

The Greatest Gift

HOPE HAS ARRIVED



Immanuel Lutheran Church Childrens Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

December 24, 2020

**Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church
Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod
Gibbon, Minnesota**

Pastor Steve Bauer 507-441-2026

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<https://stevebauer.us/> -hear Sermons and Bible Classes online

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Prairie Lutheran School

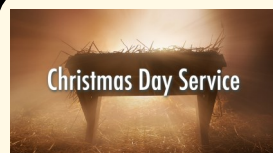
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Christmas Day Service

**Please join us tomorrow for the
9:30 am Christmas Day Service
with Communion.**

ThankOffering in the boxes in the narthex is designated for the Children's Mission Project

Precious is the Child

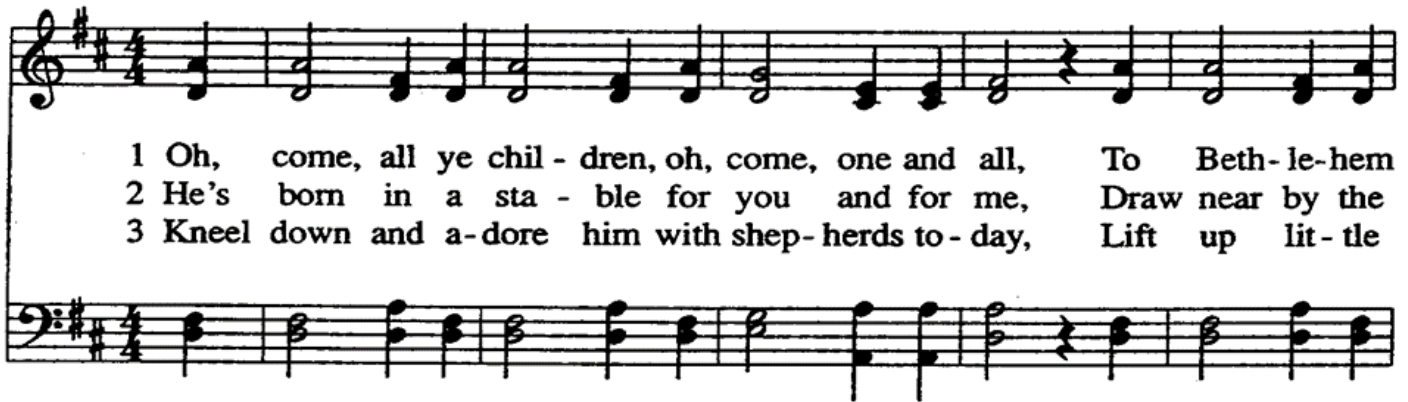
Arranged by Pastor Paul Meitner—Zion Winthrop

Pastor: We begin our service in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

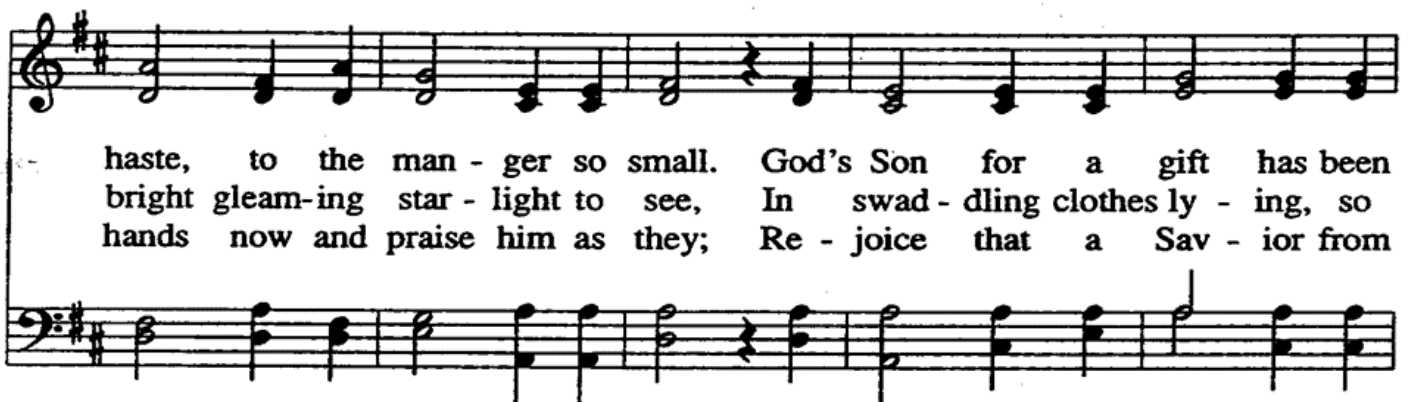
Processional Hymn: Congregation

(Pastor will lead the procession to the front of church. As the congregation sings.)

