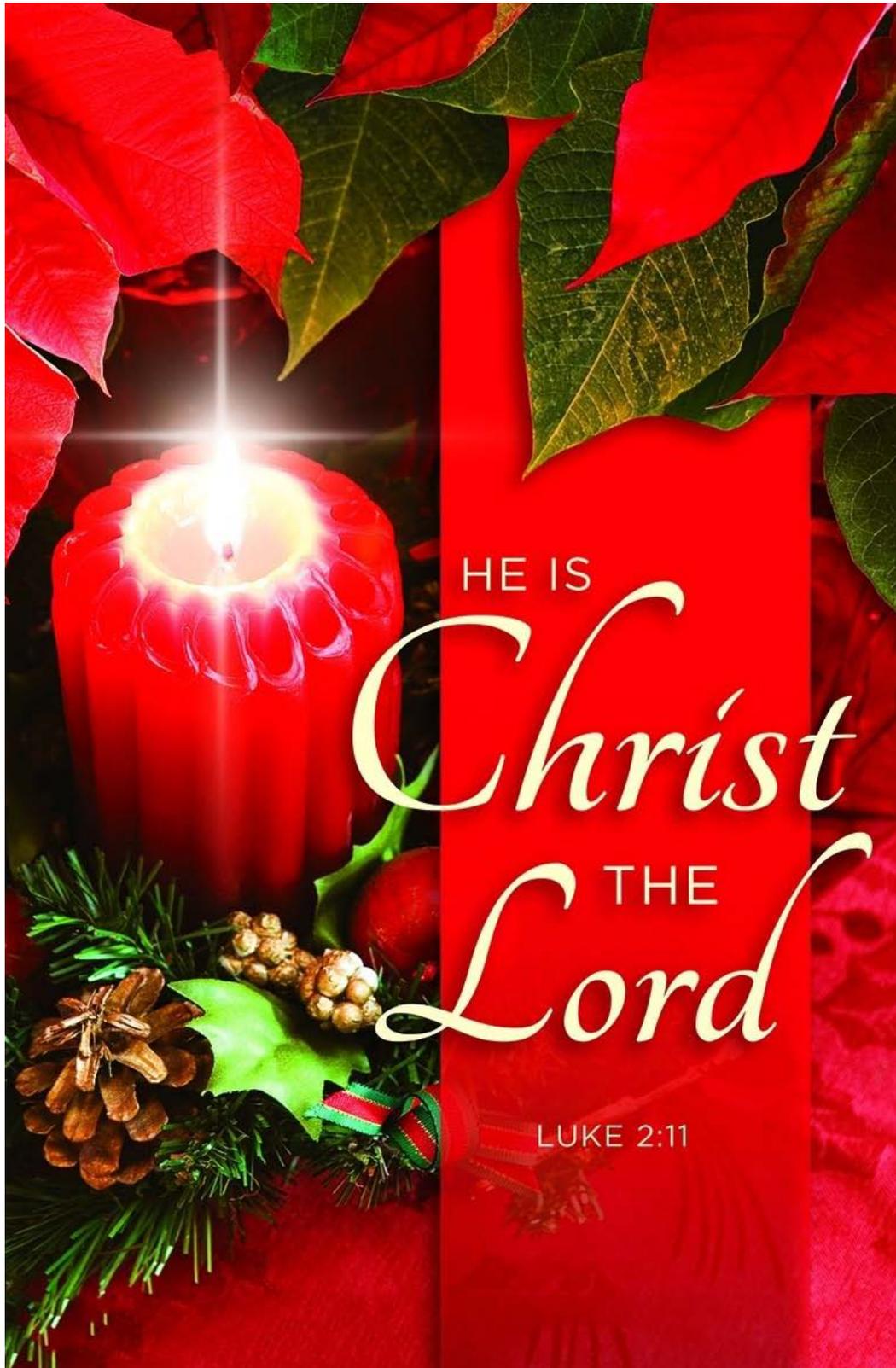


NATIVITY OF OUR LORD  
CHRISTMAS DAY, December 25, 2017  
10:00am



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**INTRODUCTION**

*On this Christmas morning the people of God gather to celebrate the birth of the Word made flesh, Christ our Lord. Luke recounts the familiar story of shepherds and angels; John's gospel tells of the Word that dwells among us, full of grace and truth. The meaning of Christmas is made clear: the light shines in the darkness. It is in the liturgy that we encounter the Word made flesh—in the people of God gathered together as the body of Christ, and in the meal around the holy table. We go forth to be bearers of light as we proclaim this good news to all the ends of the earth.*

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**OPENING HYMN**                    **“Good Christian Friends Rejoice”**                    **# 288 ELW**  
(please stand on the last verse)

**CHRISTMAS DIALOG**

Leader: The world is decked in the garb of celebration:

**People: Tinsel and lights, garlands of greenery, brightly colored packages and flashing Christmas greetings cover our world.**

Leader: The world is engaged in the spirit of celebration:

**People: Festive singing, fine food, merry parties, and grand Tradition abound.**

Leader: Yet the best efforts fall short,

**People: For it is the birth of the Messiah we celebrate.**

Leader: It is the incarnation of God.

