

Christmas #1

12-26-2021

J.V. Trautwein, Pastor

Celebrate (Introduction)

“On the first Sunday of Christmas we find the boy Samuel and the boy Jesus, both in the temple, both growing in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and humankind. We too returned to the house of God ‘to sing psalms, hymn, and spiritual songs of God,’ who has gifted us with a savior. As the festival continues, ‘let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.’ It is Christmas, still.”

We come together in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Opening Hymn: [“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”](#)

Psalmody: Psalm 148

“Praise the Lord!

Praise the Lord from the heavens,
praise him in the heights!

² Praise him, all his angels,
praise him, all his host!

³ Praise him, sun and moon,
praise him, all you shining stars!

⁴ Praise him, you highest heavens,
and you waters above the heavens!

⁵ Let them praise the name of the Lord!
For he commanded and they were created.

⁶ And he established them for ever and ever;
he fixed their bounds which cannot be passed.^(a)

⁷ Praise the Lord from the earth,
you sea monsters and all deeps,

⁸ fire and hail, snow and frost,
stormy wind fulfilling his command!

⁹ Mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars!

¹⁰ Beasts and all cattle,
creeping things and flying birds!

¹¹ Kings of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the earth!

¹² Young men and maidens together,
old men and children!

¹³ Let them praise the name of the Lord,
for his name alone is exalted;

his glory is above earth and heaven.
14 He has raised up a horn for his people,
praise for all his saints,
for the people of Israel who are near to him.
Praise the Lord!

Hymn of Praise: [“Good Christian Friends Rejoice”](#)

Prayer of the Day

“Shine into our hearts the light of your wisdom, O God, and open our minds to the knowledge of your word, that in all things we may think and act according to your good will and may live continually in the light of your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen.”

1st Reading: [1 Samuel 2:18-20,26](#)

2nd Reading: [Colossians 3:12-17](#)

The Gospel: Luke 2:41-52

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+2%3A41-52&version=NRSV>

Hymn of the Day: [“Angels, From the Realms of Glory”](#)

(The third week’s Angel Tree results will be sent later today)

The Message: ([Video Link](#))

Today is the second day of Christmas. Despite what many may think, the Christmas season began yesterday and continues for twelve days, the twelve days of Christmas, until Epiphany, the 6th day of January. For those who believe the Christmas season begins on Thanksgiving, they are already packing up their decorations and taking down their trees and beginning to celebrate the coming of the New Year. But in Christianity we continue to celebrate the birth of Christ during these twelve days. The celebration may not have all of the glitz and fanfare of Christmas Day but it certainly is a time which we continue to reflect upon and celebrate the miracle of the incarnation.

We have come through the season of Advent during which we prepared for and anticipated the most game changing event of history, the Nativity. Christmas Eve we relived that night long ago with the shepherds and the angel’s message of “good news of great joy” and their visit to the side of the manger. The peace and joy of the night filled our lives with a renewed sense of being. This renewed sense of being is founded upon the acknowledgement of the incarnation in our lives, that is that God is ever with us. With knowing this presence we then begin to be able to find the joy of this good news.

In our celebration over the coming days, we need to renew our commitment to the good news of Christmas. Paul in his letter to the Colossians stated it in this way, "As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humiliation, meekness, and patience." What a timely message for us anytime in life but it is especially timely during these times within our nation and world. With our fellow human beings so divided by political factions these virtues which Paul has related seem almost impossible to realize but which are the essence of being able to live together, work together, dream together, and celebrate together. There seems to be little in common between the various factions because truth had been deliberately undermined with fiction in order for some to gain power.

The tragedy is that words like compassion, kindness, humiliation, and meekness seem to be only for like-minded people and then they only apply when it suits the person. Then when you add patience to the mix especially when there is such extremism and bitter divisional living during a deadly pandemic the result is that patience is over ruled and deadly consequences are a result. This is not celebrating Christmas as long as life is motivated by ill-conceived mindsets. We need to be so renewed by the good news of Christmas that we become that shining example which can overcome that which desires to bring us down.

Just listen as Paul further explains, "Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive." This is most difficult when faced with deliberate attempts to undermine any goodwill among a divided people and mindset. No matter how difficult it may seem forgiveness is needed in order to set the example that even in the worst situation love prevails. This is exemplified by Paul, "Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony." This is what our lives need to exemplify and to celebrate during Christmas. This is the reason for the incarnation and our celebration throughout not only these few days but throughout our lifetime.. This is the joy of Christmas which will lead others to recognize that we are all brothers and sisters living for each other day in and day out.

The heavenly host departed the shepherds, that night so long ago, with this proclamation, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors." Paul goes further, "And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body." It is this peace which we have found in coming to the Nativity, which we experience with each other, and which gives us that inner peace of knowing the loving presence of God within our lives.

