



St. John's Lutheran Church

Rooted and Growing: In Christ. In Community.



Children's Christmas Eve Service, December 24, 2017

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church



Welcome to our visitors!

- We enjoy sharing the Good News of Christmas with our family and friends. On this night, it is our prayer that the message compels you to praise God along with us for his precious Son. He entered our world with a singular purpose: to rescue us from slavery to sin. As the King from heaven came down to earth, he broke death's grip on our eternity. By faith in him, we are free from the fear of the grave. We can be certain of our future. Our confidence lies not in our own good works, but in his manger stall. He alone, as God made man, opens the door to heaven for us. We pray that you will return to worship with us again.
- Large print service folders are available from an usher.
- The pastors, staff, principal, faculty, and their families wish to thank the members of St. John's for all the Christmas cards and gifts received during this festive season. Your expressions of love and gratitude for our ministry are genuinely appreciated. God bless you for your care and concern. We wish you a blessed Christmas and a joyous New Year.



“Where Shepherds Lately Knelt”

Children’s Christmas Eve Service

December 24, 2017

Preservice Music

St. John’s Piano Students

What Child Is This

William Eft

Joy to the World

Lexi Siegmund

Once in Royal David’s City

Micah Buske

O Come, All Ye Faithful

Chloe Campbell

Ding Dong Merrily On High

Madison Sipe

What Child Is This

Eden Rader

Angels We Have Heard On High

Kaylie McEvoy

Good Christian Men, Rejoice

John Handeland

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Jacob Alejandro

Junior Handbells

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

arranged by Larry Sue

Slumber Song of the Infant Jesus

arranged by Larry Sue

Angels We Have Heard on High

arranged by Larry Sue

Sussex Carol

arranged by Larry Sue

Processional Hymn

Come, Your Hearts and Voices Raising

Christian Worship 42

**C: Come, your hearts and voices raising,
 Christ the Lord with gladness praising;
 Loudly sing his love amazing,
 Worthy folk of Christendom.**

**See how God, for us providing,
Gave his Son and life abiding;
He our weary steps is guiding
From earth's woe to heav'nly joy.**

**Christ, from heav'n to us descending
And in love our race befriending,
In our need his help extending,
Saved us from the wily foe.**

**Jacob's Star in all its splendor
Beams with comfort sweet and tender,
Forcing Satan to surrender,
Breaking all the pow'rs of hell.**

**Gracious Child, we pray you, hear us;
From your lowly manger cheer us.
Gently lead us and be near us
Till we join th'angelic choir.**

Narration

Grace Marie Theesfeld

Welcome to our celebration of Christ's birth. This evening, we return to the place "Where Shepherds Lately Kneled."

Jaroslav Vajda used these words in the opening line of a Christmas hymn. The four stanzas of this hymn will help us celebrate tonight.

With hymn writer Vajda, we marvel at what we see in the stable of Bethlehem. There, in an **unlikely place**, we find **room and welcome**. There we see Isaiah's word of **prophecy fulfilled**. There we find God's love – **not alone for us**, but for the whole world. So come, it's time to revisit that place "Where Shepherds Lately Kneled."

PART ONE: ROOM AND WELCOME

Narration

Reagan Godager

A handful of shepherds near Bethlehem had witnessed many things in their days of caring for the sheep. Not much would frighten these seasoned men. But on one particular night, they were not only afraid, they were terrified.

On that night, they suddenly were closer to God than they had ever been. God's messengers came and spoke directly to them.

The angels had not come to terrify, but to deliver a birth announcement that would bring peace: the Christ had been born.

With this news ringing in their ears, hearts that were pounding with fear became hearts filled with wonder and delight.

Recitation

3rd & 4th Grades

There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: you will find the baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

Recitation

Kindergarten – 8th Grades

“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”
(Luke 2:8-14)

Response to the Word

3rd & 4th Grades

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

by Vicki Hancock Wright

Glory to the newborn King!
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 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 God-head see, hail th’ incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with us to dwell, Jesus, our Immanuel!
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”
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 we no more may die,
Born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”
Glory to the newborn King!

Narration

Quinn Taylor

Could it really be true? Could they be the first to know that a Savior had been born? The shepherds wasted no time. In an instant, they were on their way to Bethlehem so they could witness the event the angels had announced.

When they arrived at the stable, no crowd prevented them from entering. There was plenty of room for them to see. They were welcomed to the manger-side, and there they knelt before the Son of God.