**People: How can we respond to the greatness of this event?**

Leader: How can we celebrate the Messiah's birth?

**People: We celebrate in worship.**

Leader: Christmas is a time of worship. It is the moment when the busiest pause in wonder.

**People: Let us worship together!**

## CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the Holy One of Israel, the Word made flesh, the Power of the Most High, ✠ one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

Gathered in the name of Jesus, let us confess our sin against God and our neighbor.

*Silence for self reflection*

Gracious God,

**in Christ Jesus you come among us as light shining in darkness. We confess our failure to welcome this light. Forgive us and renew our hope, so that we may live in the light of your grace, and welcome the truth of Christ the Lord. Amen.**

I bring you good news of great joy for all the people: To you is born a Savior, Christ the Lord. Your sins are forgiven in ✠ Jesus' name.

**Amen.**

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

**Almighty God, you gave us your only Son to take on our human nature and to illumine the world with your light. By your grace adopt us as your children and enlighten us with your Spirit, through Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.**

**Amen.**

*Please be seated*

## FIRST READING: Isaiah 52:7-10

*A messenger races home to Jerusalem with the marvelous words: "Your God reigns!" In comforting the people, God proves to be the best brother or sister (redeemer) they have ever known. Everyone will witness the victory (salvation) of God.*

<sup>7</sup>How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."

<sup>8</sup>Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices, together they sing for joy; for in plain sight they see the return of the LORD to Zion.

<sup>9</sup>Break forth together into singing, you ruins of Jerusalem; for the LORD has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem.

<sup>10</sup>The LORD has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

The word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

## **Psalm Psalm 98**

*All the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God. (Ps. 98:3)*

<sup>1</sup>Sing a new song to the LORD, who has done marvelous things, whose right hand and holy arm have won the victory.

<sup>2</sup>**O LORD, you have made known your victory, you have revealed your righteousness in the sight of the nations.**

<sup>3</sup>You remember your steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God.

<sup>4</sup>**Shout with joy to the LORD, all you lands; lift up your voice, rejoice, and sing.**

<sup>5</sup>Sing to the LORD with the harp, with the harp and the voice of song.

<sup>6</sup>**With trumpets and the sound of the horn shout with joy before the king, the LORD.**

<sup>7</sup>Let the sea roar, and all that fills it, the world and those who dwell therein.

<sup>8</sup>**Let the rivers clap their hands, and let the hills ring out with joy before the LORD, who comes to judge the earth.**

<sup>9</sup>The LORD will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with equity.

## **Second Reading: Hebrews 1:1-4 [5-12]**

*This letter opens with a lofty declaration of Jesus' preeminent status as the Son through whom God created the world and through whom our sins are cleansed. God speaks to us now through the Son, who is exalted even above the angels.*

<sup>1</sup>Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, <sup>2</sup>but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. <sup>3</sup>He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, <sup>4</sup>having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. [

<sup>5</sup>For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you"? Or again, "I will be his Father, and he will be my Son"?

<sup>6</sup>And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him."

<sup>7</sup>Of the angels he says, “He makes his angels winds, and his servants flames of fire.”

<sup>8</sup>But of the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the righteous scepter is the scepter of your kingdom.

<sup>9</sup>You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.”

<sup>10</sup>And, “In the beginning, Lord, you founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands;

<sup>11</sup>they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like clothing;

<sup>12</sup>like a cloak you will roll them up, and like clothing they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will never end.” ]

The word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

*Please stand if you are able.*

**GOSPEL: John 1:1-14**

**Glory to you, O Lord**

*The prologue to the Gospel of John describes Jesus as the Word of God made flesh, the one who reveals God to be “full of grace and truth.”*

<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 in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup>in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did 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 to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. <sup>9</sup>The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

<sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup>He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. <sup>12</sup>But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, <sup>13</sup>who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.

The Gospel of the Lord

**Praise to You, O Christ**

*Please be seated.*

**HYMN:**

**“Away in a Manger”**

**# 277 ELW**

## SERMON

### PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Created in the image and likeness of God, we pray for the light of life in all people, for new birth among us, and for communities that long for new life.

