

Prince of Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church



Good News of Great Joy
A Savior Has Been Born

Christmas Eve

December 24, 2023



“Learning and sharing the gospel of Christ the Prince of Peace.”

Prince of Peace
Evangelical Lutheran Church
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WELCOME!

Welcome to Prince of Peace Lutheran Church. We pray that the time spent here in God's house helps you to appreciate how dearly God loves you! May God bless our worship today! If you are visiting with us for the first time, please take a moment to fill out one of the information cards found in the pews next to the hymnals. You can either place the completed card in the offering plate or give it to the usher when being ushered out at the end of the service. We look forward to getting to know you better in order to serve you fully with God's word!

THEME FOR TODAY

We live in a world with a 24-hour news cycle. Between the countless tv networks, social media posts, and webpages, news is flying at us constantly. Most of it seems awful. We doomscroll on our phones—bad news after more bad news. Our hearts grow heavy. Our minds grow anxious. The world is starving for good news. And that is exactly what we get at Christmas. On that first Christmas, the angel told the shepherds, “I bring you good news of great joy” (Luke 2:10). News is not advice. The angel had not come to give advice about how to cope in a messed-up world. News is simply a report of facts. The angel reported a fact—the birth of One who would make everything right again. This child would remove all our fears and fill our hearts with joy. Our worship today presents to us this good news in a series of readings that lead up to the announcement of good news accompanied by songs of praise.

Christmas Eve in Lessons and Carols

354 O Come, All Ye Faithful

CW 354 sts. 1-3

Opening Prayer

Dear Lord God, in your word you encourage us:

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” (Colossians 3:15-17)

This Christmas season we do just that as we look to your word to hear again the prophecies concerning the Savior, the message of the angels announcing his birth, and eyewitness accounts of those who saw this great and mighty wonder in little Bethlehem. We thank you for making these great truths known to us.

We begin our worship this day in your name and bring to you our petitions as our dear Savior himself 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.**

Be seated

First Lesson

Genesis 3:8–15

The Seed of the woman will crush the serpent's head.

⁸Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”

¹⁰He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”

¹¹And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”

¹²The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

¹³Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?”

The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

¹⁴So the LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this,

“Cursed are you above all livestock

and all wild animals!

You will crawl on your belly

and you will eat dust

all the days of your life.

¹⁵And I will put enmity

between you and the woman,

and between your offspring and hers;

he will crush your head,

and you will strike his heel.”

313 Hark the Glad Sound! The Savior Comes

CW 313 sts. 1–3

Second Lesson

Titus 3:4–7

The reason why Jesus appeared was to save us.

⁴But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, ⁵he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

332 Let Us All with Gladsome Voice

CW 332

Third Lesson

Isaiah 7:10–14

The prophet foretells the coming of the Savior.

¹⁰Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, ¹¹“Ask the LORD your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights.”

¹²But Ahaz said, “I will not ask; I will not put the LORD to the test.”

¹³Then Isaiah said, “Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of humans? Will you try the patience of my God also? ¹⁴Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

330 Peace Came to Earth

CW 330

Fourth Lesson

Isaiah 11:1–9

A Branch from the stump of Jesse will bear fruit.

¹A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.

²The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and of might,
the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD—

³and he will delight in the fear of the LORD.

He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes,
or decide by what he hears with his ears;

⁴but with righteousness he will judge the needy,
with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.

He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth;
with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.

⁵Righteousness will be his belt
and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

⁶The wolf will live with the lamb,
the leopard will lie down with the goat,
the calf and the lion and the yearling together;
and a little child will lead them.

⁷The cow will feed with the bear,
their young will lie down together,
and the lion will eat straw like the ox.

⁸The infant will play near the cobra’s den,
and the young child will put its hand into the viper’s nest.

⁹They will neither harm nor destroy
on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.

333 O Little Town of Bethlehem

CW 333 sts. 1–2, 4

Fifth Lesson

Luke 1:26–35, 38

The angel Gabriel announces to Mary the birth of a son.

²⁶In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”

²⁹Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. ³¹You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³²He 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, ³³and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”

³⁴“How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”

³⁵The 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.

³⁸“I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her.

350 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

CW 350

Sixth Lesson

Luke 2:1–7

St. Luke tells of the birth of Jesus.

¹In 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.) ³And everyone went to their own town to register.

⁴So 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. ⁵He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

⁶While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷and 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.

340 Away in a Manger

CW 340

Seventh Lesson

Luke 2:8–12

The birth of the Savior is announced.

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

Christmas Eve Message

Luke 2:8–12

345 Where Shepherds Lately Knelt

CW 345

Eighth Lesson

Luke 2:13-20

The angels sing praises to God at the birth of Jesus. Shepherds visit the Christ child.

¹³Suddenly 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.”

¹⁵When 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.”

¹⁶So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

346 Angels We Have Heard on High

CW 346

Stand

Ninth Lesson

John 1:1–14

St. John unfolds the great mystery of the incarnation.

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was with God in the beginning. ³Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. ⁸He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

⁹The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹²Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— ¹³children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

¹⁴The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

344 What Child Is This

CW 344 sts. 1–2

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

May he who by his incarnation gathered into one things earthly and heavenly, fill you with such joy that comes from the forgiveness of sins and the hope of eternal life; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the † Son and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always.

Amen.

Be seated

337 Silent Night, Holy Night

CW 337 sts. 1–3

Acknowledgments

Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols from Christian Worship

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THE WEEK AHEAD

MONDAY	10:30 am Christmas Day Worship with Lord's Supper
SUNDAY	9:15 am Bible Class 10:30 am Worship

CHANCEL FLOWERS

Joe and Chris Henry are celebrating their wedding anniversary. The flowers today are their gift of gratitude to God for the blessings they have enjoyed as husband and wife. We join them in thanking God for blessing this union and for providing them with a common faith in Jesus Christ by which they can continue to encourage one another and serve one another as though serving their Lord. Congratulations to Joe and Chris!



WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY



The new year is right around the corner. That means it's almost time again for monthly women's Bible Study. Saturday, January 6, 10:00 AM - Ruth, A Love Story - All women of confirmation age and older are invited AND bring a friend!

CHRISTMAS EVE

Peace, in Aiken, SC, our sister WELS church will be holding their Christmas Eve service this evening at 5:00 pm. You are welcome to attend!



Operating Offerings		Attendance		Mortgage Progress	
12/13 & 12/17/23	\$ 3,404.00	12/13/23	12	12/13 & 12/17/23	\$ 2,600.00
Month to Date	\$ 11,546.00			Month to Date	\$ 3,045.00
YTD	\$ 185,970.00	12/17/23	72	YTD	\$ 42,010.00
Budget YTD	\$ 194,857.00			Budget YTD	\$ 33,258.00
2022 YTD	\$ 169,905.00			2022 YTD	\$ 41,124.00

Weekly needs December Operating Offering
Monthly Mortgage Payment

\$ 3,987.00
\$ 2,867.00