

Vasa Lutheran Church

Journey to Bethlehem

Children's Christmas Program, 2019

Pastor Maureen Hagen Accompanist – Austin Ferguson

Sunday, December 15, 2019

Third Sunday of Advent

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADVENT OPENING:

COME THOU LONG EXPECTED JESUS

- 1. Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us;
let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou are,
dear desire of ev'ry nation,
joy of ev'ry longing heart.**
- 2. Born thy people to deliver,
born a child and yet a king;
born to reign in us forever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit
raise us to thy glorious throne.**

Blessed are you, God of might and majesty, for you promise to make the desert rejoice and blossom, to watch over the strangers, and to set the prisoners free. As we light these candles, satisfy our hunger with your good gifts, open our eyes to the great things you have done for us, and fill us with patience until the coming of the Lord Jesus.

O ransomed people of the Lord, come,
**let us travel on God's holy way
and enter into Zion with singing. Amen.**

JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM

Welcome! Today we are going on a special journey—the journey to Bethlehem. We are not the first to take this journey. The trip has been made by rich kings and lowly shepherds, and even the angels in heaven. We have been invited to make this journey. At the end of it, we will meet our Savior, Jesus, the newborn King.

Even before that first Christmas, God was preparing the hearts of his people for the coming Messiah. He spoke through prophets to spread the word of the One who was to come.

Bible Reader:

For to us 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.

His 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. (*Isaiah 9:6-7*)



Everyone sing: "O Come All Ye Faithful"

**O come, all ye faithful,
joyful and triumphant!
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him,
born the king of angels:**

**(Refrain) O come, let us adore him,
O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!**

**Sing choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God in the highest! (Refrain)**

**Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
born this happy morning;
Jesus to thee be glory giv'n!
Word of the Father,
Now in flesh appearing. (Refrain)**

Our journey on the road to Bethlehem begins in Galilee.

Mary and Joseph:

The Angel Gabriel told us some good news
We didn't know if we should believe him.
Mary will have a baby named Jesus
And He will save people from their sins.

Everyone Sing: "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

**O come, O come, Emmanuel, And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here, until the son of God appear.**

(Refrain) Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you O Israel.

**O come O wisdom from on high, embracing all things far and nigh.
In strength and beauty come and stay, teach us your will and guide
our way. (Refrain)**

God spoke into the hearts of the prophets to tell his message of the Messiah to the world. Now it was time for God to speak to those who would be taking the journey to Bethlehem. God told Mary she would give birth to God's own son. She praised God for this news.

When Joseph heard the news he didn't understand what was happening. Joseph wasn't sure he could be the father of Mary's son, but God knew that Jesus needed a father on earth to care for him and God chose Joseph for the job.

Joseph's story reminds us that the journey to Jerusalem requires faith. God calls us to put our faith in him, even when it doesn't make sense. When we move forward in faith, we find out that God has already been there getting things ready for us.

Bible Reader:

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration. And all went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph 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. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And 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. *(Luke 2:1-7)*

Everyone sing: "Silent Night"

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, Son of God, Love's pure light

radiant beams from your holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace, Jesus, Lord, at your birth, Jesus, Lord, at your birth.

Sunday Primary kids:

Baby Jesus born today in a manger filled with hay. Angels from the heavens sing. Joyful, joyful news they bring.

Bell song:

Jesus the Savior is born!

Wednesday Primary kids:

Jesus is born! Follow the star. Jesus is born! Come from near and far.

Everyone sing: "While Shepherds Watched their Flocks"

- 1. While shepherds watched their flocks by night all seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down, and glory shone around,
And glory shone around.**
- 2. "Fear not!" said he, for mighty dread had seized their troubled mind.
"Glad tidings of great joy I bring to all of human kind, to all of human kind."**

Bible Reader:

And in that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see--I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: You will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." *(Luke 2:8-12)*

All kids sing: "The Savior, Yes the Messiah"

Angels:

Just a little baby, Jesus was his name, bringing joy and gladness when from heaven he came. We told the message of the Baby's birth. He was the Savior sent to all the earth.

