

WELCOMING WORD *Within the gospel reading's profound words lies the simple message that God is revealed in a human person. Though we may try to understand how the Word existed with God from the beginning of time, the wonder we celebrate at Christmas is that the Word continues to dwell among us. Christ comes among us in the gathered assembly, the scriptures, the waters of new birth, and the bread and the wine. Through these ordinary gifts we receive the fullness of God's grace and truth.*

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Worship the LORD, O Jerusalem;

C: praise your God, O Zion,

L: God sends out a command to the earth,

C: a word that runs very swiftly.

L: God declares the word to Jacob,

C: statutes and judgments to Israel.

OPENING HYMN #82 As with Gladness Men of Old (vs. 1-3)

As with gladness men of old did the guiding star behold.
As with joy they hailed its light, leading onward, beaming bright.
So, most gracious Lord, may we evermore be led by thee.

As with joyful steps they sped, Savior, to thy lowly bed;
There to bend the knee before thee, whom heav'n and earth adore.
So may we with willing feet ever seek thy mercy seat.

As they offered gifts most rare at thy cradle, rude and bare,
So may we with holy joy, pure and free from sin's alloy.
All our costliest treasure bring, Christ, to thee, our heav'nly king.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, who was in the beginning, who makes a dwelling among us, who covers us with justice and mercy. Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: God of goodness and lovingkindness,

C: we confess that we have sinned against you and our neighbors. We have turned away from your invitation to new life. We have turned away from the lowly and downtrodden. In your abundant mercy, forgive us our sins, those we know and those known only to you, for the sake of the one who came to live among us, Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

P: Hear the good news of peace and salvation! God forgives us all our sins, not through our own work, but through Jesus Christ, made known to all people. With all who come to the manger, rejoice in this amazing gift of grace.

C: Amen.

INVOCATION

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

C: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Almighty God,

C: **you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

FIRST LESSON: Jeremiah 31:7-14 ⁷Thus says the LORD: Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, "Save, O LORD, your people, the remnant of Israel." ⁸See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north, and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, those with child and those in labor, together; a great company, they shall return here. ⁹With weeping they shall come, and with consolations I will lead them back, I will let them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble; for I have become a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.

¹⁰Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away; say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him, and will keep him as a shepherd a flock." ¹¹For the LORD has ransomed Jacob, and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him. ¹²They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall become like a watered garden, and they shall never languish again. ¹³Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy, I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow. ¹⁴I will give the priests their fill of fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty, says the LORD.

SECOND LESSON: Ephesians 1:3-14 ³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. ⁵He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace ⁸that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight ⁹he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, ¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, ¹²so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. ¹³In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; ¹⁴this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

GOSPEL: John 1:1-18 ¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵(John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") ¹⁶From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

MESSAGE Pastor John Twiton

HYMN #42 Of the Father's Love Begotten (vs. 1, 3, 5)

Of the Father's love begotten ere 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.

This is he whom seers in old time chanted of with one accord.
Whom the voices of the prophets promised in their faithful word;
Now he shines, the long expected; Let creation praise its Lord.
Evermore and evermore.

Christ, to thee, with God the Father, and O Holy Ghost, to thee,
Hymn and chant and high thanksgiving and unwearied praises be:
Honor, glory, and dominion, and eternal victory.
Evermore and evermore. Amen

CONFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day, he rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen.

OFFERTORY PRAYER Gracious God, you came to us as one unknown, bringing joy and salvation to the earth. Nourish us as we worship, that with all who welcome your birth we may proclaim your peace, revealed in Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

P: Joining our voices with the song of the angels, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Redeeming God, you gather together your people from the farthest parts of the earth. Protect your church from stumbling. Let it not be overcome by sorrow, division, or despair. Make us radiant with goodness, that we might live always to the praise of your glory. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

P: You bring together heaven and earth. All creation testifies to your splendor. Hold the ecosystems of this earth in delicate balance, from coastlands to farmlands, forests to wetlands, deserts to rainforests. Show us new ways to live in harmony with the world around us. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

P: You overflow with grace upon grace. Expand the imaginations of those who serve in positions of authority. Open their hearts to the needs of their nations and communities. Protect all those in harm's way and those risking danger for the sake of others. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

P: You bring consolation to those who weep. Embrace those who feel far-off, excluded, or defeated. Accompany those living with chronic and invisible illness. Sustain the weak and weary. Refresh those who labor under the weight of pain or sickness (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

P: You turn our mourning into joy. We give thanks for those who have died in faith (*especially*). With all the saints, give us our inheritance in Christ. In the fullness of time, gather us all together in your mercy. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

P: God of mercy, come quickly to us with grace upon grace as we lift these and all our prayers to you, in the name of Jesus.

