

St. Johns Lutheran Church

He himself bore our sins in his body
on the tree,



that we might die to sin
and live to righteousness.

St. Johns Lutheran Church

St. Louis, Missouri

Christmas Eve

December 24th, 2022

A Tale of Trees from Death to Life

The Cross (Tree of Salvation)

AS WE GATHER

The original title of the Christmas carol “In dulci jubilo” (*LSB* 386, “Now Sing We, Now Rejoice”) was interpreted by the famous French organist and composer Marcel Dupre as “In Quiet Joy.” Another familiar hymn tells of the birth of the Savior in the words “How silently the wondrous gift is given!” (*LSB* 361:3). Though there were moments of rage and loud opposition through His earthly ministry, many of our Lord’s activities happened in the quiet and stillness of His presence. Indeed, even as He accomplished His goal, He entered Jerusalem in quiet humility, suffered obediently, closed His eyes and breathed His last in death, and finally was laid in the stone-cold silence of a tomb. There are times for loud praise and rejoicing, but this night let us gather in quiet joy contemplating the mystery that, in this little babe in the little town of Bethlehem of Judea, fulfilled God’s ancient promise of redemption and peace for all who would be drawn in the silence of the Spirit of God through His Word and blessed Sacraments.

RINGING OF THE BELLS

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

WELCOME GUESTS

We’re glad you are here! Make it a point to introduce yourself to the pastor. Please take time to fill out an attendance card and drop it in the basket during the offering

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH (3 BLUE, 1 PINK)

Jesus Christ is the light of the world,
the light no darkness can overcome.

By the Holy Spirit we cry out with the whole Church,
“Prepare the way of the Lord.”

All who wait for Jesus to return pray,
Come, Lord Jesus, come.

PREPARATION

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.

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!

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.

O holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in,
Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell;

**O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Immanuel!**

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

ADVENT LITANY

O God, our Father, You made a perfect and beautiful world. But when Adam and Eve disobeyed you by eating the fruit of the forbidden tree, sin and its curse corrupted the earth. Like them, we turn away from doing your will and so incur the curse of death. Turn us back to you to repent of our disobedience.

Lord, have mercy, and come to us.

Heavenly Father, in your mercy and love you promised us a savior from sin's curse. Thank you for establishing the family of Abraham, of Jesse and David, of Joseph and Mary to bring forth that savior, and thank you for grafting us into your family tree.

Lord, have mercy, and come to us.

Almighty Lord, you were welcomed with palm branches and Hosannas when you entered Jerusalem. Fill us with your Holy Spirit so that we not only praise you with our lips, but also honor you with our lives.

Lord, have mercy, and come to us.

Dear Jesus, You are the light of the world that no darkness can put out. As we light candles of prophecy and proclamation this season, let the light of your love shine on us. Make us your lights that we may shine the good news of your forgiveness on all we meet.

Lord, have mercy, and come to us.

Lord Jesus, as we remember your birth in Bethlehem, remind us that you came because of our sin. In your great love for us, you endured humility and shame, dreadful suffering, and death on the tree of the cross. In dying, you paid for our forgiveness, and in rising, you opened the kingdom of heaven to us. Help us to put our trust in your saving grace.

Lord, have mercy, and come to us.

Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you created us, redeemed us, and made us Your own people. Keep us faithful to You all the days of our lives, that we may eat the fruit of the tree of life in Heaven and give You all thanks and praise forever.

Lord, have mercy, and come to us.

The Lord has had mercy and has come to us. When we repent of our sins, He covers them with Jesus' righteousness. Thanks be to God!

Amen.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Holy and gracious God,

I confess that I have sinned against You this day. Some of my sin I know—the thoughts and words and deeds of which I am ashamed—but some is known only to You. In the name of Jesus Christ, I ask forgiveness. Deliver and restore me that I may rest in peace.

Silence for reflection.

By the mercy of God, you are redeemed by Jesus Christ, and in Him you are forgiven. We rest now in His peace and in quiet joy.
Amen.

God's promised Son is born

READING: *Luke 2:1-7*

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. ⁶And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

CHOIR: A Stable Lamp Is Lighted – st. 1

HYMN: Away in a Manger LSB 364

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the sky--looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.
I love Thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
And take us to heaven to live with Thee there.

