

# St. Mark Evangelical Lutheran Church

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS)

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## + God Loves Me Dearly+ December 25, 2014 Christmas Day Service

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**A Note about Today's Service:** Today's service is based on the traditional liturgical order of service commonly used in the Lutheran Church. The major songs and canticles of the service have been replaced with Christmas hymns that reflect the thoughts and words of the usual songs in our service.

### OPENING HYMN

Now sing we, now rejoice, Now raise to heav'n our voice;  
He from whom joy streameth Poor in a manger lies;  
Not so brightly beameth The sun in yonder skies.  
Thou my Savior art! Thou my Savior art!

Come from on high to me; I cannot come to thee.  
Cheer my wearied spirit, O pure and holy Child;  
Through thy grace and merit, Blest Jesus, Lord most mild,  
Draw me unto thee! Draw me unto thee!

Now through his Son doth shine The Father's grace divine.  
Death o'er us had reign-ed through sin and vanity;  
He for us obtain-ed Eternal joy on high.  
May we praise him there! May we praise him there!

Oh, where shall joy be found? Where but on heav'nly ground?  
Where the angels singing With all his saints unite,  
Sweetest praises bringing In heav'nly joy and light.  
Oh, that we were there! Oh, that we were there!

### OFFERING

**Now Sing We Now Rejoice**  
*Christian Worship 34*

### PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Dear God of all glory, through eyewitnesses you have revealed your Son as the Babe of Bethlehem, as the Savior at the cross, and as the King of heaven. Help us, therefore, to praise him properly as we celebrate his birth, to receive him humbly in his grace, and to look for him to come again in glory, for his name's sake we pray, even as we join our hearts in praying the prayer he has taught us...

### LORD'S PRAYER

### HYMN

**Still, Still, Still**

*Let All the People Praise You 289*

Still, still, still, Your heart with joy I'd fill.  
I'd sing you a song and watch by your manger,  
Guard you from harm and keep you from danger.  
Still, still, still, Your heart with joy I'd fill

Sleep, sleep, sleep, 'Mid the oxen and the sheep.  
The shepherds come to see your glory;  
Angels bend low to tell the story.  
Sleep, sleep, sleep, 'Mid the oxen and the sheep.

Still, still, still, Within Your holy will.  
To You great God, my voice I'll raise,  
With awe and wonder sing Your praise.  
Still, still, still, within Your holy will.

### PRAYER

**M:** Accept our praise, heavenly Father, for the mystery of your Son becoming flesh. We thank you for the gladness you have provided for all the world and to which we may this day give expression. Allow this joy to fill our hearts and permeate our lives. Let the true joy of this day shine on those in any trouble or adversity. Let the bright beams of heavenly love illuminate the paths of those walking in darkness or those who have fallen into sin. May all, from the greatest to the least, kneel in humble adoration before your Son, our King and newborn Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

## HYMN OF THE DAY

Once in royal David's city  
Stood a lowly cattle shed,  
Where a mother laid her baby  
In a manger for his bed;  
Mary was that mother mild,  
Jesus Christ her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven  
Who is God and Lord of all,  
And his shelter was a stable,  
And his cradle was a stall;  
With the poor and mean and lowly  
Lived on earth our Savior holy.

But our eyes at last shall see him  
Through his own redeeming love,  
For that child, so dear and gentle,  
Is our Lord in heav'n above,  
And he leads his children on  
To the place where he is gone.

Not in that poor, lowly stable  
With the oxen standing by  
Shall we see him, but in heaven  
Set at God's right hand on high.  
Then like stars his children crowned  
All in white, his praise will sound.

## SERMON-Matthew 1:18-25

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.<sup>19</sup> Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. <sup>20</sup> But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." <sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: <sup>23</sup> "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"--which means, "God with us." <sup>24</sup> When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. <sup>25</sup> But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

## Once in Royal David's City *Christian Worship 50*

## GREETING AND DIALOGUE OF PRAISE

**M:** The grace of our Lord + Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**C: And also with you.**

**M:** Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord, let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.

