



The Eve of the Nativity of Our Lord 2020
"The Journey to Bethlehem"

Zion Lutheran Church
Wausau, Wisconsin

3:00 p.m.

Sharing God's Blessings

- Tonight's radio broadcast is sponsored by Dick and Dianne Ames in memory of departed loved ones, and in thankfulness for many blessings received.
- The fresh evergreen trees at the altar are sponsored anonymously by grateful Zion members. The trees are decorated with *chrismons*, symbols of Christ, hand-made by Zion members.
- Please refer to the bulletin insert for a listing of all who gave to the Christmas Decorating Fund.

Zion's Crèche in the Chapel

The 19 figures in Zion's crèche represent the first Christmas: The Holy Family, the Shepherds and the Wise Men, the Animals, and the Angel of the Lord. Hand-carved for us by craftsmen in the Black Forest of Oberamergau, Germany, the figures are made from linden wood. They were purchased in New York City in 1964 by Rev. Dale Hansen, former Zion pastor (1961-1974). Mrs. August C. (Ottile) Mueller, a member of Zion, donated the money for the carvings as a gift to the children of the parish. Herbert Ladwig, a Zion parishioner, constructed the wooden stable in 1964.

Welcome to the "Liturgy of Bethlehem"

Christians have long gathered to celebrate each aspect of our Lord's birth. Starting in late afternoon on December 24, they would journey with the holy family, angels, and shepherds into the joy of Christ's arrival, moving from afternoon and evening prayer to fuller celebrations of Holy Communion. In this service, we give thanks for that little town of Bethlehem, and journey with St. Joseph, St. Mary and holy Jesus into a time of adoration, praise, and joy.

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

Organ Preludes on "O Come All Ye Faithful"

RINGING OF THE BELLS

Please stand and face the back.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN "Once in Royal David's City"

Choir: 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.

Congregation:



3 For He is our child - hood's pat - tern, Day by
4 And our eyes at last shall see Him, Through His
5 Not in that poor, low - ly sta - ble With the



day like us He grew; He was lit - tle, weak, and
own re - deem - ing love; For that child so dear and
ox - en stand - ing by Shall we see Him, but in



help - less, Tears and smiles like us He knew; And He
gen - tle Is our Lord in heav'n a - bove; And He
heav - en, Set at God's right hand on high, Then like



feels for all our sad-ness, And He shares in all our glad-ness.
leads His chil-dren on To the place where He is gone.
stars His chil-dren, crowned, All in white, His praise will sound!

*"It came
without rib-
bons! It came
without tags!
It came with-
out packages,
boxes or
bags!" And
he puzzled
three hours,
till his puz-
zler was sore.
Then the
Grinch
thought of
something he
hadn't before!
"Maybe
Christmas,"
he thought,
"doesn't come
from a store.
Maybe
Christmas...
perhaps...
means a little
bit more!"*

*And what
happened
then...?
Well...in
Who-ville
they say that
the Grinch's
small heart
grew three
sizes that
day!*

*~ Dr. Seuss,
A.D. 1957*

The central miracle asserted by Christians is the Incarnation. They say that God became Man. Every other miracle prepares for this, or exhibits this, or results from this.

*~ C.S. Lewis,
Miracles,
A.D 1947*

VERSICLES

P: Make haste, O God, to deliver me.

C: Make haste to help me, O Lord.

P: Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

C: I will not fear, for you are with me.

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

C: In him was life, and the life was the light of man.

**All: Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.**

Amen

PRAYER

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us pray . . . O God, you led your servants, Joseph and Mary, to Bethlehem, the city of David, there to bring forth your Son, Jesus, the true King of Israel. So order our steps by his grace that we also would follow where he leads and dwell with him in the city everlasting; for he lives and rules with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen

Please be seated.

CHIMES RESPONSE

"O Come, Little Children"

arr. Susan E. Geschke

PSALMODY Psalm 121

P: I lift up my eyes to the hills; from where is my help to come?

C: My help comes from the LORD, the maker of heaven and earth.

P: He will not let your foot be moved
and he who watches over you will not fall asleep.

**C: Behold, he who keeps watch over Israel
shall neither slumber nor sleep;**

P: the LORD himself watches over you;
the LORD is your shade at your right hand,

**C: so that the sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.**

P: The LORD shall preserve you from all evil;
it is he who shall keep you safe.

**C: The LORD shall watch over your going out and your coming
in, from this time forth forevermore.**

**All: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.
Amen**

CHORAL RESPONSE

“How Far Is It to Bethlehem”

arr. David W. Music

*Some said,
“Is the Christ
to come from
Galilee? Has
not the Scrip-
ture said that
the Christ
comes from
the offspring
of David, and
comes from
Bethlehem,
the village
where David
was?
~ John
7:43-43*

The word "inn" in Scripture refers to a common guest room at the time, which would have likely been filled with other guests. Therefore, the holy family did what many families did, and stayed in the stable. A reflection on this fact:

"Joseph was not obliged to seek a commercial inn. He does not appear as an inept and inadequate husband who cannot arrange for Mary's needs. Likewise, Joseph did not anger his wife's relatives by failing to turn to them in a crisis . . .

