

# **St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church**

**December 24, 2020**

## **A Digital Christmas Eve Liturgy**

### **Announcements & explanation of service**

P: Merry Christmas! Some of you may recognize me, my name is Charlie Roberts. For years I led the alternative worship experience at St Mark's, that we call The Table, and as a result also helped lead one of our numerous Christmas Eve services. I was humbled that Pastor Jim approached me to also lead a service this Christmas. In a year when our ability to go...and to gather with our friends and loved ones is so limited, as we gather for today's worship, I want to remind us all that the profound message of the Christmas story is that we worship a God who COMES TO US, in the person of Jesus! God with us...Emmanuel.

Let us pause now to prepare our hearts and minds for worship...

### **Welcome:**

P: On this holiest of days, we gather in the name of God, the Creator of the Universe, Jesus, the Holy Child of Bethlehem, and the Blessed Holy Spirit, who unites us all.

**C: Amen**

**Opening Song: The First Noel (ELW #300)**

**Opening Scripture: Luke 2: 1-20, CEV**

## **Opening Litany:**

A: Have you heard the story passed down for generations?

**C: Yes Lord, we have heard**

A: Of the baby born in Bethlehem?

**C: Yes Lord, born in humility**

A: Did you come to see what the shepherds saw?

**C: Yes Lord, we came to see**

A: And hear the song that the herald angels sing?

**C: Yes Lord, to sing praises to the new-born King**

A: Did you know this baby will one day save us all?

**C: Yes Lord, we know of the prophecy**

A: Battered and beaten, we hung him on a tree?

**C: Yes Lord, the Lamb of Calvary.**

A: But on this night we celebrate the coming of a Savior.

**C: Yes Lord, on this Holy Night**

A: Christ, The Savior is born!

**C: Christ, the Savior is born!**

## **Prayer of Preparation:**

P: Let us pray. The Lord be with you...

**C: and also with you**

P: A prayer by Robert Louis Stevenson...

Loving Father, help us remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and worship of the wise men. Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting. Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clear hearts. May the Christmas morning make us happy to be thy children, and Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake.

**C: Amen**

## **The Prophecy: Isaiah 9: 2-7, CEV**

2 Those who walked in the dark  
have seen a bright light.

And it shines upon everyone who lives in the land of darkest shadows.

3 Our Lord, you have made  
your nation stronger.

Because of you, its people are glad and celebrate  
like workers at harvest time or like soldiers dividing up what they have  
taken.

4 You have broken the power  
of those who abused and enslaved your people.

You have rescued them just as you saved your people from Midian.

5 The boots of marching warriors  
and the blood-stained uniforms  
have been fed to flames and eaten by fire.

6 A child has been born for us.

We have been given a son who will be our ruler.

His names will be Wonderful Advisor and Mighty God,  
Eternal Father and Prince of Peace.

7 His power will never end; peace will last forever.

He will rule David's kingdom and make it grow strong.

He will always rule with honesty and justice.

The Lord All-Powerful  
will make certain that all of this is done.

## **Message: The Living Nativity**

## **Song: What Child Is This? (ELW #296)**

### **Creed**

P: I invite to join me in sharing our faith through the words of the traditional Apostles Creed

**C: I believe in God the Father Almighty,  
Creator of Heaven and Earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by 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 from the dead.**

**He ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.**

**From there he will come 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.**

### **Prayers of the People**

P: Sister and brothers in Christ, as we gather this day, we pray for with friends and families and all those who are not present with us, or who are without the comfort, warmth and security of this community, and the joy we share. Let us pray. To close each of our petitions, I will say

We your people pray...

**Change my heart... and you respond... Lord, make us new**

For those who have experienced the sorrow and anguish of losing loved ones and neighbors from this awful pandemic, or accidents, to acts of violence, terrorism or war, we pray for healing and hope of our nation in the midst of this despair. We especially remember this day...

We your people pray...

**P: Change my heart... Lord, make us new**

As the long, dark winter nights are filled with the bright light of countless stars and we bring the light indoors on our trees and candle-lit rooms, we thank God for the bright light of forgiveness and hope in Jesus Christ that dispels the darkness in our lives. We your people pray...

**P: Change my heart... Lord, make us new**

We ask you God to bless and equip our bishops, Pastor Jim and our church leaders, congregations and ministries, especially as they make decisions regarding our safe indoor gatherings to pray, worship and be in fellowship. We your people pray...

**P: Change my heart... Lord, make us new**

Lord, we know Jesus persisted in his love for humankind, service, healing, forgiving and reaching out to the unloved and those pushed aside in society. We ask God to grant us the faith and courage to follow Jesus' example. We your people pray...

**P: Change my heart... Lord, make us new**

We remember in our prayers college and university students during their winter break or J-terms, that they will experience both renewal and enrichment in spirit and knowledge.

We your people pray...

**P: Change my heart... Lord, make us new**

L: We entrust all these prayers to you gracious God, in the name of the promised Messiah, Emmanuel, God with us in the person of Jesus our Lord. And all God's people said...

**C: Amen**

## **Lord's Prayer**

Lord remember us in your Kingdom and pray with me as we have been taught to pray. 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.

## **Benediction**

*(If participants have a candle, you are invited to light it, and keep it as a focal point for the singing of Silent Night)*

A: May God direct your ways in peace, make you abound in love for one another and for all, and strengthen your hearts until the coming of our Lord Jesus.

Go in peace to love and serve God's people.

**C: Amen**

**Sending Song: Silent Night (ELW #281)**