**C: O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. You have set your glory above the heavens.**

**M:** Give thanks to the Lord of lords, to him who alone does great wonders, who by his understanding made the heavens, who spread out the earth upon the waters, who made the great lights – the sun, to govern the day, the moon and stars to govern the night.

**C: Great is the Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit.**

**M:** But our iniquities have separated us from our God; our sins have hidden his face from us, so that he will not hear. We look for light, but all is darkness; for brightness, but we walk in deep shadows. We look for deliverance, but it is far away.

**C: For our offenses are many in his sight, and our sins testify against us. Our offenses are ever with us, and we acknowledge our sins.**

**M:** The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.

**C: From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets, the name of the Lord is to be praised.**

**M:** "The days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord our Righteousness."

**C: Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.**

**M:** 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.

**C: Let the name of the Lord be praised forever and ever. Alleluia!**

## HYMN OF PRAISE

### God Rest You, Merry Gentlemen

*Let All the People Praise You 94*

God rest you merry gentlemen, Let nothing you dismay,  
For Jesus Christ our Savior Was born upon this day,  
To save us all from Satan's pow'r When we were gone astray:  
Oh, tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy, Oh, tidings of comfort and joy.

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:  
Oh, tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy, Oh, tidings of comfort and joy.

The shepherds at those tidings Rejoiced with much in mind,  
And left their flocks a feeding In tempest storm and wind,  
And went to Bethlehem straightway This blessed babe to find  
Oh, tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy, Oh, tidings of comfort and joy.

But when to Bethlehem they came, Where-at this infant lay,  
They found him in a manger, Where oxen feed on hay  
His mother Mary pondering before the Lord did pray:  
Oh, tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy, Oh, tidings of comfort and joy.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

**M:** Let us pray: Almighty God, in mercy you sent your one and only Son to take upon himself our human nature. By his gracious coming deliver us from the corruption of our sin and transform us into the likeness of his glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

## OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Isaiah 52:7-10

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!"<sup>8</sup> Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices; together they shout for joy. When the LORD returns to Zion, they will see it with their own eyes.<sup>9</sup> Burst into songs of joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem, for the LORD has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem.<sup>10</sup> The LORD will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God.

## Hymn Response:

## God Loves Me Dearly

*Let the People Praise You 93*

God loves me dearly, grants me salvation; God loves me dearly, loves even me.  
Therefore I'll say again: God loves me dearly, God loves me dearly, loves even me

## EPISTLE LESSON

## Hebrews 1:1-9

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, **2** but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. **3** The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. **4** So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs. **5** For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father " Or again, "I will be his Father, and he will be my Son" **6** And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him." **7** In speaking of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, his servants flames of fire." **8** But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom. **9** You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy."

## Hymn Response:

He sent forth Jesus, my dear Redeemer; He sent forth Jesus and set me free!  
Therefore I'll say again: God loves me dearly, God loves me dearly, loves even me

## HOLY GOSPEL

## John 1:1-14

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 men. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. <sup>6</sup> There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men 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 every man 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 received 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, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

### ***After the Gospel, the minister and congregation respond:***

**M:** This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**C: God be praised for his Good News!**

**BLESSING**

**M:** 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.

**C: Amen.**

**CLOSING HYMN**

**Infant Holy, Infant Lowly**

*Let All The People Praise You 152*

Infant holy, infant lowly, for his bed a cattle stall,  
Oxen lowing, little knowing Christ the child is Lord of all.  
Swift are winging angels singing, bells are ringing, tidings bringing  
Christ the child is Lord of all,  
Christ the child is Lord of all!

Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping vigil till the morning new  
Saw the glory, heard the story, tidings of the Gospel true.  
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow, praises voicing, greet the morrow:  
Christ the child was born for you,  
Christ the child was born for you!

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