LESSON Micah 5:1-5

¹Now muster your troops, O daughter of troops; siege is laid against us; with a rod they strike the judge of Israel on the cheek. ²But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days. ³Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel. ⁴And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. ⁵And he shall be their peace.

P: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

RESPONSORY

P: The Lord comes forth like a bridegroom out of his chamber.

C: **He rejoices like a champion to run his course.**

P: Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, the God of Jacob.

C: **He rejoices like a champion to run his course.**

P: Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

C: **He rejoices like a champion to run his course.**

LESSON Luke 2:1-7

¹In 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.

P: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

HYMN "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

C: **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!**

Choir: 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.

C: **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 child
[Jesus] was
born in the
normal sur-
roundings of
a peasant
home some-
time after
they arrived
in Bethlehem,
and there was
no heartless
innkeeper
with whom to
deal. A mem-
ber of the
house of
David was
not humili-
ated by rejec-
tion as he
returned to
the village of
his family's
origins. The
people of
Bethlehem
offered the
best they had
and preserved
their honor as
a community.
~ Kenneth E.
Bailey,
Jesus
Through
Middle
Eastern
Eyes, A.D.
2008*

**The great glad tidings tell;
Oh, come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Immanuel!**

SERMON *for which the children may come forward*

HYMN "Away in a Manger"

**C: Away in a manger, no crib for his 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 poor baby wakes,
But little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky
And stay by my cradle till 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.**

Please kneel.

PRAYERS

P: Let us pray . . .

P: Blessed are you, O Prince of peace.

C: You rule the earth with truth and justice.

P: Blessed are you, O Jesus, Son of the Virgin,

C: you share our very flesh and blood.

P: Blessed are you, O Son of God,

C: You dwell among us, the Word made flesh.

Well here comes Christmas! That astonishing thing that no 'commercialism' can in fact defile – unless you let it.

*~ J.R.R Tolkien,
letter to his son, A.D 1962*

*Prayers for the church, world, neighborhood, and congregation follow.
For each petition:*

P: . . . let us pray to the Lord,
C: **Lord, have mercy.**

The prayers conclude:

P: O God, your only-begotten Son appeared in the substance of our human flesh: Grant that he, whose outward form is like our own, may reshape us inwardly by his grace; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
C: **Amen**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

P: Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach 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**

Please stand.

BENEDICAMUS

P: Let us bless the Lord.
C: **Thanks be to God.**

Please light your individual candle from the aisle candles. Please extinguish them after Silent Night is sung.

*In the Christian story God descends to reascend. He comes down; down from the heights of absolute being into time and space, down into humanity; down further still, if embryologists are right, to recapitulate in the womb ancient and pre-human phases of life; down to the very roots and seabed of the Nature He has created. But He goes down to come up again and bring the whole ruined world up with Him.
~ C.S. Lewis,
Miracles,
A.D 1947*

*In Bethlehem,
the House of
Bread,
Jesus was
born, the
Church's
Head.*

*Within the
Church, the
House of
Bread,
Those born in
Christ His
flesh are fed.*

*Archangels,
angels, saints
above,
Magnify Him
who came in
love,*

*To call the
hungry to
His Feast,
From north
and south,
from west
and east.*

*~ Chad L.
Bird,
2001 A.D.*

HYMN "Silent Night, Holy Night!"

**C: 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.**

BENEDICTION

P: The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless and preserve you now and forever.

C: Amen

Please turn toward the cross as it is carried from the sanctuary.

RECESSIONAL HYMN "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

**C: 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 angelic hosts 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, incarnate deity!
Pleased as man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel!
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn king!"

Hail the heav'n-born 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 each child of earth,
Born to give us second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn king!"

POSTLUDE

"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

...David Cherwien

+ **Soli Deo Gloria** +

To God alone be glory

Serving at Worship

Presiding: The Rev. Christopher Johnson

Preaching: The Rev. Dr. Steven K. Gjerde

Organist: Kantor Irene Beethe

Choir: Brennan and Ethan Hochberger; Carol Rich;
Carter and Wyatt Kulesa; Tim and Tyler Pagel

Choir: Zion Handchime Choir

Elder: Jon Oestreich

Acolyte: Emma Pagel

Altar Guild: Sally Christoffersen

**A Prayer
As You Go**
On this holy day in which we remember the birth of our Savior, we pray, O Lord, that you would fill our hearts with wonder and joy at the Babe of Bethlehem. God has become man! Jesus the Savior of the nations has come! Whatever may cause us sorrow or sadness let it be dispelled because Jesus is here!
Amen.

Acknowledgements:

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"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing": Text: Public Domain.

Zion Lutheran Church

Sixth and Grant Streets, Wausau, Wisconsin 54403

Those who trust in the Lord shall be like Mount Zion,
which cannot be moved, but abides forever. (Psalm 125:1)

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Senior Pastor Steven K. Gjerde
Associate Pastor Christopher S. Johnson
Int. Assoc. Pastor Theodore B. Gulhaugen
Kantor Irene Beethe
Office Manager Pam Gabriel
Secretary Anna Mae Zeinemann
Deployed Chaplain Joseph C. Pinzl

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Sundays, 9:00 am, WSAU Radio 550AM (or
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