



The Nativity of Our Lord: Christmas Eve

December 24, 2023

at Epiphany Lutheran Church

EpiphanyLutheranColumbia.org

Greg Fetzer, Pastor

J.V. Trautwein, Pastor Emeritus

PRELUDE

Please stand, as you are able.

P Many ages from the time when God created the heavens and the earth and then formed humanity in the divine image; long after the great flood, when God made the rainbow shine forth as a sign of the covenant; twenty-one centuries from the time the promise was given to Abraham and Sarah; thirteen centuries after Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt and Miriam danced in freedom; eleven hundred years from the time of Ruth and the judges; one thousand years from the anointing of David as king, in fulfillment of the times and years and months and days discerned by the prophets; in the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad; the seven hundred and fifty-second year from the foundation of the city of Rome; the forty-second year of the reign of Octavian Augustus; while the whole world enjoyed a span of peace, Jesus Christ, eternal God and Son of the eternal Father, desiring to sanctify the world by his most merciful coming, being conceived by the Holy Spirit and nine months of growth in the womb of his mother - now in our own times is the nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, God made flesh.

GATHERING HYMN [ELW#283 "O Come, All Ye Faithful"](#)

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C **And also with you.**

P Let us pray. Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen**

Please be seated.

FIRST LESSON Isaiah 9:2-7

L A reading from Isaiah: ²The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined. ³You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. ⁴For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. ⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

L The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

The Nativity candle is lit.

FIRST CAROL [ELW#267 "Joy to the World" vv. 1-2](#)

SECOND LESSON Micah 5:2-5a

L A reading from Micah: ²But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. ³Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. ⁴And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; ⁵and he shall be the one of peace.

L The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

*The first candle on the Christmas Log is lit.
The animals are presented at the Nativity.*

SECOND CAROL [ELW#279 "O Little Town of Bethlehem" vv. 1-2](#)

THIRD LESSON Luke 2:1-7

L A reading from Luke: ¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

L The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

*The second candle on the Christmas Log is lit.
Jesus, Mary, and Joseph are presented at the Nativity.*

THIRD CAROL [ELW#277 "Away in a Manger"](#)

FOURTH LESSON Luke 2:8-16

L A reading from Luke: ⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ¹⁴"Glory to God in the

highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" ¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

L The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

*The third candle on the Christmas Log is lit.
Jesus, Mary, and Joseph are presented at the Nativity.*

FOURTH CAROL [ELW#289 "Angels We Have Heard on High"](#)

FIFTH LESSON Luke 2:25-35

L A reading from Luke: ²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, ²⁸Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, ²⁹"Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; ³⁰for my eyes have seen your salvation, ³¹which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, ³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel." ³³And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too."

L The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

The fourth candle on the Christmas Log is lit.

FIFTH CAROL [ELW#296 "What Child Is This?" vv. 1-2](#)

SIXTH LESSON Matthew 2:1-11

L A lesson from Matthew: ¹In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ²asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." ³When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: ⁶'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'" ⁷Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage."

⁹When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

L The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

*The fifth candle on the Christmas Log is lit.
The Wise Men are presented at the Nativity.*

SIXTH CAROL [ELW#300 "The First Noel" vv. 1-2](#)

SERMON: [\(Sermon Audio Link\)](#)

Please stand, as you are able.

HYMN OF THE DAY [ELW#271 "I Am So Glad Each Christmas Eve"](#)

- P** Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.
C **We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen

Please be seated.

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

*The Offering is received and is presented at the altar.
Please stand, as you are able.*

OFFERTORY ELW#296 "What Child Is This?" v. 3

- P** May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the determination of the magi, and the peace of the Christ child. Almighty God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.
C **Amen**

We light our hand-held candles.

CLOSING CAROL [ELW#281 "Silent Night"](#)

- P** Go in peace. Proclaim this good news that Christ the Savior is born!
C **Thanks be to God.**



Poinsettia Dedications

In Memory of Loved Ones by Greg and Deb Fultz
In Honor of our Grandson Logan by Greg and Deb Fultz
In Memory of Loved Ones by Bob and Heidi Brackbill
In Memory of Loved Ones by Ron and Ann Lambert
In Loving Memory of My Dear Wife Laraine by Dr. Bob Hardy
In Memory of Loved Ones by John and Rebecca Brennan
In Honor of our Grandchildren by John and Rebecca Brennan
In Memory of Wilfried Bachmann by Monica Fetzer and Family

Upcoming Events

Saturday, January 6 at 10 a.m. - Taking down the greens

Sunday, February 18 at 1 p.m. - Lady Terps Basketball (Tickets \$40, see Bob Hardy)

*Offering 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

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