

Historic Zion Lutheran Church

DIVINE SERVICE FOR THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY

9:00 am Wednesday, December 25, 2024

RECEIVING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER AT ZION

As intended by Christ and as practiced by the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church throughout her history, "Closed Communion" is observed in this congregation, in which the Lord's Supper is distributed only to those:

- (a) who have been **baptized** in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit;
- (b) who have been **instructed** in the truth of Holy Scripture as taught in the Lutheran Confessions, who have been **confirmed** in this Lutheran faith, and who now confess the same doctrines that are taught in this congregation, holding membership in a congregation of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod;
- (c) who **believe that in this sacrament the real body and blood of Christ are truly distributed to them and orally received by them**, bestowing on them the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation;
- (d) who **sincerely repent** of all their sins, and desire to receive God's forgiveness in this holy meal.

Guests at our services, before receiving the sacrament, are requested to affirm these facts with one of our pastors. Thank you for honoring our practice. If you are looking for a church home, would like to be a member of Zion, or would like to learn more about the Christian Faith, please speak to one of our pastors about our membership classes.

✠ = *appropriate to make the baptismal sign of the cross*
When "rise" or "kneel" is indicated, it is appropriate to sit if needed

[Rise] **Invocation**

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen!

The Congregation rises, turns towards the entrance of the nave, and faces the Cross of Christ, the reminder of Christ's promise to come and dwell among His people as they are gathered in His name.

Processional Hymn Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful Burgundy Hymn 379

[Be Seated]

Kyrie setting by J. Brudieu

[Rise]

Gloria in Excelsis Hark! the Herald Angels Sing Burgundy Hymn 380

Salutation

The Lord be with you.



And with thy spir— it.

Collect for Christmas Day: *Almighty God, grant that the birth of Your only-begotten Son in the flesh may set us free from the bondage of sin; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.*



A ——— men!

[Be Seated]

+ The Office of the Word of God +

Old Testament Reading..... Isaiah 52:7-10

[After the reading] *This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.*

Gradual Hymn Rejoice, Rejoice Burgundy Hymn 391

Epistle of the Day Hebrews 1:1-12


[After the reading] *This is the word of the Lord.* **Thanks be to God.**

[Rise and face the Processional Cross for the Gospel Procession.]

Alleluia Sequence Oh, Rejoice, Ye Christians Burgundy Hymn 897

[Sing the Twelve-fold Alleluia below and stanzas 1 & 2 BEFORE the Gospel.

Stanzas 3 & 4 will be sung after the Gospel is proclaimed.]

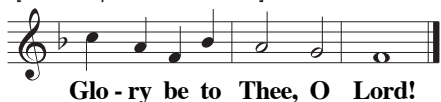


Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,
ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le -
lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,
lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

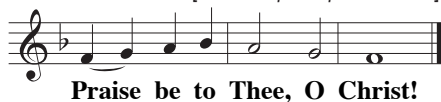
Holy Gospel St. John 1:1-18

[The Gospel is announced.]

[The Gospel is proclaimed.]



Glo - ry be to Thee, O Lord!



Praise be to Thee, O Christ!

Hymn Oh, Rejoice, Ye Christians Burgundy Hymn 897

[Sing stanzas 3 & 4. After singing stanza 4, sing the Twelve-fold Alleluia below.]



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,
ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le -
lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,
lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

Confession of Faith (The Nicene Creed)

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, Begotten, not made, Being of one substance with the Father, By whom all things were made; Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven

[Bow] And was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, And was made man;

And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried; And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures; And ascended into heaven, And sits at the right hand of the Father; And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead; Whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spoke by the Prophets. And I believe in one Holy Christian and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, And I look for the resurrection of the dead, And the life of the world to come. Amen!

[Be Seated]

Hymn of the Day **Of the Father's Heart Begotten**

Words by Prudentius (c. 348–413)

Melody from *Piae Cantiones* (1582)



[Choir] 1. Of the Fa - ther's heart be - got - ten,
 [Choir] 2. By his word was all cre - a - ted;
 [All] 3. He as - sumed this mor - tal bo - dy,
 [Women] 4. O how blest that won - drous birth - day,
 [Men] 5. This is he, whom seer and sy - bil
 [All] 6. Sing ye heights of heav'n, his prais - es;



Ere the world from cha - os rose, He is
 He com - mand - ed and 'twas done; Earth and
 Frail and fee - ble, doomed to die, That the
 When the Maid the curse re - trieved, Brought to
 Sang in a - ges long gone by; This is
 An - gels and arch - an - gels, sing! Where - so -