From this experience of the peace of the incarnation experience we are free to witness to the real Christmas message of peace through love. Paul states, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God." In these words we are given the command of wisdom. It is the command of how to witness to the troubled world in which we live. This witness is a witness which is motivated out of the love which we celebrate and renew during this special time of the year.

It is significant that during these days of Christmas we culminate our World Hunger Appeal and the Angel Tree. Our response to those who are in need is only the beginning of our response to those who are in need of the joy of touching our brothers and sisters lives throughout the year. But let us keep in mind to strengthen our celebration of the Nativity our lives are to be motivated out of God's love. Finally, Paul concludes his defining of the life which is lived through the celebration of Christmas. "And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." With this the joy of Christmas lives on within us beyond these few days.

It is through the celebration of the joy of the Angel's message that we end another year looking back upon the last twelve months. To say the least they have been filled with challenging times. There is little doubt that there have been tumultuous times which have threatened and continue to threaten the life of our nation. Violence has, even more so, become a way of life. The pandemic has continued to be a part of our lives with new mutations creating drastic surges in Covid cases and deaths. The good news is that vaccinations have given hope and a return of some normalcy in our lives although we must continue to have patience and determination to follow the procedures in order to overcome this persistent virus.

Although we may look with negativity upon this past year, there has been some good news for which to celebrate and be thankful. Because of the vaccine and the diligent use of masks we have been able to escape the isolation. This means we have been able to be with family, friends, and coworkers. The world around us has slowly opened up so that we could travel, take vacations, attend concerts, and other forms of entertainment. For us at Epiphany, we have been able to gather together again, sharing our lives in worship and fellowship. We have discovered how much we mean to each other. We have felt even more deeply what it means to be the fellowship of believers, the body of Christ. It was extremely rewarding to see this fellowship in action last Sunday night as we gathered to sing carols around the pit fire. What a great experience. Finally, we have had the joy of the Angel Tree again this year. This celebration of giving is a testament to what Christmas is about - the sharing of our love with others in need as God's love is shared with us.

Yes, we do have much to celebrate during this Christmas season even though the past year has not been what many would not consider to be the most perfect of years. Now as we face a New Year we look forward to the challenges and opportunities which will come our way as individuals and as a church. Both you and I will face many decisions which perhaps we may not want to face. But these decisions will present not only new challenges but also new opportunities in your and my future. Rest assured that it is through our love for each other that we will be able to continue our lives in celebrating the good news of the Christmas message and find new life in the presence of God's love

Therefore, may we continue to experience the joy of the true meaning and joy of Christmas throughout the coming New Year. I wish you a most blessed and joyful Christmas and a New Year full of dreams come true.

Anthem: ["Gesu Bambino" Agne G.](#)

Offering*: ([On-Line giving Link](#))

We give thee but thine own, what e'er the gift may be; all that we have is thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.

The Prayer

This morning we come to you Lord, to continue to celebrate your presence among us. We welcome this good news especially during these times when life seems so uncertain not only are we amidst troubling times when our society is in turmoil and truth seems to have lost its way to a mindset which only sees the importance of self. Along with this we face the continuing crisis of a pandemic which refuses to be contained. Far too many today are suffering and facing death as a consequence of its desires. Yet Lord, we celebrate your presence knowing the comfort, peace and love of the birth of your son. You came so that we may have life and through the nativity you have shown to us the way to bring peace and healing to this world.

We pray for all who need your comforting and healing presence especially Bob and Pat Allen, Heidi Brackbill, Parker Brennan, the Cronin family, the Elshafei family, the Fultz family, Dotty Gibson, Kraig Greff, the Johnson Family, Robert Karner, Charles Larsen, Donna Mayhew, Wendy Neumann, Elise Oliver, Peter Olsen, David Otto, Dottie Reitz, Robert Reitz, Linda Rigby, Colin Shea, Jerry Shea, Jack Smith, the Spiegler family, Della, Yongyin Sun, Esther and Buck Trautwein, Wyatt Lee Wolf, Pastor Jack,
We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

The Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord make His face shine upon you;
The Lord lift up His presence upon you and give you peace. Amen

And now my brothers and sisters
Live on knowing God's love,
The joy of living this life of love,
And the peace which only comes through the power of His presence within you.
So live on in Love, Joy, Peace, and Power.

Closing Hymn: ["Go, Tell It on The Mountain"](#)

Announcements

Please note that Masks are required while in the church building.

Add an angel to the Angel Tree by giving a donation to The World Hunger Appeal. Either give on-line https://tithe.ly/give_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/2627291 Or send directly to either address below.

*Offering and World Hunger Contributions to be sent to
Robert Brackbill
10274 Raleigh Tavern Lane
Ellicott City, MD 21042

Epiphany Lutheran Church
9122 Sybert Drive
Columbia Hills
Ellicott City, MD 21043
<https://www.epiphanylutherancolumbia.org>

Please note that you now have the opportunity of online giving with the link found after the offering designation or here: https://tithe.ly/give_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/2627291