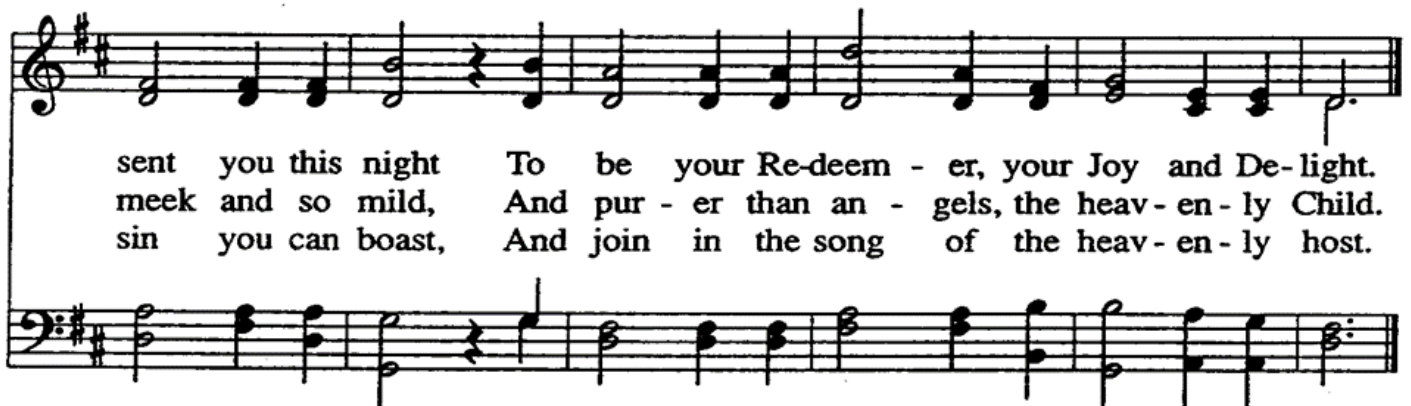
Oh, Come, All Ye Children



1 Oh, come, all ye chil - dren, oh, come, one and all, To Beth - le - hem
2 He's born in a sta - ble for you and for me, Draw near by the
3 Kneel down and a - dore him with shep - herds to - day, Lift up lit - le



haste, to the man - ger so small. God's Son for a gift has been
bright gleam - ing star - light to see, In swad - dling clothes ly - ing, so
hands now and praise him as they; Re - joice that a Sav - ior from



sent you this night To be your Re - deem - er, your Joy and De - light.
meek and so mild, And pur - er than an - gels, the heav - en - ly Child.
sin you can boast, And join in the song of the heav - en - ly host.

Please Stand

Pastor: Lift up your heads, O you gates:
Congregation: Lift them up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in

Pastor: Who is he, this King of glory?
Congregation: The Lord Almighty – He is the King of glory.

Pastor: Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving.
Congregation: And make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.

Pastor: Oh, come, let us worship and bow down:
Congregation: Let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker.

Pastor: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit
**Congregation: As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.**

Prayer

Pastor: Heavenly Father, you have made our world shine with the brightness of the true Light, Jesus Christ. We ask that as we have come to know that Light here on earth, we may also come to the fullness of its joys in heaven, through the same Jesus Christ, your Son our Lord, who lives and rules with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Please Be Seated.