The Savior is given to earth

READING: *Luke 2:8-11 (a Savior is born)*

⁸ And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

CHOIR: A Stable Lamp Is Lighted – st. 2

SOLO: Do you Hear What I Hear? (Tiffany Bautista)

Jesus reveals why he was born

READING: *John 3:13-15 (Son of Man must be lifted up)*

¹³ No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

READING:

John 12:23-24 (grain of wheat must die to bear fruit); John 12:27 (for this purpose I have come)

²³ And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit....

²⁷ “Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour.

READING: *John 18:37 (Jesus responds to Pilate – truth)*

³⁷ Then Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.”

HYMN: God Loves Me Dearly LSB 392 st. 1, 3, 4

**God loves me dearly,
Grants me salvation,
God loves me dearly,
Loves even me.**

Refrain:

**Therefore I'll say again:
God loves me dearly,
God loves me dearly,
Loves even me.**

**He sent forth Jesus,
My dear Redeemer,
He sent forth Jesus
And set me free. [Refrain]**

**Jesus, my Savior,
Himself did offer;
Jesus, my Savior,
Paid all I owed. [Refrain]**

Jesus died for the sins of the world

READING:

Philippians 2:5-8 (Christ humbled himself to death on the cross)

⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

READING:

1 Peter 2:21-24 (Christ suffered for us; bore our sins on the tree)

²¹ For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. ²² He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. ²³ When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. ²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

READING:

Galatians 3:13-14 (Christ redeemed us, hanged on a tree)

¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”— ¹⁴ so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

CHOIR: A Stable Lamp Is Lighted – st. 3

HYMN: What Child Is This LSB 370

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 ox and ass 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!

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!

HOMILY

OFFERING AND TREE DECORATIONS

Jesus is the Tree of Salvation

READING: *John 15:1-2, 4-5*

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit....

⁴ Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

HYMN: Christ, the Word of God Incarnate LSB 540 st. 1,3

**Christ, the Word of God incarnate,
Lord and Son of Abraham;
Christ, the radiance of the Father,
Perfect God, the great I AM;
Christ, the light, You shine unvanquished,
Light and life You bring to all;
Light our path with Your own presence,
Grant us grace to heed Your call.**

**Christ, the shoot that springs triumphant
From the stump of Jesse's tree;
Christ, true vine, You nurture branches
To bear fruit abundantly.
Graft us into You, O Savior;
Prune our hearts so we remain
Fruitful branches in Your vineyard
Till eternal life we gain.**

Jesus rose from the dead

READING: *Acts 5:29a, 30-31 (God raised Jesus whom you hanged on a tree)*

²⁹ But Peter and the apostles answered,...³⁰ The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. ³¹ God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.

READING: *1 Corinthians 15:3-4 (Christ died, buried, rose)*

³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴ that

he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,

CHOIR: A Stable Lamp Is Lighted – st. 4

Jesus was born to give us life

READING: *John 3:16*

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

BENEDICTION

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

Amen.

HYMN

“Silent Night, Holy Night” *LSB* 363

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!

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.**

Preacher	Pastor Michael Tanney
Liturgist	Pastor Michael Tanney
Elders	Al Bohannon & Earl Welch
Organist	Suzanne Manelli
Ushers	Cameron Hampel, John Benwell, Patrick Benwell, Jayvon Evers, Joan Potvin, William Gebhart, and Roger Schmidt

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The Poinsettia's gracing the Chancel were placed to the Glory of
God and in the memory of loved ones by:

Sandra Gerber	Loved Ones
Diane Schwab	Henry & Hazel Schwab
	Jacob & Noah Flyinn
	Denny & Sally Schwab
Marsha Jackson	Joseph Jackson
	Loved Ones
Ruth Trauth	Loved Ones
Doris Seevers	Ken Seevers
	David Seevers
	Valerie Seevers
	Ken Seevers
Thuy Troung	Loved Ones
Tra-Mi Troung	Alex Bell
	Mrs. K
Al & Liz Bohannon	Tamarris Bohannon
	JR and Lucy Bohannon