The shepherds witnessed. They worshiped. And then they returned with words of praise on their lips.

Recitation

5th – 8th Grades

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told. (Luke 2:15-20)

Response to the Word

Silent Night

Kindergarten – 8th Grades and Congregation

arranged by Mark Patterson

Choir: Stille nacht! Heilige nacht! Alles schläft, einsam wacht,
Nur das traute hoch heilige paar, Holder Knabe, im lockigen haar,
Schlaf in himmlischer ruh, schlaf in himmlischer ruh.

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.

**C: 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.**

Narration

Madison Sipe

Should we go? Will we be welcome? Will there be room for us? The shepherds had no second thoughts about going or about finding enough room or about being welcomed. After all, the Lord himself had delivered the marvelous news that the long-awaited Savior had arrived.

That news has also reached us. The Lord has also told us, “Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you.” God loved us so much that he sent his only Son into our world. Yes, it is true. God sent Jesus for us. There is room for us – we are welcome.

Response to the Word

Kindergarten – 8th Grades

Where Shepherds Lately Knelt (stanza 1)

Christian Worship 54

Where shepherds lately knelt and kept the angel’s word,
I come in half-belief, a pilgrim strangely stirred;
But there is room and welcome there for me,
But there is room and welcome there for me.

PART TWO: AN UNLIKELY PLACE

Narration

Sofia Chasco

Mary knew that her baby would be born very soon. What a time for the government to require her to make a trip to Bethlehem! Joseph was determined to make the trip as easy as possible for his wife. He was sure that when they got to Bethlehem, he would be able to rent a room where Mary would be comfortable.

But God had other plans for their stay in Bethlehem. There was not a single room left at the inn for Mary and Joseph. The only place they could find was a stable – not a nice place to stay. Certainly not a place for a baby to be born.

But this was God’s will: that in this unlikely place, his Son would be born.

Congregational Hymn

Away in a Manger

Christian Worship 68

**C: Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
 The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
 The stars in the bright 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 you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.**

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

Away in a Manger

Kindergarten Bells

Recitation

Kindergarten – 2nd Grades

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. (Luke 2:1-7)

Response to the Word

Kindergarten – 2nd Grades

Christmas From the Heart

by Linda Moeller

Gently sleeping there in the hay,
Jesus, Savior, born on this day.
Infant – both God and man – came from heav'n above.
Hearts are full tonight, full of his love.

Hearts were sinful, sinful and black.
But God loved us, wanted us back.
And so he sent his Son here to pay the cost
Of redemption for hearts that were lost.

Bleeding, suff'ring, dying for me;
Then arising triumphantly;
Bringing salvation to sinners here below.
Now God sees our hearts white as the snow.

Go now, Christian; go with his Word
To all nations till they have heard
That their hearts too should be filled with peace and joy.
He's their Savior too, sweet baby boy.

See him sleeping there in the hay,
Jesus, Savior, born on this day.
Let our hearts ever be thankful that he came
And forevermore glorify his name!

Narration

Lauren Beck

Is this the right place? You know the feelings you get when you walk up to an unfamiliar place. You have never been here before, and it doesn't look the way you thought it would. If what you see doesn't match what you expected to see, you wonder if you have the right address.

When we look at the stable in Bethlehem, we have to ask, "Is this the right place? Is this really where the Savior of the world, the King of kings and the Lord of lords, is born? Among the cattle? In a feedbox?" Yes, we find him in this unlikely place. Here we find a sweet newborn, a tiny babe, our Savior.

We can only marvel at God's plan that began to unfold that night in Bethlehem. The small voice of his Son, crying in the manger, would grow into a voice that one day would cry out, "It is finished." On that day, God's plan to save all people would be complete. Dear heavenly Father, thank you for leading us to this unlikely place.

Response to the Word

Kindergarten – 8th Grades

Where Shepherds Lately Knelt (stanza 2)

Christian Worship 54

In that unlikely place I find him as they said:
Sweet newborn Babe, how frail! and in a manger bed,
A still, small voice to cry one day for me,
A still, small voice to cry one day for me.

PART THREE: PROPHECIES FULFILLED

Narration

Lindsey Lampe

Israel had been waiting for this birth for a long time. God had told his people many times that a Savior would be sent. Isaiah was one of the prophets that God used to deliver this message. God revealed to Isaiah his plan to send his Son into the world as a child. This child would be special; Isaiah said this baby would be born to a virgin.