Part 1: Precious is the Child, because he is our ETERNAL gift

Pastor: Tonight we celebrate the birth of the most precious Child of all, Jesus Christ. We shall look at five of the many, many reasons he is such a special gift from God. We hold him to be precious because he is eternal. Jesus is the eternal Son of God. And hundreds of years before his birth, the Old Testament prophets foretold his coming. As soon as Adam and Eve fell into sin, and by their sin death entered into the world, God gave them a promise of a savior who would be the eternal Son of God but also a true human being just like us who would undo what Satan had done:

Congregation: Genesis 3:15 "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

Pastor: After the flood, God through Noah prophesied that through the descendants of Shem, salvation for the world would come. Genesis 9:26-27 ²⁶He also said, "Praise be to the LORD, the God of Shem! May Canaan be the slave of Shem. ²⁷May God extend Japheth's territory; may Japheth live in the tents of Shem, and may Canaan be the slave of Japheth."

Later still, God chose a specific descendant of Shem, Abraham, whose descendant one day would be the savior of all the world. Now the Lord said to Abram,

Congregation: Genesis 12:2-3 ²"I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

Camille Bauer *Narrator:* Over time, the Lord gave through his prophets specific details of his coming. He would be of the tribe of Judah: The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until the one to whom it belongs comes. He will receive the obedience of the peoples. He would be of the family of David:

Congregation: Micah 5:2 "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."

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

Camille Bauer *Narrator*: But most important, the prophets told us what he would do for the world:
The people walking in darkness have seen a great light. For those living in the
and of the shadow of death, the light has dawned.

Isaiah 9:6 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.

Narrator and Congregation: Precious is the Child, because he is our eternal gift.

PASTOR AND CONGREGATION HYMN: 35 OF THE FATHER'S LOVE BEGOTTEN

Pastor Stanza 1. Of the Father's love begotten
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.

**Congregation Stanza 3. This is he whom heav'n-taught singers
Sang of old with one accord;
Whom the Scriptures of the prophets
Promised in their faithful word.
Now he shines, the long-expected;
Let creation praise its Lord
Evermore and evermore.**

Part 2: Precious is the Child, because he is our SAVING gift.

Emma Niebuhr *Narrator*: After generations of waiting and watching, God's people saw his promise fulfilled. Jesus came into our world at the right time, just as God had promised. Before Jesus was born, God sent an angel to his mother, Mary. The angel told Mary that she would have the special privilege of being the mother of the Savior. Listen as the angel tells Mary this miraculous news in Luke chapter 1.²⁶ In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee,²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

Congregation: ²⁸ The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

Emma Niebuhr *Narrator*: ²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.

Congregation: ³⁰ But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. ³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³² He 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, ³³ and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

Emma Niebuhr *Narrator*: ³⁴ "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

Congregation: ³⁵ **The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on 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.**

Emma Niebuhr *Narrator:* ³⁸ "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her. (Luke 1:26-35,38)

SEXTET: MARY DID YOU KNOW

Accompanist: Brenda Scherer

Tanner Rieke *Narrator:* God also sent an angel to prepare Joseph, Mary's fiancé, for the birth of Jesus. ¹⁸ This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³ "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").
²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵ But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus. (Matthew 1:18-25)

Narrator and Congregation : Precious is the Child, because he is our saving gift.

CONGREGATION HYMN 47 BEHOLD A BRANCH IS GROWING

1 **Behold, a Branch is growing
Of loveliest form and grace,
As prophets sang, foreknowing;
It springs from Jesse's race
And bears one little flow'r
In midst of coldest winter,
At deepest midnight hour.**

4 **This flow'r, so small and tender,
With fragrance fills the air;
His brightness ends the darkness
That kept the earth in fear.
True God and yet true man,
He came to save his people
From earth's dark night of sin.**

Part 3: Precious is the Child, because he is our UNDESERVED gift

While the children are saying the recitations, the organ will softly introduce each hymn.

Maverick Johnson *Narrator:* When we exchange gifts at Christmas, we are reminded of the greatest gift of all, Jesus. Because we all sin, we have deserved God's wrath and punishment. But Jesus came to sacrifice his sinless life on the cross and suffer in our place.

Children: As Jesus himself says, "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." John 3:16

Maverick Johnson *Narrator:* We call this the Gospel, that is, the Good News of God's undeserved love. Please join us in hearing the good news in Luke, Chapter 2 and singing it as well:

Children: In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ² (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³ And everyone went to their own town to register.

⁴ 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. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ 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.