Al - pha: from that Foun - tain All that
 sky and bound - less o - cean, U - ni -
 race from dust cre - a - ted Might not
 birth man - kind's sal - va - tion, By the
 he of old re - veal - ed In the
 e'er ye be, ye faith - ful, Let your



is and hath been flows; He is O - me -
 verse of three in one, All that sees the
 pe - rish ut - ter - ly, Which the dread - ful
 Ho - ly Ghost con - ceived; And the Babe, the
 page of pro - phe - cy; Lo! he comes, the
 joy - ous an - thems ring, Ev' - ry tongue his



ga, of all things Yet to come the
 moon's soft ra - dian - ce, All that breathes be -
 Law had sen - tenced In the depths of
 world's Re - deem - er, In her lov - ing
 pro - mised Sa - viour; Let the world his
 name con - fess - ing, Count - less voi - ces

mys - tic Close, Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
 neath the sun, Ev - er - more and ev - e - more.
 hell to lie, Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
 arms re - ceived, Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
 prais - es cry! Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
 an - swer - ing, Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.

Sermon

+ The Office of Confession of Sins and Holy Absolution +

Having heard the Word of God, and as we prepare for the great gift of the Holy Sacrament of Christ's body and blood, let us confess our sins and receive God's forgiveness.

[Kneel]

*Our help is in the name of the Lord Who made heaven and earth.
 I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord. And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.*

O almighty God, merciful Father; I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.

Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen!

[Rise] **Prayer of the Church**

*Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs: [After each petition]:..., Lord, in Your mercy: Hear our prayer.
 [After the final prayer]:..., one God, now and forever Amen.*

[Be Seated] **Offerings**

Choral Voluntary Today a Child Is Born C. de Morales

[Rise] **Offertory Hymn Break Forth Burgundy Hymn 378: St 1**

[Sing stanza 1 only.]

+ The Office of the Sacrament of the Altar +

Preface

The Lord be with you.

Lift up your hearts.

And with thy spir - it.

We lift them up un - to the Lord.

Let us give thanks unto the Lord, our God.

It is meet and right so to do.

Proper Preface for Christmas

It is truly meet, right and salutary ever more praising You and saying:

Sanctus Hymn Let All Mortal Flesh Burgundy Hymn 621

[Choir alone sings stanza 1; Men alone sing stanza 2; Women alone sing stanza 3; All sing stanza 4.]

[Kneel] **Lord's Prayer**

[Pastor chants:] *Our Father who art in heaven; but deliver us from evil.*

For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glo - ry for -
ev - er and ev - er. A - men.

Words of Institution, Pax Domini

The peace of the Lord be with you always!

A - men.

Agnus Dei

1-3. O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that tak-est a-way the sin of the world,
have mer-cy up - on us. Grant us Thy Peace. A - - - men!

[Be Seated]

Distribution Hymns A Great and Mighty Wonder Burgundy Hymn 383

Now Sing We, Now Rejoice Burgundy Hymn 386

Eucharistic Benediction

The Body and Blood of your Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in body and soul to life everlasting! ✠ Depart in Peace! Amen!

Post-Communion Canticle The Nunc Dimittis

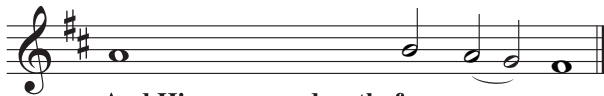
1. Lord now— lettest Thou Thy
servant, de— part— in — peace, ac— cord— ing to Thy Word.
2. For mine__ eyes have seen
Thy Salvation,
which Thou hast pre— pared__ be— fore the face of all__ people.
3. a Light to light-en the Gen-tiles and the Glo- ry of Thy peo-ple Is - - - ra-el.
4. Glo— ry__ be to the
Father, and to__ the __ Son, and to the Ho- ly Ghost.



5. As it ___ was in the beginning, is now, and e-ver shall be, world with-out end. A-men.

Post Communion Rite

Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good.



And His mercy endureth for - ev — er.

Prayer of Thanksgiving ... one God, now and forever.



A — men.

The Lord be with you.

Bless we the Lord.



And with thy spir — rit.



Thanks be to God.

Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and ✠ give you peace.



A-men, A-men, A - men.

During the Recessional, the Congregation turns and faces the Processional Cross, the symbol of Christ's promise to remain with and lead His people as they now go and live in the world in His name.

