, Who conquered all our foes,  
Bring us at last, we pray, To the bright courts of heaven  
And to the endless day.

**Pre K-8: Offering Hymn:** “Your Little Ones, Dear Lord, Are We” (CW 46)

Your little ones, dear Lord, are we  
And come your lowly bed to see;  
Enlighten ev’ry soul and mind  
That we the way to you may find.

With songs we hasten you to greet  
And humbly fall before your feet.  
Oh, blessed hour, oh, sweetest night  
That gave you birth, our souls’ delight.

Oh, draw us wholly to you, Lord,  
And to us all your grace accord;  
True faith and love to us impart  
That we may hold you in our heart,

Until at last we, too, proclaim,  
With all your saints, your glorious name;  
In paradise our songs renew  
And praise you as the angels do.

**Prayer**

**Cong: The Lord’s Prayer:**

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.

**Blessing:**

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord look on you with favor and (+) give you peace. Amen.

God his own doth tend and nourish;  
In his holy courts they flourish.  
From all evil things he spares them;  
In his mighty arms he bears them.

Neither life nor death shall ever  
From the Lord his children sever;  
Unto them his grace he showeth,  
And their sorrows all he knoweth.

Though he giveth or he taketh,  
God his children ne'er forsaketh;  
His the loving purpose solely  
To preserve them pure and holy.

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**Congregation:** The Second Article and Explanation:

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

*What does this mean?*

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.

He 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.

All this he did that I should be his own, and live under him in his kingdom and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as he has risen from death and lives and rules eternally.

This is most certainly true.

**Offering**

**Myles Howard:**

Oh, to be young again! My friends, look no farther than the manger to find a cure for your guilt, your cynicism, your skepticism, your lack of faith. For in that manger is a child who was not blind to the sin of this world. No, he knew exactly the world he was coming into. He knew how sinful this world is. So Jesus Christ came into this world and became what he was not so that we could be what we were not—children of God.

**Cong. Hymn:** “Of the Father’s Love Begotten” (CW 35:2)

Oh, that birth forever blessed When the virgin, full of grace,  
By the Holy Ghost conceiving, Bore the Savior of our race,  
And the babe, the world’s Redeemer, First revealed his sacred face  
Evermore and evermore.

**5-6:** The Birth of the Christ Child

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. (Luke 2:1-7)

**Pre K-4: Song:** “As Each Happy Christmas”

As each happy Christmas  
Dawns on earth again,  
Comes the holy Christ Child  
To the hearts of men.

Enters with his blessing  
Into every home,  
Guides and guards our footsteps,  
As we go and come.

All unknown, beside me  
He will ever stand  
And will safely lead me  
With his own right hand.

Part 3: Children of the Heavenly Father Rejoice in God's Grace

**Dillon Richert:**

Jesus Christ came into this world and has forgiven all of our sins. The Bible says that he has removed them as far as the East is from the West! Years of guilt are gone. Years of skepticism and cynicism toward God are gone. All that remains is a simple childlike faith. A faith that does not get rattled by the doubting of the world but stands upon the truth of God's unchanging Word. A faith that boldly and confidently proclaims, "My Savior has come for me!" And so we hear the voices of children proclaiming the mighty deeds of the Lord at Christmastime, and we sing with them as fellow children of God. And as we sing, we also join in the joyous song of the shepherds and angels on that very first Christmas.

**Cong: Hymn** "Of the Father's Love Begotten" (CW 35:3)

This is he whom heav'n-taught singers Sang of old with one accord;  
Whom the Scriptures of the prophets Promised in their faithful word.  
Now he shines, the long-expected; Let creation praise its Lord  
Evermore and evermore.

**3-4: The Shepherds and Angels Rejoice**

There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." (Luke 2:8-14)

**Cong: Hymn:** "Silent Night! Holy Night" (CW 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.

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!

**Joey Murphy:**

The following passages speak of the tender relationship we have with God through faith in Jesus.

**Recitation:**

**7-8:** Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil. (Hebrews 2:14)

**5-6:** To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. (John 1:12,13)

**3-4:** I write to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name. (1 John 2:12)

**1-2:** The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. (Romans 8:16)

**Pre K-K:** Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children. (Ephesians 5:1)

**Pre K=K:** How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! (1 John 3:1)

**Joey Murphy:**

In his Small Catechism, Martin Luther expressed this affectionate relationship between God and the believer in The Address of the Lord's Prayer.

**Congregation:**

Our Father in heaven.

*What does this mean?*

With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that he is our true Father and that we are his true children, so that we may pray to him as boldly and confidently as dear children ask their dear father. (*Luther's Catechism*)

**Pre K—8: Song:** "Children of the Heavenly Father" (CW 449)

Children of the heav'nly Father  
Safely in his bosom gather;  
Nestling bird or star in heaven  
Such a refuge ne'er was given.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,  
But little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.  
I love Thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky  
And stay by my cradle til morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay  
Close by me forever, and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,  
And take us to heaven, to live with Thee there.

#### Part 5: By Faith, We Are Children of the Heavenly Father

##### **Noah Kumwenda:**

“How great is the love the Father has lavished on us”—a love that we did nothing to earn or deserve, but a love that God gave us. That’s what God’s *agape* love is. It is a love that is a gift. This is a love that God freely gave when he sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to be a child for us. And this is a love that he has freely given to us in Baptism, where, connected with simple water, he marked us as redeemed children of God. When God says that we are called children of God, that’s because he made us children of God. So through faith in Jesus Christ, we can be confident that children of God is what we are!

**Cong: Hymn:** “Of the Father’s Love Begotten” (CW 35:5)  
Christ, to you, with God the Father, And the Spirit ceaselessly  
Hymn and chant and high thanksgiving And unending praises be,  
Honor, glory, and dominion And eternal victory  
Evermore and evermore.

##### **7-8: We See Jesus With a Childlike Faith**

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said: “I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. See that you do not look down on one of these little ones.” (Matthew 18:1-5,10)

Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “*Abba*, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. (Romans 8:14-17)

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.

#### Part 4: Children of the Heavenly Father Proclaim God’s Word

##### **Melody Tustin:**

Is there any way we can go back to the days when all inhibition was gone as we sang out “Away in a Manger” and “Jesus Loves Me”? Is there any way we can go back to the days when we were so excited to tell Mommy and Daddy that Jesus died on the cross for us? We may be tempted to call it youthful ignorance, but let’s call it what it really is: simple, childlike faith. These words that come joyfully pouring out of the mouths of children are the words that are active in their hearts. They proclaim what they believe—that Jesus Christ came into the world to make us children of God. The youthful faith of these children is not beyond us. The same Spirit that created faith in the hearts of these children created faith in our hearts through the simple proclamation of the gospel. And now that gospel is ours to share, just as the shepherds did.

##### **Cong:** “Of the Father’s Love Begotten” (CW 35:4)

Let the heights of heav’n adore him, Angel hosts his praises sing,  
Pow’rs, dominions bow before him And extol our God and King.  
Let no tongue on earth be silent, Ev’ry voice in concert ring  
Evermore and evermore.

##### **1-2: The Shepherds Go to Bethlehem**

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told. (Luke 2:15-20)

##### **Pre K-K: Hymn:** “Away in a Manger” (CW 68)

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