Children sing Once in Royal David's City

Accompanist: Karin Bauer

Once in royal David's city	He came down to earth from Heaven,
Stood a lowly cattle shed,	Who is God and Lord of all,
Where a mother laid her Baby	And His shelter was a stable,
In a manger for His bed:	And His cradle was a stall;
Mary was that mother mild,	With the poor, and mean, and lowly,
Jesus Christ her little Child.	Lived on earth our Savior holy.

Children: ⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

CONGREGATION HYMN 53 TO SHEPHERDS AS THEY WATCHED BY NIGHT

**Women: To shepherds as they watched by night
Appeared a host of angels bright;
Behold the tender Babe, they said,
In yonder lowly manger laid.**

**Men: At Bethlehem, in David's town,
As Micah did of old make known;
'Tis Jesus Christ, your Lord and King,
Who doth to all salvation bring.**

**All: Oh, then rejoice that through His Son
God is with sinners now at one;
Made like yourselves of flesh and blood,
Your Brother is the eternal God.**

Children: ¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

CONGREGATION HYMN 61 HARK THE HERALD ANGELS SING

**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 the angelic host proclaim:
"Christ is born in Bethlehem"
Hark! The herald angels sing
"Glory to the newborn King!"**

Children: ¹⁵ 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."

¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

Children sing Hymn 63 Angels We Have Heard on High

Accompanist: Karin Bauer

2. Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heavenly song?
Refrain Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
 Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
3. Come to Bethlehem and see
Christ Whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee,
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.
Refrain

Children: ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Narrator and Congregation: Precious is the Child, because he is our undeserved gift.

CONGREGATION HYMN 38 FROM HEAVEN ABOVE TO EARTH I COME – (CHILDREN RETURN TO THEIR FAMILIES)

- 13 **Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child,
Prepare a bed, soft, undefiled
Within my heart, made clean and new,
A quiet chamber kept for you.**
- 14 **My heart for very joy must leap;
My lips no more can silence keep.
I, too, must sing with joyful tongue
That sweetest ancient cradle song:**

Part 4: Precious is the Child, because he is our gift of JOY

Priscilla Bauer *Narrator:* We live in a world filled with heartaches, tears, tragedies, sickness and death. Yet, we can be happy and joyful, because we know about God's love in Jesus Christ. The Lord promises that he will use everything, even life's hardships, for our good.

The psalmist described the joy that awaits us in heaven, "You will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand" (Psalm 16:11).

We hear now of the joy that was brought to Anna and Simeon when they saw the Baby Jesus in the temple:

Mary Niebuhr *Narrator*: ²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷ Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

Priscilla Bauer *Narrator*: ²⁹ "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. ³⁰ For my eyes have seen your salvation, ³¹ which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: ³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel." ³³ The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, ³⁵ so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

Mary Niebuhr *Narrator*: ³⁶ There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷ and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. ³⁸ Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem. Luke 2:25-38

Narrator and Congregation: Precious is the Child, because he is our gift of joy.

CONGREGATION HYMN 62 JOY TO THE WORLD

**1 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.**

Part 5: Precious is the Child, because he is our gift to SHARE

Sarah Black *Narrator*: Sometimes both children and adults tend to be selfish with gifts; we don't want to share our toys or possessions with others. Yet some gifts are meant to be shared, especially the gift of God's Son. Jesus didn't come just for our town or church, but for everyone. When we tell other people about the Savior, we don't lose him ourselves. Rather we are enriched even more. After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, when Herod was king, Wise Men from the east came to Jerusalem.

They asked, ²"Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

³When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵"In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

Mia Johnson *Narrator*: ⁶“But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.”

⁷Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

⁹After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Narrator and Congregation: Precious is the Child, because he is our gift to share.

CONGREGATION HYMN 67 WHAT CHILD IS THIS

- 1 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!**

- 2 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!**

- 3 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!**

Closing

Please Stand

Pastor: Dear Lord, we thank you for revealing yourself to us as our Savior, who took on our flesh to redeem it. Fill us with the same hope, love, peace and joy that you have given to your people since the beginning of time. Give us the faith to see you as the Savior of the world and the desire to share that message with everyone. In Jesus name, we ask these things, who also taught us to pray:

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

Blessing

Pastor: 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.

Congregation: (spoken) Amen.

