



**NORTHWESTERN
PUBLISHING HOUSE**



**NORTHWESTERN
PUBLISHING HOUSE**



Bethlehem Lutheran Church

4465 South Blosser Road
Santa Maria, CA 93455
Office: 805-937-0339
www.starlutheran.org
Pastor Michael Foley

Worship Service

Sunday, December 24, 2023 7:00 p.m.

CHRISTMAS EVE

Theme of the day: “But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.” Just as Mary, on the very first Christmas, we too meditate on the mystery of Christmas. Christ was born in order to live, die and rise from the grave for us! The Word became flesh and through faith we see his glory! Glory to God in the highest!

WELCOME

A warm welcome to our friends and visitors! Star of Bethlehem Lutheran Church is eager to share with you the blessings of its Christ-centered ministry. If you are a new or long-time resident of the Central Coast looking for a church home, we invite you to meet with us at the close of this worship service or at your convenience. All are welcome to stay for refreshments in the fellowship hall.

Families are encouraged to worship together. If you need to step out with your children, the service can be seen and heard in the fellowship hall or narthex area. Feel free to enter and return at any time.

OUR MISSION

Our congregation exists for the purpose of “HOLDING OUT THE WORD OF LIFE.” This is accomplished by faithfully preserving and proclaiming all of God’s inerrant word, and administering the Sacraments as they were instituted by Christ.

Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!



- 2 Corinthians 9:15

Minister: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Congregation: Amen.

M: Arise, shine, for your light has come!

C: **And the glory of the Lord is dawning upon you.**

M: Look, darkness covers the earth, and deep darkness covers the peoples,

C: **but the LORD will dawn upon you, and his glory will be seen over you.**

M: Nations will walk to your light,

C: **and kings to the brightness of your dawn.**

M: For to us a child is born. To us a son is given.

C: **The authority to rule will rest on his shoulders.**

M: He will be named: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

C: **Do not be afraid. For behold, I bring you good news of great joy, which will be for all people.**

M: Today in the town of David, a Savior was born for you.
He is Christ the Lord.

C: **Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward mankind.**

♪ **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:
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!** (CW 354:1)

M: Beloved people of God, at Christmas it is our duty and our joy to listen again to the message of the angels and go in mind and heart to Bethlehem and see what has happened that the Lord has told us about this child, Jesus Christ who is lying in a manger. Today we read and learn anew in the Holy Scriptures the story of God's enduring love for his people. We see his promises made and his promises kept from the time immediately after the fall into sin until the act of redemption on the cross of Calvary. We rejoice that God's grace has appeared through this holy child born in Bethlehem—our Savior. But first, we pray for all the people of the world that they would rejoice with us in the knowledge of the good news of Jesus Christ, and that they would join with us in our songs of praise and worship. We pray for all the people of our community and the members of our congregation. And because it pleases God our Savior, we remember in his name the poor and the defenseless, those who lack adequate food, those who are oppressed and feel the sadness of this world, those who feel alone and unloved. We especially remember those who do not know their Lord Jesus, those who do not love him, those who do not welcome him this Christmas because of their lack of faith. We lay these and all like requests in the hands of our gracious God as we pray together the prayer that Jesus taught us to pray:

C: 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.

♪ Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest:
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord! (CW 354:3)

FIRST LESSON - Genesis 3:8-15

⁸They heard the voice of the LORD God, who was walking around in the garden during the cooler part of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹The LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"

¹⁰The man said, “I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid myself.”

¹¹God said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?”

¹²The man said, “The woman you gave to be with me—she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

¹³The LORD God said to the woman, “What have you done?”

The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

¹⁴The LORD God said to the serpent: Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all the livestock, and more than every wild animal. You shall crawl on your belly, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. ¹⁵I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He will crush your head, and you will crush his heel.

♪ Song: “Savior of the Nations, Come” *(CW 301:1,5)*

Savior of the nations, come;
virgin’s Son, make here your home.
Marvel now, O heav’n and earth,
that the Lord chose such a birth.

Praise to God the Father sing,
praise to God the Son, our King,
praise to God the Spirit be ever and eternally.

SECOND LESSON - John 3:16-21

¹⁶“For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸The one who believes in him is not condemned, but the one who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. ¹⁹This is the basis for the judgment: The light has come into the world, yet people loved the darkness rather than the light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰In fact, everyone who practices wicked things hates the light and does not come toward the light, or else his deeds would be exposed. ²¹But the one who does what is true comes toward the light, in order that his deeds may be seen as having been done in connection with God.”

