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GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL

DECEMBER 25, 2012

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Our Christmas Worship

ENTRANCE:

OPENING DIALOG:

P: Unto us a Child is born, Hallelujah!

C: Unto us a Son is given, Hallelujah!

P: The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

C: And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

P: Oh, come, let us worship Him:

C: Let us kneel before the Lord in the manger. Hallelujah!

HYMN:..... *TLH 103: To Shepherds as They Watched by Night*

CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION:..... *Based on TLH 90*

P: Dear Heavenly Father, having come into Your presence, we are moved to confess to you all of our many sins; sins that we have committed in our desires, our thoughts, our words, and our actions.

C: Have mercy upon us, O God, we pray.

**SING: Gracious Child, we pray Thee, hear us,
From Thy lowly manger cheer us,
Gently lead us and be near us
Till we join th' angelic choir.**

P: You who are dearly loved by God, it is good and right for us to come before the throne of His grace in Christ Jesus and confess our many sins. The command of our Lord is that His people be comforted with the message of forgiveness in the Christ. Through the Prophet Isaiah, the Lord says to His people, Israel: "Tell her that her sins I cover, and her warfare now is over." Our Savior came to make peace between God

and man. Now He desires to come to us and abide with us — in our hearts — with His forgiveness and peace.

**SING: 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.**

C: O most merciful God, we confess to You all of our many sins. We have sinned against You by what we have thought, what we have said, and what we have done. Yet You have given Your only begotten Son to die for us. Have mercy upon us we pray, and for His sake grant us forgiveness for all our sins. By the power of Your Holy Spirit cause us to know Your will truly, and to obey it willingly, so that by Your grace, through faith, we may finally come to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

**SING: Oh, the joy beyond expressing
When by faith we grasp this blessing
And to Thee we come confessing
That our freedom Thou hast wrought!**

P: Since God has given you the Keys of the Kingdom of heaven, and as you have called me to administer the same, even so may it be to you as you believe, by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. He who believes and is baptized shall be saved! For if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed! O Lord, grant this unto us all.

**SING: From the bondage that oppressed us,
From sin's fetters that possessed us,
From the grief that sore distressed us,
We, the captives, now are free.**

CHRISTMAS DAY COLLECT:

P: Grant, almighty God, that the birth of Your only-begotten Son in human flesh may set us free, who through sin are held in bondage; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

CHOIR:..... *Joy to the World*

FIRST READING:..... *Isaiah 52:7-10*

The Lord comes to manifest His strength and power to redeem.

SECOND READING:..... *John 1:1-14*

Jesus is the Word made flesh, bringing God's grace to earth.

THIRD READING:..... *Luke 2:1-14 with "From Heaven Above"*

ALL: **"From heav'n above to earth I come
To bear good news to ev'ry home;
Glad tidings of great joy I bring,
Whereof I now will say and sing:"**

Pastor: And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, everyone into his own city.

MEN: **"To you this night is born a child
Of Mary, chosen virgin mild;
This little child, of lowly birth,
Shall be the joy of all the earth."**

Men: And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

WOMEN: **"This is the Christ, our God and Lord,
Who in all need shall aid afford;
He will Himself your Savior be
From all your sins to set you free."**

Women: And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

MEN: **Give heed, my heart, lift up thine eyes!
What is it in yon manger lies?
Who is this child, so young and fair?
The blessed Christ-child lieth there.**

Men: And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

WOMEN: **Welcome to earth, Thou noble Guest,
Through whom the sinful world is blest!
Thou com'st to share my misery;
What thanks shall I return to Thee?**

Women: And the angel said unto them, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all

people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.”

**ALL: Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child,
Make Thee a bed, soft, undefiled,
Within my heart, that it may be
A quiet chamber kept for Thee.**

All: And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

**ALL: My heart for very joy doth leap,
My lips no more can silence keep;
I, too, must sing with joyful tongue
That sweetest ancient cradle-song:
Glory to God in highest heaven,
Who unto us His Son hath given!
While angels sing with pious mirth
A glad new year to all the earth.**

CONFESSION OF FAITH:.....*The Christmas Creed*

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, Who sent His Son as my Savior on Christmas Day.

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary, Announced by the Angels, Worshipped by the shepherds, Adored by the Wise Men, Who lived to suffer, die, and rise again, To free me from sin, death, and the power of the devil.

I believe in the Holy Ghost, Who has brought me to faith in the Christ of Christmas, And by whose continuous work in my heart, I am ever led to lay before the feet of Christ the treasures of my love and live under Him as my King, Both now and forevermore. Amen.

HYMN:..... *TLH 647: O Little Town of Bethlehem*

SERMON:..... *Luke 2:4-7*

⁴Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into 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 wife, who was with child. ⁶So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. ⁷And she brought forth her

firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. (NKJV™)

Is There Room in Your Inn?

RESPONSE:..... *TLH 88: This Night a Wondrous Revelation*

Sing [♩]: **O Jesus, precious Sun of Gladness,
Fill Thou my soul with light, I pray.
Dispel the gloomy night of sadness
And teach Thou me this Christmas Day
How I a child of light may be,
Aglow with light that comes from Thee.**

HYMN:..... *WS 712: What Child is This*

OUR GIFTS TO THE CHRIST-CHILD:..... *Interlude*

CHRISTMAS PRAYER:

THE LORD’S PRAYER:..... *Tune of ‘It Came Upon a Midnight Clear’*

**C: Our Father, Lord on heav’n’s high throne,
Most holy be Your name.
Your kingdom come. Your will be done
On earth — in heav’n the same.
Give us this day the food we need;
Forgiven may we be;
Into temptation do not lead;
From evil set us free.**

**Yours is the kingdom; unto You
In grateful love we bow;
And Yours the pow’r; Lord, let us view
Your mighty presence now.
The glory Yours; Your praise be sung
By angel hosts and men
In ev’ry land, by ev’ry tongue
Forevermore! Amen.**

CHOIR:..... *Handel’s Hallelujah Chorus*

BENEDICTION:

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all.

C: [Sung] Amen. Amen. Amen.

HYMN:..... *WS 706: Go Tell It on the Mountain*

CLC E-Devotion
Tuesday, December 25, 2008
Christmas Day

Luke 2:11 For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

HE SHALL BE CALLED: SAVIOR

Put yourself in the shepherds' place for a moment. Let's move past the unusual fact that an angel appeared to them, and consider the message that was announced: "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."

I know, you are very familiar with these words because you have heard them over and over again. But imagine being one of those shepherds as they heard it for the first time -- from an angel of the LORD! "Good tidings ... great joy ... a Savior ... Christ the Lord ... a Babe ... lying in a manger."

That had to be a lot to comprehend. What did it mean? "A Savior, who was Christ the Lord."

A Savior. In the Old Testament the LORD had foretold a time when all people would know that He alone was the Savior. Through the prophet Isaiah God proclaimed: "All flesh shall know That I, the LORD, am your Savior, And your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob" (Isaiah 49:26). That time had finally come, and the shepherds were privileged to hear it and see it on that very first night. Through the Child born in Bethlehem the whole world would learn of God's salvation.

Jesus was not just a Savior, but *the* Savior. The Savior who was Christ the Lord. Nearly a century later the apostle John wrote concerning that baby Jesus: "And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world" (1 John 4:14).

Thanks be to God for the gift of the Savior!

Hark the glad sound! The Savior comes, the Savior promised long;
Let every heart prepare a throne and every voice a song.
Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace, Thy welcome shall proclaim
And heaven's eternal arches ring, with Thy beloved name.
(The Lutheran Hymnal, 66:1, 5)