Please Be Seated

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

(Pastor gives light to the ushers; they in turn give light to the first worshipper in each pew, who passes it on. The lighted candle is never tilted but is always held upright when giving light to another. Please extinguish your candle when you see the Pastor extinguish his.) **PLEASE REMAIN SEATED: THE LIGHTS WILL BE TURNED OFF AT THIS TIME.**

CONGREGATION HYMN 60 SILENT NIGHT

Verse 1—German Stille Nacht! Heilige Nacht! Alles schläft; einsam wacht
Nur das traute hoch heilige Paar. Holder Knab' im lockigen Haar,
Schlafe in himmlischer Ruh! Schlafe in himmlischer Ruh!

Verse 1-6 English (Also printed on the back page of bulletin)

1 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.	2 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!
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**3 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.**

**5. Silent night! Holy night!
 Shows to each his great might
 Love descends from heaven above,
 Dwells with us in brotherly love,
 Hailed by nations afar
 Hailed by nations afar**

**4. Silent night! Holy night!
 Brings to earth saving light;
 Grace fulfilled to us is giv'n,
 From the gold heights of heav'n
 Comes in lowly birth
 Comes in lowly birth**

**6. Silent night! Holy night!
 Grants us grace, from sins plight;
 Stills God's wrath as was foretold
 By his prophets in days of old
 Peace, good will to all men,
 Peace, good will to all men.**

THOSE WHO SERVED IN OUR SERVICE TONIGHT

Minister and Service Leader.....
 Narrators.....
 Organist.....
 Children's Accompanist.....
 Singers and Accompanist.....
 Ushers.....
 Videographers.....

Pastor Steve Bauer
 Emma Niebuhr, Camille Bauer, Tanner Rieke,
 Mary Niebuhr, Mia Johnson, Sarah Black, Priscilla Bauer,
 Maverick Johnson
 Carol Kramer
 Karin Bauer
 Brenda Scherer, Risë Seidl, Megan Johnson,
 Camille Bauer, Karin Bauer, Doug Scherer, Robin Kramer
 Emma Niebuhr, Mia Johnson, Sarah Black
 Kendra Kramer, Mary Niebuhr, Maverick Johnson
 Tanner Rieke, Hunter Anderson, Lindsey & Naomi
 Johnson, Macord Johnson

Special Thanks to theChildren of Immanuel for sharing the wonderful news of the birth of Jesus.
 Thank you to all who made this Christmas Program possible tonight. Thank you for having the passion and flexibility to ensure that the children could participate in one of Immanuel's most anticipated and most joyful Christmas traditions. And finally "thank you" techies for making it possible for everyone viewing at home to share this same experience. What a wonderful blessing you all are to our community.



Tonight's Service will be live streamed and will be available for viewing on Immanuel's YouTube Channel.

Christmas Day Service with Communion— tomorrow at 9:30 am. Service will also be live streamed.

1. Si - lent night! Ho - ly night! All is calm, all is bright,
 2. Si - lent night! Ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake at the sight.
 3. Si - lent night! Ho - ly night! Son of God, love's pure light
 4. Si - lent night! Ho - ly night! Brings to earth sav - ing light;
 5. Si - lent night! Ho - ly night! Shows to each his great might,
 6. Si - lent night! Ho - ly night! Grants us grace, from sins plight;

5

Round yon vir - gin Moth - er and child Ho - ly in - fant so
 Glo - ries Stream from heav - en a - far; Heav'n - ly hosts sing
 Ra - diant beams from thy ho - ly face With the dawn of re -
 Grace ful - fill - ed to us is giv'n, From the gol - den
 Love de - scends from heav - en a - bove, Dwells with us in
 Stills God's wrath as was fore - told By his pro - phets in

8

ten - der and mild, Sleep in heav - en - ly
 Al - le - lu - ia; Christ, the Sav - ior is
 deem - ing grace, Je - sus, Lord, at thy
 heights of heav'n, Comes in low - ly
 bro - ther - ly love, Hailed by na - tions a -
 days of old. Peace, good - will to all

10

peace, Sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
 born! Christ, the Sav - ior is born.
 birth, Je - sus Lord, at thy birth.
 birth, Comes in low - ly birth.
 far, Hailed by na - tions a far.
 men, Peace, good - will to all men.

PLEASE PLACE YOUR CANDLE AND CUP IN THE CONTAINER
 LOCATED ON THE TABLE IN BACK OF THE WORSHIP AREA.