

Vasa Lutheran Church

Miracle in the Manger

Pastor Maureen Hagen Accompanist – Anne Anderson

Sunday, December 18, 2022

ANNOUNCING THE DAY: The Fourth Sunday of Advent

Lighting of the Advent Candles

Praise to you, O God, who lives with us, sharing our flesh and bones.
As Mary waited and Joseph dreamed, so we wait and dream for you.
Bless us and let your face shine upon us, more radiant than these candles,
and more dear than all else we seek.

Restore us when we fail to refuse the evil and choose the good,
and banish all our fears.

We pray in the name of Emmanuel, your promised child and our Savior.

Amen.

“Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful” (*Sung by congregation and children.*)

1. Oh, come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!
Oh, come ye, oh, come ye to Bethlehem:
Come and behold him, born the King of angels:
Refrain:
Oh, come, let us adore him, oh, come let us adore him,
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!
2. Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God in the highest! *Refrain*
3. All Hail! Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,
O Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n!
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing; *Refrain*

Lyrics by John Francis Wade

OPENING BIBLE READING AND PRAYER

Leader: *I remember your wonderful deeds of long ago.
They are constantly in my thoughts.
I cannot stop thinking about your mighty works.*

*O God, your ways are holy.
Is there any god as mighty as you?
You are the God of great wonders!*

Psalm 77:11–14

Leader: Thank you, heavenly Father, for gathering us today. We've come to celebrate the miracle of your grace and love—a love so great that you sent your Son, Jesus, to be our Savior! Lead us to a sense of wonder and awe as we recall the miracles of the first Christmas, and help us want to share the Good News of Christ's birth with everyone.

All: **Amen.**

WELCOME TO OUR CHRISTMAS PLAY

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE PRESENTED BY THE CHILDREN

All Children: A miracle is something
Only God can do.
The Christmas miracles will show
God's power and love for you!

Speaker 1: The very first Christmas miracle took place long ago. It happened in the Garden of Eden when God promised a Savior to Adam and Eve. They disobeyed, but he kept on loving them.

Speaker 2: So the first miracle was that God still loved Adam and Eve, even though they sinned?

Speaker 3: Yes! God's grace was (and is) a miracle—something only God can do. He promised to send a Savior. We all need the Savior because we all sin. We live like God doesn't matter. We live like we matter most.

Speaker 4: *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23*

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Speaker 5: After many years, at just the right time, God chose Mary, a young Hebrew girl, to be the Savior's mother. She planned to marry a carpenter named Joseph.

Speaker 6: One day, God sent the angel Gabriel to Mary's house. The angel said, "Mary, God has chosen you to be the mother of his Son. He will be great and his rule will never end!"

Speaker 7: Mary said, "How can this happen?" The angel told her, "God will make it possible. God can do anything."

Speaker 8: The miracle was that Mary would have a baby.

Speaker 9: The miracle was also that Mary's baby would be named Jesus!

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" (*Sung by congregation*)

1. 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 thee, O Israel.

2. Oh, come, our Lord and Savior, come and stay,
Reside within our hearts this Christmas Day.
Come as the greatest miracle to be
Our Savior-King! We worship thee! *Refrain*

Translated by John Mason Neale

All Children: A miracle is something
Only God can do.
The Christmas miracles will show
God's power and love for you!

Speaker 10: God's next Christmas miracle happened to Joseph.

Speaker 11: Joseph was worried. He was confused and troubled!

Speaker 12: Joseph didn't know what to do. Mary was going to have a baby, and he wasn't the father! Did she love someone else? Joseph was worried!

Speaker 13: God sent an angel to calm Joseph's fears.

Speaker 14: The angel said to Joseph, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife. Her baby is from the Holy Spirit. The baby is God's Son. Name him Jesus because he will save his people from their sins."

Speaker 15: The miracle wasn't that Joseph was worried.

Speaker 16: The miracle was that God sent an angel to calm Joseph's fears.

All Children: A miracle is something
Only God can do.
The Christmas miracles will show
God's power and love for you!

Speaker 17: At about this time, the Roman emperor, Caesar Augustus, decided he wanted to count everyone in his empire. He ordered all the people in his realm to return to the town of their birth to be counted.

Speaker 18: Joseph and Mary traveled to the town of Bethlehem, the town of Joseph's ancestors, the city of King David.

Speaker 19: This is the miracle of prophecies fulfilled! Micah 5:2 says, "But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village among all the people of Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel, whose origins are in the distant past, will come from you on my behalf."

"O Little Town of Bethlehem" (*Sung by congregation*)

1. O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.
2. For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the king and peace to all the earth!
3. How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.

Lyrics by Phillips Brooks

All Children: A miracle is something
Only God can do.
The Christmas miracles will show
God's power and love for you!

Speaker 19: The Miracle in the manger was born on that first Christmas.
The Miracle in the manger was Jesus—our Savior!

Younger Children: Little baby Jesus,
Sleeping in the hay,
You are the greatest miracle,
Born on Christmas day!

"Away in a Manger" (*Sung by the children*)

All Children: A miracle is something
Only God can do.
The Christmas miracles will show
God's power and love for you!

Speaker 20: That same night, shepherds were watching their sheep in the hills around Bethlehem. Suddenly a bright light shone all around them and many, many angels appeared in the sky.

Speaker 21: The shepherds were so very afraid! But an angel said, "Don't be afraid. I have Good News for you and all people. Tonight the Savior has been born in Bethlehem. Go and find him. He will be wrapped in strips of soft cloth and lying in a manger."