Bible Reader:

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among whom he favors." When 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." *(Luke 2:13-15)*

There shepherds, There shepherds. Clap clap clap, clap. **You've found the way.** Clap clap clap clap. **Worship the baby.** Clap clap clap clap. **Asleep on the hay.** Clap clap clap clap.

Now shepherds Now shepherds. Clap clap clap clap. **Praise and be bold.**
Clap clap clap clap. **Tell all who will listen.** Clap clap clap clap. **What you've**
been told. Clap clap clap clap.

Everyone sing: "Hark the Herald Angels Sing"

**Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king;
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled."
Joyful, all you nations rise; join the triumph of the skies;
With angelic hosts proclaim, Christ is born in Bethlehem?
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"**

Shepherds:

This angel chorus was the very first Christmas carol. No more beautiful song was ever heard before. We had to go and see what the angels told us about. We went to Bethlehem and looked in every stable in the city until we found the baby Jesus. When we found him, he was wrapped up, just like the angels said, and was in a manger. His mother smiled at us when we told her about the angels and looked as though she had a special secret.

Everyone sing: "Go Tell it On the Mountain"

**(Refrain) Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and ev'ry where;
Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!**

**While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,
behold throughout the heavens there shone a holy light. (Refrain)**

**The shepherds feared and trembled when lo' above the earth
rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth. (Refrain)**

**Down in a lonely manger the humble Christ was born;
and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn. (Refrain)**



Bible Reader:

In the time of King Herod after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem asking, "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." When King Herod heard this he was frightened and all Jerusalem with him and calling all of the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written: "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." (*Matthew 2:1-6*)

Bible Reader:

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem saying, "Go and search carefully for the child and when you have found him, bring me word, so that I may also go and worship him." (*Matthew 2:7-8*)

Bible Reader:

When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then they opened their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they returned for their own country by another road. (*Matthew 2:9-12*)

Everyone sing: "What Child is This"

What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?

Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping?

This, this is Christ the king, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;

Haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.

So bring him incense, gold and myrrh, come, peasant, king, to own him.

The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone him.

Raise, raise the song on high, the virgin sings her lullaby;

Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary!

Wise Men:

Gold is a good gift for a king because gold is worth a lot of money.

Frankincense is a proper gift for a king because it is sweet smelling incense to burn in his temple. Myrrh is a great gift for a king who will go through suffering so that peace can be brought to the world.

The wise men journeyed from very far to meet the newborn king. They had to travel many miles on their way to Bethlehem. But they never forgot the reason for their journey.

God put a new star in the sky to guide the wise men. It showed them the way and if they turned the wrong way they wouldn't have found Baby Jesus. If they had gotten tired and turned back, they would have missed the blessing. With their eyes fixed on the star, they were reminded of what waited for them. All of the hot days and the long nights, the sore backs and the uncomfortable beds were worth it in the end because they got to see Jesus.

We need to remember what Christmas is really about. Our heads can be filled with shiny ornaments and decorations, the stockings on the mantle, and the presents under the tree. These things are great but we can't let them take our attention away from the meaning of Christmas, God's son came to Earth, born as a baby in a manger.

It's the true meaning of Christmas. It's as true today as it was for the Magi and a group of shepherds working out in the fields.

Everyone sing: "Joy to the World"

Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king;

Let ev'ry heart prepare him room

And heaven and nature sing, and heaven 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...

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...

While some traveled many miles to get to Bethlehem, some came from right around the corner. As the angels told the shepherds, the message of the Messiah is for everybody: rich, poor, young, old, man woman, and every race and religion. Jesus is God's love in the flesh. And his love has no limits. Jesus is the reason for the season!

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
the parent who rouses us from slumber,
the shepherd who gathers us on the holy mountain,
the deliverer who sets us free.

Amen.

Let us come before the living God in confession.

Silence is kept for reflection.

As we wait and watch for the promised day of salvation,

we open our hearts to you, O God.

Search us and know us.

Reveal all that we keep inside.

To you, O God, we confess our sins,

known and unknown.

Forgive us, renew us,

and lead us in your ways of justice and peace.

**Make us reflections of the radiant love
of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Beloved children of the Most High,
you are gathered before the righteous judge
who has mercy on all.

Splash exuberantly in the waters of baptism,
where sin is washed away in the river of life.