Recitation

Kindergarten

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: the virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:14)

Narration

Caleb Pollesch

This child would become great. He would be known as the Prince of Peace and the Mighty God. He would establish a kingdom and rule over it forever. This is what Isaiah said:

Recitation

1st – 4th Grades

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned. (Isaiah 9:2)

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever. (Isaiah 9:6, 7)

Response to the Word

Junior Choir

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

arranged by Margaret R. Tucker

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lowly exile here, until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, thou Wisdom from on high, and order all things, far and nigh;
To us the path of knowledge show, and cause us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;
Bid envy, strife, and quarrels cease; and fill the world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Narration

Tony Jones

On the outside, there was nothing unusual about Jesus, nothing that would identify him as a King. His birth certainly didn't make the headlines in Israel.

But the work this child came to do would make the headlines. He was not here to establish a kingdom on earth. He was here on a greater mission – to free us from sin and to free us from guilt. He came to make peace between God and man. Isaiah also made this clear.

Recitation

5th – 8th Grades

He grew up before him like a tender shoot,
and like a root out of dry ground.
He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.
But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was upon him,
and by his wounds we are healed. (Isaiah 53:2, 5)

Response to the Word

5th – 8th Grades

What Child Is This
Christian Worship 67

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 Christians, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce him through; the cross he'll bear 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!

Narration

Alex Hernandez

Is it really true? Can this really be happening to me? When good news comes to us, we sometimes question whether or not we can be having such good fortune.

Is it really true? Is the baby of Bethlehem, born that first Christmas night, the One that God had said would come?

Yes, he is. All the prophecies about *how* he would be born, *where* he would be born, and *why* he would be born are fulfilled there in the manger. We can be absolutely sure that this Jesus is the Promised One. In Bethlehem, we see centuries of prophecy become reality. Our hearts begin to pound with excitement as we realize that God fulfilled these prophecies for each one of us.

Response to the Word

Kindergarten – 8th Grades

Where Shepherds Lately Knelt (stanza 3)

Christian Worship 54

How should I not have known Isaiah would be there,
His prophecies fulfilled? With pounding heart I stare:
A child, a son, the Prince of Peace for me,
A child, a son, the Prince of Peace for me.

PART FOUR: NOT ALONE FOR ME

Narration

Miaya Chesterman

The story of Christmas is the story of God's love. Love came down to us, was born of a virgin, and became fully human. We see God's love in the person of Jesus Christ.

Recitation**3rd – 4th Grades**

The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him “Immanuel” – which means, “God with us.” (Matthew 1:23)

Narration**Miaya Chesterman**

God’s love extends to all people. It was not just for some that Jesus came, lived, and died. He did all of these things for all people. He came because he loved the whole world.

Recitation**Kindergarten – 2nd Grades**

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. (John 3:16, 17)

Response to the Word**A Christmas Introit***Junior Choir**by Audrey Snyder*

Hodie Christus natus est,
Christ is born today.
Hodie Christus natus est,
Christ is born today.
“Christ is born today,” the angels sang so very long ago.
Christ is born today within our hearts and souls.
Hodie Christus natus est,
Christ is born today!

Narration**Alan Zhu**

The news of God’s love for the world is spread through those who have learned of his love and believe – people like us.

God says to us, “Tell others about the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. Tell them why he came. Tell them that their sins are forgiven. Tell them they do not have to worry about death. Tell them that they have eternal life in Jesus Christ.” God touches the hearts of many who hear his Word. For his work among us and among those who have not yet learned of his love, we thank and praise him. This is the great work God wants us to do.

Recitation**Kindergarten – 8th Grades**

He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.” (Mark 16:15)

Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke, and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction. (2 Timothy 4:2)

Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19)

Narration**Austin Danko**

I’ll never forget. Have you heard yourself say that? Sometimes we don’t forget. But quite often memory fades in a very short time. Can we forget the story of God’s love? Can we forget God’s love as we see it in the Christmas gospel? Can we forget his love as we see it in the cross of Jesus?

We all would certainly say, “I will never forget!” God help us always to remember. And God help us to remember that his love is not alone for us, but for all the world. God help us spread the good news that we have heard tonight: “A Savior has been born – for you.”

Response to the Word**Where Shepherds Lately Knelt (stanza 4)***Kindergarten – 8th Grades**Christian Worship 54*

Can I, will I forget how Love was born, and burned
Its way into my heart unasked, unforced, unearned,
To die, to live, and not alone for me,
To die, to live, and not alone for me.