♪ Song: “Of the Father’s Love Begotten” (CW 358:1,4)

**Of the Father’s love begotten ere the worlds began to be,
he is Alpha and Omega, he the source, the ending he,
of the things that are, that have been,
and that future years shall see evermore and evermore.**

**Let the heights of heav’n adore him,
angel hosts his praises sing,
pow’rs, dominions bow before him
and extol our God and King.
Let no tongue on earth be silent,
ev’ry voice in concert ring evermore and evermore.**

THIRD LESSON - Isaiah 9:2,6-7

**²The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.
For those living in the land of the shadow of death, the light has
dawned.**

**⁶For to us a child is born.
To us a son is given.
The authority to rule will rest on his shoulders.
He will be named:
Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God,
Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace.**

**⁷There will be no limit to his authority
and no end to the peace he brings.
He will rule on David’s throne and over his kingdom,
to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteous-
ness
from now on, into eternity.
The zeal of the LORD of Armies will accomplish this.**

♪ Song: “The People Who in Darkness Walked” (CW 381:2,3,5)

**To us a child of hope is born,
to us a son is giv’n,
and on his shoulders ever rests
all pow’r in earth and heav’n, all pow’r in earth and heav’n.**

**His name shall be the Prince of Peace,
the Everlasting Lord,
the Wonderful, the Counselor,
the God by all adored, the God by all adored.**

**Lord Jesus, reign in us, we pray,
and make us yours alone,
for you are with the Father and
the Spirit ever one, the Spirit ever one.**

FOURTH LESSON - Jeremiah 23:5,6

**⁵Listen, the days are coming, declares the LORD,
when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch,
who will reign wisely as king
and establish justice and righteousness on earth.**

**⁶In his days Judah will be saved
and Israel will dwell securely.**

This is his name by which he will be called:

The LORD Our Righteousness.

♪ Song: “Behold, a Branch Is Growing” (CW 360:1,4)

**Behold, a branch is growing of loveliest form and grace!
As prophets sang, foreknowing, it springs from Jesse’s race
and now begins to flow’r in midst of coldest winter,
at deepest midnight hour.**

**O Savior, child of Mary, who felt our human woes,
O Savior, King of glory, who conquered all our foes,
bring us at last, we pray, to the bright courts of heaven
and to the endless day.**

FIFTH LESSON - Luke 1:26-37

²⁶In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin pledged in marriage to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women.”

²⁹But she was greatly troubled by the statement and was wondering what kind of greeting this could be. ³⁰The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, because you have found favor with God. ³¹Listen, you will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will never end.”

³⁴Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”

³⁵The angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. ³⁶Listen, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age even though she was called barren, and this is her sixth month. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible for God.”

♪ Song: “Once in Royal David’s City” (*CW 343:1-3*)

Once in royal David’s city stood a lowly cattle shed,
where a mother laid her baby in a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven
who is God and Lord of all,
and his shelter was a stable, and his cradle was a stall;
with the poor and mean and lowly
lived on earth our Savior holy.

And our eyes at last shall see him
through his own redeeming love,
for that child, so dear and gentle, is our Lord in heav’n above,
and he leads his children on to the place where he is gone.

SIXTH LESSON - Matthew 1:18-25

¹⁸This is how the birth of Jesus Christ took place. His mother, Mary, was pledged in marriage to Joseph. Before they came together, she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Joseph, her husband, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her. So he decided to divorce her privately. ²⁰But as he was considering these things, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to him

in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

²²All this happened to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ²³“Look, the virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son. And they will name him Immanuel,” which means, “God with us.”

²⁴When Joseph woke up from his sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him. He took Mary home as his wife, ²⁵but he was not intimate with her until she gave birth to her firstborn son. And he named him Jesus.

♪ Song: “What Child Is This” (CW 344:1,2)

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!

Why lies he in such mean estate where oxen now are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce him through,
the cross be borne for me, for you;
hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary!

SEVENTH LESSON - Luke 2:8-20

⁸There were in the same country shepherds staying out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock at night. ⁹An angel of the Lord appeared to 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 behold, I bring you good news of great joy, which will be for all people: ¹¹Today in the town of David, a Savior was born for you. He is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this will be a sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” ¹³Suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude from the heavenly army, praising God and saying, ¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward mankind.”

¹⁵When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Now let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.”

¹⁶So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they had seen him, they told others the message they had been told about this child. ¹⁸And all who heard it were amazed by what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

♪ Song: “Angels We Have Heard on High” (CW 346)

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o’er the plains,
and the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo; gloria in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
which inspire your heav’nly song?
Gloria in excelsis Deo; gloria in excelsis Deo.

Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria in excelsis Deo; gloria in excelsis Deo.

