

Vasa Lutheran Church

The Birth of our Savior

Pastor Maureen Hagen Various Musicians

Thursday, December 24, 2020

Christmas Eve

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CANDLE LIGHTING LITURGY

L: Tonight old dreams die and new dreams come to life.
The promise is fulfilled.

P: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace.

L: Hope gives way to joy and prayer to proclamation.

P: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace.

L: The candles tell the story. Dawn invades midnight.
The Light of the world has come.

P: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace.

L: This light is a light for all, warming us from within, radiating love,
lighting our lives with the presence of God in human flesh,
within us and among us now and always.

P: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace. Goodwill to all.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✚ one God,
who was in the beginning,
who makes a dwelling among us,
who covers us with justice and mercy.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God of goodness and lovingkindness,
**we confess that we have sinned against you
and our neighbors.**

**We have turned away from your invitation to new life.
We have turned away from the lowly and downtrodden.**

**In your abundant mercy, forgive us our sins,
those we know and those known only to you,
for the sake of the one who came to live among us,
Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.**

Hear the good news of peace and salvation!
God forgives us all our sins,
not through our own work,
but through ✝ Jesus Christ, made known to all people.
With all who come to the manger,
rejoice in this amazing gift of grace.
Amen.

OPENING HYMN HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING ELW 270

PRAYER OF THE DAY: *(In unison)*

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. Amen**

FIRST READING LUKE 2:1-5

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. 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.

HYMN O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM ELW 279

SECOND READING: LUKE 2:6-7

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.

HYMN

AWAY IN A MANGER

ELW 277

THIRD READING: LUKE 2:8-14 In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock 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." 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 those whom he favors!"

HYMN:

ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH

ELW 289

FOURTH READING: LUKE 2:15-16 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." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

HYMN:

WHAT CHILD IS THIS

ELW 296

FIFTH READING LUKE 2: 17-20 When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

MESSAGE FOR THE YOUNG AND THE YOUNG AT HEART

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY:

LOVE HAS COME

ELW 292

THE APOSTLES' CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

THE PRAYERS OF THE CONGREGATION

Each petition will end with: Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

CONSECRATION OF COMMUNION ELEMENTS: After the words of institution you will be invited to partake in the body and blood of Christ. We believe that God is present with us in our homes as we share in this sacred meal.

Holy God, you alone are holy, you alone are God.
The universe declares your praise:
beyond the stars; beneath the sea;
within each cell; with every breath.
We praise you, O God.

Generations bless your faithfulness:

through the water; by night and day;
across the wilderness; out of exile; into the future.

We bless you, O God.

We give you thanks for your dear Son:
at the heart of human life; near to those who suffer;
beside the sinner; among the poor; with us now.

We thank you, O God.

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.

Remembering his love for us on the way, at the table, and to the end,
we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

We pray for the gift of your Spirit:

in our gathering; within this meal;
among your people; throughout the world.

Blessing, praise, and thanks to you, holy God, through Christ Jesus,
by your Spirit, in your church, without end. **Amen.**

THE 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.**

BLESSING AND PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P: The body and blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ be with you now and forever. Amen.

PRAYER We give you thanks, **gracious God, that you have once again fed us from your very self with the body and blood of Christ. Through this mystery, send us forth to proclaim your promise to a world in need, through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.**

THE GOSPEL OF THE INCARNATION: John 1:1-14

You are invited to light a candle in your home during the reading of this gospel lesson.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴ in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸ He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

⁹ The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹² But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood or of the will of the

flesh or of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴ 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.

Silent Night, Holy Night!
Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht!