Dwell peacefully in the loving arms
of the one who nurtures all creation.

Go forth boldly in the assurance that your sins are forgiven
in the name of the one who is coming and is already here,

† Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Each petition will end with the words, "Lord, in your mercy,"

Please respond with "**hear our prayer.**"

COLLECTION OF OUR GIFTS FOR GOD, INCLUDING A GENEROSITY MOMENT

OFFERING PRAYER: (in unison) Giver of every good thing,
we set before you the gifts that you have already given to sustain our lives and to share with others. Help us to be good stewards of the earth and all that is in it, and let our lives be a testimony to the abundant feast you prepare for all who hunger. Amen.

HOLY COMMUNION

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

With this bread and cup
we remember your Word dwelling among us,
full of grace and truth.
We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection.
We look with hope for his coming.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Holy God, we long for your Spirit.

Come among us.

Bless this meal.

May your Word take flesh in us.

Awaken your people.

Fill us with your light.

Bring the gift of peace on earth.

Come, Holy Spirit.

All praise and glory are yours,
Holy One of Israel,
Word of God incarnate,
Power of the Most High,
one God, now and forever.
Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

DISTRIBUTION *The congregation will receive communion by intinction. Gluten free wafers and grape juice are available for those who have dietary restrictions. Children not yet of communicant age are welcome to come forward to receive a blessing.*

POST COMMUNION PRAYER: God of abundance,
we give you thanks that in this holy meal you have invited us to feast with you and one another. May the taste of your love remain with us, and may our words and our work in your name invite others into your bountiful grace. Send us from your table to proclaim your presence, even as we await the glorious coming of Christ our Savior. Amen.

SENDING HYMN:

FROM HEAVEN ABOVE

ELW 268

We will sing verses 1, and 12-14.

- 1. From heav'n above to earth I come to bear good news to every home!
Glad tidings of great joy I bring to all the world and gladly sing:**
- 2. "To you this night is born a child of Mary, chosen virgin mild;
this newborn child of lowly birth shall be the joy of all the earth.**
- 12. Ah, dearest Jesus, holy child, prepare a bed, soft undefiled,
a quiet chamber in my heart, that you and I may never part.**
- 13. My heart for very joy now leaps; my voice no longer silence keeps.
I too must sing with joyful tongue the sweetest ancient cradle song.**
- 14. "Glory to God in highest heav'n, who unto us the Son has giv'n."
With angels sing in pious mirth a glad new year to all the earth.**

BLESSING

May God, who gathers us in love,
lead you in pathways of righteousness and justice.
May God, who knows us more deeply than we know ourselves,
lead you in pathways of forgiveness and freedom.
May God, who fills us with good things,
lead you in pathways of equity and abundance.
The blessing of the holy Trinity, † one God,
be upon you and remain with you forever.
Amen.

DISMISSAL

P: Go in peace. Christ is with you.
C: Thanks be to God.

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Prayer Concerns David Broin, Scott and Kerry Sorenson (sons of Sharyn),
Brenda Bradley and her family, Linda Thompson, Deb Ruby (Ed Gruber's
daughter), Eileen Anderson, Paul Deutsch, Jim Josephson

Program Participants

Grade 6: Mason Chaska, Danny Mann

Grade 5: Miranda Mandelkow, Malena Mandelkow, Lucy Sense, Miley Clemens

Grade 4: Max Fredin, Brenner Pagel, Nick Weigman, Connor Hyllengren, Julia Fleming

Grade 3: Bella Otto, Aliyah Chaska, Gabriel Bauch, Marissa Mandelkow, Kennedy McCann

Grade 2: Larissa Fredin

Grade 1: Audrey Hyllengren, Andrew Weigman, Chantz Nelson, Ainslee Hanson, Eli Bauch, Zoey Strohbeen

Kindergarten: Parker Nelson, Eileanor Diercks, Cashton Hovel, Emmitt Featherstone

Pre-School: Fiona Diercks, Caleb Hovel, Joel Hyllengren, Jeremiah Bauch, Ty Lindahl, Samuel Gesme, Sawyer Gesme, Josie Strohbeen, Piper Hanson Beibhinn Winn, Kodee Lindahl