EIGHTH LESSON - Hebrews 1:1-12

In the past, God spoke to our forefathers by the prophets at many times and in many ways. ²In these last days, he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. ³The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact imprint of the divine nature. He sustains all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he took his seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

⁴The Son became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. ⁵For to which of the angels did God ever say:

You are my Son. Today I have begotten you?

And again:

I will be his Father, and he will be my Son.

⁶And again, when he brought his firstborn into the world, he said:

Let all God's angels worship him.

⁷About the angels he says:

He makes his messengers winds and his ministers flaming fire.

⁸But about the Son he says:

**God, your throne is forever and ever,
and the scepter of righteousness is the scepter of your kingdom.**

⁹You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness.

**Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of joy
beyond your companions.**

¹⁰And he says:

**In the beginning, Lord, you laid the foundation of the earth,
and the heavens are the works of your hands.**

¹¹They will perish, but you remain.

They will all become old like a garment.

**¹²You will roll them up like a robe,
and they will be changed like a garment.**

**But you are the same,
and your years will never end.**

♪ Song: "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" (CW 350)

**Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King;
peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies;
with th' angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"**

**Christ, by highest heav'n adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come, offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, hail th' incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with man to dwell, Jesus, our Immanuel!
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"**

**Hail, the heav'nly Prince of Peace!
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by, born that man no more may die,
born to raise the sons of earth,
born to give them second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"**

NINTH LESSON - Matthew 28:16-20

¹⁶The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷When they saw him, they worshipped him, but some hesitated because they were uncertain. ¹⁸Jesus approached and spoke to them saying, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore go and gather disciples from all nations by baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and by teaching them to keep all the instructions I have given you. And surely I am with you always until the end of the age.”

♪ Song: “Go, Tell It on the Mountain” (CW #361)

Refrain *Go, tell it on the mountain,
 over the hills and everywhere;
 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 lowly manger
the humble Christ was born
and God sent us salvation
that blessed Christmas morn. *Refrain*

MESSAGE: John 1:14

The Word became flesh and dwelled among us. We have seen his glory, the glory he has as the only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

THE SECOND ARTICLE

I believe in Jesus Christ, his 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 into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

What does this mean?

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord. He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death. All this he did that I should be his own, and live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness, just as he has risen from death and lives and rules eternally. This is most certainly true.

Offering

A PRAYER AT CHRISTMAS

M: On this holy day, dear Father, we rejoice to hear the good news of great joy that a Savior has been born for us. For fulfilling your prophecies and in the fullness of time sending your Son to be our Savior, we give you our heartfelt thanks and praise.

C: Unto us a child is born! Unto us a Son is given!

M: What a great mystery of our faith this is: that God has become fully human for our salvation! Even though he is the all-powerful Lord of all, he is wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger.

C: Help us always believe that this precious child was born as our substitute to be our Savior.

M: In the midst of our joy, we grieve for the many people in our world who do not know that Jesus has come to bring them forgiveness and healing.

As the shepherds spread abroad the good news of the birth of the Savior born for all the world, may we also make use of the unique opportunities this holiday presents to tell others of what we have seen and heard concerning the child.

C: Grant that the true peace between God and fallen mankind may comfort all people.

M: As the angels sang out their praise, move us also to sing out our praise to you, today and every day, as the joy of our Savior's birth remains in our hearts.

C: Glory to God in the highest! Amen.

(Tune of "Away in a Manger" CW #341)

♪ **Our Father in heaven, all praise to Your name!
Your kingdom among us, your will done the same
by mortals and angels, come, Lord, reign alone;
O, hear us and bless us from heaven's high throne.**

**The bread that we yearn for, provide us each day;
as we forgive others, our sins take away;
in time of temptation, to lead us, be near;
from evil deliver your children most dear.**

**For Yours is the kingdom, o'er all things You reign.
And Yours is the power; all things You maintain.
To You be the glory, resounding again
from all of creation, forever! Amen.**

THE LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

(The pastor will light his candle from the Christ candle. As you pass the light on, never tip a lighted candle. Always tip the unlighted candle toward the one that is burning.)

♪ **Song: Silent Night (CW 337)**

**Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht! Alles schläft, einsam wacht
nur das traute, hochheilige Paar.
Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar,
schlaf in himmlischer Ruh, schlaf in himmlischer Ruh.**

**Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar,
heav'nly hosts sing, Alleluia!
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born.**

**Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light
radiant beams from thy holy face
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.**

M: The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor, and give you peace.

C: Amen.

Extinguish your candles.

♪ Song: Joy to the World (CW 353:1,4)

**Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
let ev'ry heart prepare him room
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and heav'n and nature sing.**

**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.**





www.starlutheran.org