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# Grace Lutheran Church

## Christmas 2018

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Why Christmas Shepherds?



# GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

## CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL

DECEMBER 25, 2018

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## Our Christmas Worship

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### 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:**..... *WS 708: Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful*

**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:.....Christmas Peace Canon**

**FIRST READING:.....Isaiah 9:2-7**

*In the midst of sin, God promises to send a Child, His Son, to save.*

**SECOND READING:.....Hebrews 1:1-9**

*Jesus is the Son of God, begotten of the Father from eternity.*

**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:.....***WS 711: See in Yonder Manger Low*

**SERMON:.....***Luke 2:8*

"And there were in the same country shepherds, abiding in their fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night; And lo ..."

## Why Christmas Shepherds?

Guest Preacher: Pastor Emeritus David Schierenbeck

**RESPONSE:**..... *TLH 109: While Shepherds Watched ...*

**Sing [♪]:** 1. While shepherds watched their flocks by night,  
All seated on the ground,  
The angel of the Lord came down,  
And glory shone around.  
“Fear not,” said he, for mighty dread  
Had seized their troubled minds;  
“Glad tidings of great joy I bring  
To you and all mankind.”

3. Thus spake the seraph,--and forthwith  
Appeared a shining throng  
Of angels, praising God, and thus  
Addressed their joyful song:  
“All glory be to God on high,  
And to the earth be peace;  
Good will henceforth from Heaven to men  
Begin and never cease.”

**HYMN:**..... *WS 715: Where Shepherds Lately Knelt*

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

**CHRISTMAS PRAYER & LORD’S PRAYER:**

**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:**..... *LSB 364 and 365: Away in a Manger*

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.

# FELLOWSHIP LOST-- TO RESTORATION

Written by Rev. Daniel Fleischer, 11/2018, Melody: TLH 375

When God created earth and heav'n,  
Man that He made was very good.  
He lived in perfect peace with God.  
But Satan tempted man who fell.  
Both death and sorrow followed sin,  
Now ruined was what God had made.  
Man lost his fellowship with God.

The Father had a heart of love,  
No retribution would He show.  
But in His deepest love and grace,  
The life man lost God would restore.  
So He determined in His heart,  
That grace and mercy'd overflow:  
He'd send Messiah, Christ, His Son.

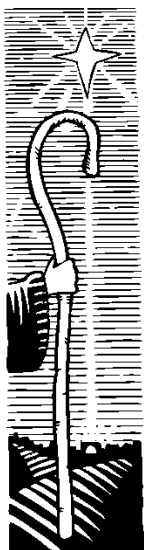
So, in the fullness of the time  
The Father sent His only Son.  
Conceived of God, the Holy Ghost,  
And born of Mary, virgin pure,  
Christ came, the promised Son of God.  
As angels told His lowly birth,  
The glory of the Lord shone round.

With rapt attention shepherds heard:  
"To you this night is born a Child,  
Of lowly birth, yet Christ the Lord,  
All glory be to God on high."  
Now, all who through baptismal grace,  
Believe in Jesus, Savior true,  
Have life eternal through His name.

The shepherds went their Lord to see,  
They left again with joyful hearts,  
And praised the Lord for what they'd seen.  
So also we, through Christ redeemed,  
Will gladly to the world proclaim:  
"By grace alone, through faith in Christ,  
Reclaimed by God, we are His own."

# *A Christmas Day Devotion*

by Martin Luther



“And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night”

That was a mean [undignified] job, watching flocks by night. Common sense calls it low-down work, and the men who do it are regarded as trash. But the Evangelist lauds the angels because they proclaimed their message only to shepherds watching their flock by night. These were real shepherders. And what did they do? They did what shepherds should do. They stayed in their station and did the work of their calling. They were pure in heart and content with their work, not aspiring to be townsmen or nobles, nor envious of the mighty. Next to faith this is the highest art — to be content with the calling in which God has placed you. I have not learned it yet.

Who would have thought that men whose job was tending unreasoning animals would be so praised

that not a pope or a bishop is worthy to hand them a cup of water? It is the very devil that no one wants to follow the shepherds. The married man wants to be without a wife, or the nobleman to be a prince. It is: “If I were this! If I were that!” You fool! The best job is the one you have. If you are married, you cannot have a higher status. If you are a servant, you are in the very best position. Be diligent and know that there are no greater saints on earth than servants. Do not say, “If I were”; say, “I am.” A maid who is always thinking to herself, “If only I were someone else,” will end up with a bad husband.



Look at the shepherds. They were watching their flocks by night, and an angel came and made them apostles, prophets, and children of God. Caiaphas, Herod, and the high priests were not deemed worthy. I would rather be one of those shepherds than that the Pope should make me a saint or the emperor make me a king.

“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.”