Offering

*The members of St. John’s have joined together to do the Lord’s work
in our community and around the world, and our offerings
are a joyful response of our faith. If you are a visitor today,
you are welcome but not obligated to give an offering.*

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Olivia Close, Ally Rhyner, & Lexi Siegmund, guitar

O Holy Night

Olivia Close, Ally Rhyner, & Lexi Siegmund, guitar

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

*Eva Kuehn, Emma Lindert & Madalyn Morin, clarinet; Maiya Chesterman & Elsa Gregory, oboe
Rhiannon Gantner & Alan Zhu, alto saxophone; Lauren Beck & Nora Gregory, trombone
Silas Ebeling, John Handeland & Logan Rindfleisch, French horn; Riley Rindfleisch, tuba*

What Child Is This

Morgan Festerling & Rhiannon Gantner, violin

Please stand

Prayer of the Church

M: Dear Father in heaven, we thank you for the opportunity you have given us this evening to join with family and friends to hear the good news that you sent your Son into the world to be our Savior.

C: **We love to hear the story of how Jesus was born. Throughout our lives, keep us close to you and to this good news.**

M: We confess that we have not always remembered your love for us. We have not always shown your love to those around us.

C: **For these sins, we ask forgiveness.**

M: You have removed our sin and guilt through the work of your Son. For this, we praise and thank you.

C: **We join the heavenly hosts in singing “Alleluia!”**

M: We thank you for your Christmas gift to us. Help us to share it with others. As it pleases you, turn the hearts of those who hear your gospel message. May they see your redeeming grace in the Christ-child of Bethlehem.

C: **Bring them into your presence that they, along with us, may enjoy an eternity in heaven. Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

**C: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**

M: May the God of love – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – bless and keep you tonight and forever.

C: Amen.

Be seated

Recessional Hymn

Joy to the World
Christian Worship 62

**C: 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.**

**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.**

**No more let sins and sorrows grow nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.**

**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.**

Postlude

Serving at Worship

Minister	Pastor Eric Schroeder
Musicians	Mandy Treder, organ & piano Terry Buske, piano
Kindergarten – 8th Grades Choir Directors	Dana Leyrer Mandy Treder
Junior Choir Director	Mandy Treder
Junior Handbell Choir Director	Julie Handeland

Acknowledgements

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St. John's Holiday Worship Schedule

Sunday, December 24	Service of Lessons & Carols 7:00 PM
Monday, December 25	Christmas Day Festival Worship 10:00 AM
Saturday, December 30	No evening worship
Sunday, December 31	Worship 8:00 & 10:30 AM
Sunday, December 31	New Year's Eve Worship 6:45 PM
Monday, January 1, 2018	New Year's Day Worship 10:00 AM

Regular Worship Schedule

Saturdays at 5:30 PM – Worship in English

Saturdays at 7:00 PM – Worship in Mandarin Chinese

Sundays at 8:00 & 10:30 AM – Worship in English

Sundays at 9:15 AM – Sunday School & Bible Classes (beginning January 7, 2018)

The Mission of our Church

As God's people gathered together at St. John's, we live to declare the praises of our Savior God who called us out of the darkness of sin into the light of his grace.

As 21st century disciples of Jesus, we reflect the light of God's love by:



Making worship of our Savior the top priority in our lives



Growing in our faith through daily contact with God's Word



Fostering Christian friendships for mutual encouragement and support



Using our unique gifts to glorify God and serve God's people



Sharing the good news of God's forgiving love with others

Worship Services

Saturdays at 5:30 pm

Sundays at 8:00 & 10:30 am

Worship in Chinese

Saturdays at 7:00 pm

Pastors

*Pastor Joel Leyrer
joel.leyrer@sjtosa.org*

*Pastor Eric Schroeder
eric.schroeder@sjtosa.org*

*Pastor Kyle Bitter
kyle.bitter@sjtosa.org*

Chinese Outreach Pastor

*Pastor Joshua Yu
joshua.yu@sjtosa.org*

School Principal

*Mr. Scott Uecker
scott.uecker@sjtosa.org*

Church Office

*7809 Harwood Ave
Wauwatosa, WI 53213
(414) 258-7831
church@sjtosa.org*

School Office

*1278 Dewey Avenue
Wauwatosa, WI 53213
(414) 258-4214
school@sjtosa.org*

sjtosa.org