Stil - le Nacht, hei - li - ge Nacht! Al - les schläft,
 1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm,
 2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake
 3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God,



ein - sam wacht nur das trau - te, hoch - hei - li - ge Paar.
 all is bright round yon vir - gin moth - er and child.
 at the sight; glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far,
 love's pure light ra - diant beams from your ho - ly face,



Hold - er Kna - be im lok - ki - gen Haar, schlaf in himm - li - scher
 Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and mild, sleep in heav - en - ly
 heav'n - ly hosts . . . sing, al - le - lu - ia! Christ, the Sav - ior, is
 with the dawn of re - deem - ing grace, Je - sus, Lord, at your



Ruh, schlaf in himm - li - scher Ruh.
 peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
 born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!
 birth, Je - sus, Lord, at your birth.

Text: Joseph Mohr, 1792-1849; tr. John F. Young, 1820-1885
 Music: STILLE NACHT, Franz Gruber, 1787-1863

CHRISTMAS DIALOGUE

P: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

**C: The light shines in the darkness,
 and the darkness has not overcome it.**

P: Those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness,
 on them light has shined.

**C: We have beheld Christ's glory,
glory as of the only Son from the Father.**

P: To us a child is born, to us a Son is given.

**C: In the Word was life,
and the life was the light of all people.**

SENDING HYMN:

JOY TO THE WORLD

ELW 267

BLESSING

Almighty God,
who sent the Holy Spirit to Mary,
proclaimed joy through the angels,
sent the shepherds with good news,
and led the magi by a star,
bless you this day ✝ through the Word made flesh.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus.

Thanks be to God.





Southeastern Minnesota Synod
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



December 21, 2020

"... she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger..." (Luke 2:7)

To the People of God in the Southeastern Minnesota Synod,

I often see, on social media, pictures and pontifications with the same basic message, *you are enough*. Whether it is convincing an exhausted parent, a self-conscious teen, an essential worker, an adult who feels all alone – no matter the audience, the message is the same, *you are enough*.

I'll admit these messages sometimes serve as a catalyst for little wells of tears to pool in my eyes. It feels so good to be seen. There is some piece of the message that touches on our human longing to know we matter and that all of our toil and work is not in vain.

But these messages, especially as of late, often ring hollow. There are so many things we do, so much time and energy and investment we pour into people, relationships, institutions, often without any guarantee of how things will turn out. We could give of ourselves completely, and it might never be enough. What then?

It can be easy to fall into a perpetual cycle of trying and investing and trying again until we finally collapse, exhausted. All of the social media messages in the world cannot guarantee that what we do will ever be enough.

You know what? The truth is I am not enough, and neither are you. On our own, we are not enough.

But there is someone who is.

His name is Jesus.

It has long been a mystery of the faith to me how a newborn wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger could be enough to meet the aching of the whole world. How could a child meet all of our needs? How could this One be enough to make us whole?

It is because (as you know) this child is the Son of God. This child is Emmanuel, God with us.

God with us.

And it is enough.

Dear church, I don't know how you are feeling as we come to the close of this calendar year. I know some of you are dragging. I know plenty of you are weary. Some of you are frustrated, and some of you are bone tired.

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And I know this: I know the baby in the manger is enough to hold all of this and more. I know Jesus is enough to meet us in this moment and bring us a life of abundance. I know on Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus the Christ, the one who has come to save this weary world. He is the fulfillment of all our hopes and longings, and he is the one who walks with us in all things.

We may never be enough. That's okay. We don't have to be - because Jesus is.

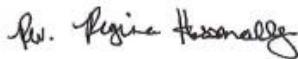
Jesus is enough for you. Jesus is enough for me. Jesus is enough for this whole, weary and wonderful world.

Jesus is enough.

Dear church, I pray this Christmas season you would know the fullness of the life of Jesus in you. I pray your weariness would be exchanged for abundance. I pray your tiredness would be exchanged for rest. I pray your tireless efforts to be enough would be exchanged for a quiet confidence in the fullness of Jesus the Christ.

This Christmas, may Christ appear in you and me, and may our hearts know the sweet joy of Jesus Christ. He is more than enough.

In Christ,



Bishop Regina Hassanally
Southeastern Minnesota Synod, ELCA