Speaker 22: Suddenly the sky was filled with many angels, all of them praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest and peace to his people on earth."

Speaker 23: The miracle wasn't that the shepherds were filled with fear.

Speaker 24: The miracle was that the shepherds believed the angel's message. They believed that Jesus is the promised Savior—the Savior sent by God.

Speaker 25: The shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this thing that the Lord has told us about."

Speaker 26: After they saw the baby Jesus, the shepherds spread the word concerning the baby. Everyone who heard it was amazed at what the shepherds said.

All Children: A miracle is something
Only God can do.
The Christmas miracles will show
God's power and love for you!

Speaker 26: Far away in an eastern land, Wise Men studied the nighttime skies. They saw a new star: the Christmas star! God had placed it in the sky. The Wise Men gathered precious gifts, gifts fit for a king. Then they followed the star to Bethlehem.

Speaker 27: After many long days of travel, the Wise Men found their newborn King. They bowed in worship. Then they present gifts to him—gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Speaker 28: The miracle wasn't that the Wise Men followed the star.

Speaker 29: The miracle was that the star led the Wise Men to Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus.

All Children: The greatest Christmas miracle
Is something God has done.
He sent our Savior, Jesus,
And our salvation's won!

Speaker 30: In Titus 3:4–5 we read, "When God our Savior revealed his kindness and love, he saved us." (*Pause, until all boxes have been turned to reveal the correct letters:*) Jesus—the Miracle in the manger!

Closing Prayer

Leader: Thank you, heavenly Father, for the miraculous gift of your Son, our Savior. We praise you and rejoice in the miracles of forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life, made possible in Jesus. Fill our hearts with your love and power. Help us believe and share your Christmas miracles, especially the miracle of forgiveness, with everyone we meet. We pray in Jesus' name.

All: **Amen.**

"Joy to the World" *(The children will sing verse one and the congregation is invited to join in on verses two and three.)*

1. 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,
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.
2. 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,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
3. 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,
And wonders, wonders of his love!

Lyrics by Isaac Watts

HOLY COMMUNION

You are indeed holy, almighty and merciful God.
You are most holy, and great is the majesty of your glory.

You so loved the world that you gave your only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him may not perish
but have eternal life.

We give you thanks for his coming into the world
to fulfill for us your holy will
and to accomplish all things for our salvation.

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.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Remembering, therefore, his salutary command,
his life-giving passion and death, his glorious resurrection and ascension,
and the promise of his coming again,
we give thanks to you, O Lord God Almighty,
not as we ought but as we are able;
we ask you mercifully to accept our praise and thanksgiving
and with your Word and Holy Spirit to bless us, your servants,
and these your own gifts of bread and wine,
so that we and all who share in the body and blood of Christ
may be filled with heavenly blessing and grace,
and, receiving the forgiveness of sin,
may be formed to live as your holy people
and be given our inheritance with all your saints.

To you, O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be all honor and glory in your holy church, now and forever.

Amen, amen, 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 *We will receive communion by intinction. There will be two stations and gluten free wafers and grape juice are available for those who have dietary restrictions. Children are welcome to join you and will receive a blessing.*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION **We give you thanks, most gracious God, that you have fed us with the bread of heaven and given us a foretaste of Paradise. Enliven us to be your body in the world and to serve those who are in need; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING

The God of peace,
who creates all things and calls them good,
who makes us alive in Jesus,
and who breathes on us the Spirit of hope,
✠ bless you now and forever.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

L: Go in peace, be a blessing to the world.

C: Thanks be to God.

Worship Assistants CHRISTMAS EVE
2:00PM

Usher: **Marv Fredrickson**
Reader: **Mike Bauch**
Hospitality: **Mo & John Hauck**
Communion Asst: **Mo Hauck**
5:00PM
Usher: **Chuck Peterson**
Reader:
Hospitality: **Kent Volz**
Communion Asst: **BJ Norman**

Music for Sunday, December 11, 2022

***Light One Candle to Watch for
Messiah***

Text © 1984 Fortress Press, admin. Augsburg
Fortress

Text: Jane Parker Huber, b. 1926
Music: Aaron Williams, 1731-1776

God Is Here!

Text © 1979 and music © 1942, Ren. 1970
Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL
60188. All rights reserved. Used by
permission.

Come Thou Long Expected Jesus

Arr. © 2006 Augsburg Fortress. All rights
reserved.

Savior of the Nations Come

Text © 2006 Augsburg Fortress
Text: attr. Ambrose of Milan, 340-397; Martin
Luther, 1483-1546; tr. hymnal version
Music: J. Walter, Geistliche Gesangbüchlein,
1524

Let Living Streams of Justice

Text © 1989 William Whitla, b. 1934
Music: Gustav Holst, 1874-1934

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Worship Assistants CHRISTMAS DAY

Usher: **Bruce Tilderquist**
Reader: **Kathy Tilderquist**
Hospitality: **Deb Donath**

Parish Pulse:

December 11, 2022

Participating in Worship: 50
+ 11 concurrent live-
streams

Total Offerings: \$ 3,010.60



Due to unexpected cost increases for cedar shakes and the cedar posts for the gazebo, the church is in need of more funding for that project. The bottom line is that we have a \$20,000 bill for labor and materials thus far, and just \$4,000 in funds specified to cover that cost. As you consider your end-of-the-year giving, please contemplate a donation to Vasa's gazebo rebuilding project.