C: Amen.

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. 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.

BENEDICTION *May the blessing of God our creator, the love of Jesus Christ our redeemer, and the presence of the Holy Spirit the comforter, surround you and sustain you until we gather again*

CLOSING HYMN: #646 We Three Kings

We three kings of Orient are, bearing gifts we traverse afar.
Field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star.

**REFRAIN: Oh, star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright.
Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.**

Born a king on Bethlehem's plain, gold I bring to crown him again.
King forever ceasing never, over us all to reign. **REFRAIN**

Frankincense to offer have I; incense owns a deity nigh.
Prayer and praising, gladly raising, worshiping God most High. **REFRAIN**

Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume breathes a life of gathering gloom.
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying, sealed in the stone cold tomb. **REFRAIN**

Glorious now behold him arise, King and God and sacrifice.
Heav'n sings alleluia; alleluia the earth replies. **REFRAIN**



OUR SYMPATHIES & PRAYERS are with the family and friends of Glenn Thronson (father of Kate Hook) who passed away on December 31st.

PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS:

Devon Schlegel (father of Dawn Haag)
Norbert Haag (brother of Virgil Haag)
Allen Olson (father of Ingrid Frank)
Delores Bryant
Nick Sydow (friend of Connie Curran's sons)
Brian Marshall (friend of Kim Kelliher)
Jeannie U'Ren
Mike Olson (Wendy Rasmussen's brother)
Irene Brufat
Connie Fausett (sister of Diane Twiton & Jean Bower)
Harlan Oimoen
Grace Aavang
Dianne Haskins (friend of Char Smith)

Ginger Quaderer (Diane Mueller's cousin)
Richard Schuhler (friend of Ron & Bonny Kellogg)
Agnes Robertson (friend of Holly Thompson)
Makenzee Smith
Brock Howe
Mary Krantz
Ruth Ann Nemet
Sally Gaard (friend of Margie Kahl)
Laurie Duden (Brenda Martin's aunt)
Bill Steinhauer
Peter Toniazzo
Shirley Thompson
Vivian Stone

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BUCKY BOOKS - ONLINE ONLY - Bucky Books can still be available for online orders, through our link below till mid January. Please share the link with family and friends. Books are shipped directly to your home. Books sell for \$35 each. Profits help our youth with future summer programming. Thank you for continued support.

*** ORDER ONLINE AT: <https://www.buckybook.com/evangelical-lutheran-church-mt-horeb>

SUNDAY SCHOOL on ZOOM- We will have a break from our ZOOM time on January 3rd. We will resume our online time on January 10th at 9:00 AM.

ELC 'COFFEE TIME' on ZOOM - Join us on Wednesdays at 10 AM each week to catch up with our church family. Time to connect and see each other! Zoom link is emailed each week. If you need the link, contact Pastor John, Tamara or Brenda.

CONFIRMATION SCHEDULE - 7th & 8th graders will resume with classes on Zoom on Jan 6th at 7 pm.

ELC: VOLUNTEERS PLEASE SIGN UP TO HELP AT THE CLOTHES CLOSET LATER IN THE MONTH Members of ELC staff the Clothes Closet the last week in December and the entire month of January. If you might be able to help, click on the sign-up link on the elcmthoreb.org website under the "Serve" tab. Precautions like wearing masks and limiting the number of shoppers and volunteers in the facility are in place to keep both patrons and workers safe. If you would like more info, call or email Kate Hook (katehook63@gmail.com) or 608-327-9944



DEVOTIONS FOR THE WEEK OF JANUARY 3, 2021

SHARE: What was a high point of your day? What was a low point?

READ: Read the following daily readings to deepen your understanding

Monday, Psalm 110, Assurance of God's Victory

Tuesday, Proverbs 22:1-9, Sayings of the Wise

Wednesday, Matthew 2:1-12, The Visit of the Wise Men

Thursday, Hebrews 11:23-26, The Faith of Moses

Friday, Exodus 2:11-25, Moses Flees to Midian

Saturday, John 8:39-59, Jesus and Abraham

TALK: Consider some of these ideas: *"And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth."* John 1:14. John begins his gospel with this prologue: a hymn to the Word through whom all things were created. This Word became flesh and brought grace and truth to the world.

- What difference does it make that God took on flesh and became one of us?
- How do continue to celebrate the birth of Christ in our world?
- Is there any end to the depth of Jesus' grace?

PRAY: Almighty God, you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

BLESS: May you experience the grace of Jesus' presence in our world. Amen!