*A brief silence.*

You, O God, form your church as the body of Christ. Reshape our hearts to know your grace, open our vision to see your truth, and make our mouths ready to proclaim your glory. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

You speak and the creation comes into being. Call us by a new word to live in harmony with the fragile planet that is our common home. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

You announce peace and salvation to all the earth. Inspire our leaders (particularly, *here name persons with local, regional, state, or national governing responsibility*) to find achievable paths toward greater comfort, justice, and peace. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Your years never end. Sustain those whose increasing years make them weary, console the young who have already known struggle, and protect newborns whose years are just beginning. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Your voice resounds among us. Give sufficient breath and abundant resilience to those who lead our praises in these festive days (particularly, *here name choirs, instrumentalists, dancers, other liturgical leaders*). Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

You are changeless from generation to generation. Anoint us with the oil of gladness and number us with your saints, who with angels and archangels know you and your majesty to be boundless love. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Into your outstretched arms, O God, we commend ourselves and all for whom we pray, trusting in Jesus Christ, the light and life of the world.

**Amen.**

### SPECIAL OFFERATORY MUSIC

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear  
Silent Night

By London Feland

*Please Stand*

## **OFFERATORY PRAYER**

God with us:

**You came as a baby to a manger. You slept on straw and greeted shepherds. You come again in bread and wine. Remind us how good you are at blessing ordinary things. And then, through these gifts, help us to bless the lives of others in the strength of your holy name.**

**Amen.**

## **CHRISTMAS CREED**

**ALL: I believe in God the Father, Creator of all things, who sent his Son as my Savior.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, announced by angels, worshipped by the Wise Men, who lived to suffer, die, and rise again, to free me from sin, death, and the power of the devil.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, who has brought me to faith in the Christ and by whose continuous work in my heart I am ever led to lay before the feet of Christ, my worship, my life, my love; to live under him as my king, both now and forevermore. Amen.**

## **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

### **COMMUNION**

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

**On this day, O God, you gave us Christ the Son to save us. As you sent the one foretold, send us now with good news for all people. Let the gladness of this feast have no end as we share with others the joy that fills us; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.**

**Amen.**

### **BLESSING**

May Christ, who by his incarnation has filled us with grace and truth, give you peace this Christmas and always. Almighty God, Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

**Amen.**

## **SENDING**

Glory to God in the highest!

**Peace to God's people on earth!**

Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **CLOSING HYMN**

**“Go Tell it on the Mountain”**

**#290 ELW**

## **SERVING THIS DAY**

Lector: Lynn Hansen

Ushers: Skip & Lynn Hansen

Music: London Feland & Digital Hymnal

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## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**All are welcome to stay and enjoy a Christmas meal together immediately following today's worship service.**

**Only One Worship Service, at 9:00am, on Sundays in January, February & March 2018**

**When you see your loved ones this holiday season, invite the kids ages 4 – 5th grade to Vacation Bible School June 18-22, 2018. Sixth graders and older are welcome as student leaders.**

**Thank You! to all who donated to Operation Christmas. The gifts were beautiful. In 2016! 179 families and 546 children in Aitkin County benefited from the volunteer committees and businesses, service clubs and churches to make this such a success. Well done, Bethesda Lutheran!**

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***BLESSINGS TO EVERYONE ON THIS WONDERFUL  
CHRISTMAS MORNING. GO PROCLAIM THE GOOD NEWS—  
CHRIST THE SAVIOR IS BORN!!***

### **BETHESDA LUTHERAN CHURCH OF MALMO**

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E-mail address: [blcmalmo@frontiernet.net](mailto:blcmalmo@frontiernet.net)

Church Web Site: [blcmalmo.org](http://blcmalmo.org)

Pastor: Rev. James Muske

## **POINSETTIA Donations**

<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>In Memory/Honor of</u></b>
Marilyn Andrews	Family
Carol Bakken	Maynard
Roy & Char Berg	Our Parents
Marvin & Theresa Berry	Rose Scott
Judie Birk	Family
Jeannine Bruesewitz	Darwin Bruesewitz
Chuck & Elsa Carlson	Parents
Lee & Barb Forrester	Parents
Ron & Artie Heins	Loved Ones
Merrily Jones	John Jones
Darrell Kelly	Family & Friends
Mike & Barbara Macioch	Family
Keith & Dorothy Munding	Loved Ones
Pastor James Muske	Parents
Rich & Marge Nelson	Loved Ones
Jenny Schuett	Dennis & Loved Ones
George & Patti Smith	Fathers
Dick & Sue Stebbins	Loved Ones
Sylvia Tapelt	Parents
Randy & Laurina Tofteland	Our Family
Bev Wedig	Al & Jen

**Thank you to those who have made donations for the beautiful  
flowers to decorate our sanctuary!**