Recessional Hymn Joy to the World Burgundy Hymn 387

Postlude From Heaven Above J. S. Bach



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Readings for the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord

The Old Testament Reading is Isaiah 52:7-10

How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of him who brings good news,
who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness,
who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.”
The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice;
together they sing for joy;
for eye to eye they see the return of the LORD to Zion.
Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem,
for the LORD has comforted his people;
he has redeemed Jerusalem.
The LORD has bared his holy arm
before the eyes of all the nations,
and all the ends of the earth shall see
the salvation of our God.

The Epistle is Hebrews 1:1-12

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

For to which of the angels did God ever say,
“You are my Son,
today I have begotten you”?

Or again,
“I will be to him a father,
and he shall be to me a son”?

And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says,
“Let all God’s angels worship him.”

Of the angels he says,
“He makes his angels winds,
and his ministers a flame of fire.”

But of the Son he says,

“Your throne, O God, is forever and ever,
the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom.
You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness;
therefore God, your God, has anointed you
with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.”

And,

“You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning,
and the heavens are the work of your hands;
they will perish, but you remain;
they will all wear out like a garment,
like a robe you will roll them up,
like a garment they will be changed.
But you are the same,
and your years will have no end.”

The Gospel is John 1:1-18

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John bore witness about him, and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.’”) For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.

Hymns for the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord

LSB379 O Come All Ye Faithful

John F. Wade

1. O come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant!
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold Him Born the king of angels;

Refrain: O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord!

2. Highest, most holy, Light of Light eternal,
Born of a virgin, a mortal He comes;
Son of the Father Now in flesh appearing! *Refrain*
3. Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God In the highest: *Refrain*
4. Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, Born this happy morning;
Jesus, to Thee be glory giv'n!
Word of the Father Now in flesh appearing! *Refrain*

LSB380 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Charles Wesley

1. Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, Join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Refrain: Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

2. Christ, by highest heav'n adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold Him come, Offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, Hail the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as Man with man to dwell, Jesus, our Immanuel! *Refrain*
3. Hail, the heav'n-born Prince of Peace! Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings, Ris'n with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by, Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them second birth. *Refrain*

LSB391 Rejoice, Rejoice This Happy Morn

Birgitte Katerine Boye.

1. Rejoice, rejoice this happy morn, A Savior unto us is born,
The Christ, the Lord of glory!
His lowly birth in Bethlehem The angels from on high proclaim
And sing redemption's story!
My soul, extol God's great favor; Bless Him ever For salvation;
Give Him praise and adoration!"

LSB897 O Rejoice, Ye Christians Loudly

Christian Keimann

Twelvefold Alleluia: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

1. O rejoice, ye Christians, loudly, For our joy has now begun;
Wondrous things our God has done.
Tell abroad his goodness proudly, Who our race has honored thus,
That He deigns to dwell with us.

Refrain: Joy, O joy, beyond all gladness, Christ has done away with sadness!
Hence, all sorrow and repining, For the Sun of Grace is shining!

2. See, my soul, thy Savior chooses Weakness here and poverty;
In such love He comes to thee.
Neither crib nor cross refuses; All He suffers for thy good
To redeem thee by His blood. *Refrain*

The Reading of the Holy Gospel

3. Lord, how shall I thank Thee rightly? I acknowledge that by Thee
I am saved eternally.
Let me not forget it lightly, But to Thee at all times cleave
And my heart true peace receive. *Refrain*
4. Jesus, guard and guide Thy members, Fill them with Thy boundless grace,
Hear their prayers in ev'ry place.
Fan to flame faith's glowing embers; Grant all Christians, far and near,
Holy peace, a glad new year! *Refrain* then *Twelvefold Alleluia*

Of the Father's Heart Begotten

Prudentius

Printed in Service Bulletin

LSB378 Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light

Johann Rist

1. Break forth, O beauteous heav'nly light, And usher in the morning.
Ye shepherds, shrink not with affright, The day of grace is dawning.
This Child, though weak in infancy, Our confidence and joy shall be,
The pow'r of Satan breaking, Our peace with God now making.

LSB621 Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence Liturgy of St. James, 5th cent.Choir
only

1. Let all mortal flesh keep silence And with fear and trembling stand;
Ponder nothing earthly minded, For with blessing in His hand
Christ our God to earth descending Comes our homage to demand.
- M 2. King of kings yet born of Mary, As of old on earth He stood,
Lord of lords, in human vesture, In the body and the blood,
He will give to all the faithful His own self for heav'nly food.
- W 3. Rank on rank the host of heaven Spreads its vanguard on the way
As the Light of Light descending From the realms of endless day,
Comes the pow'rs of hell to vanquish As the darkness clears away.
4. At His feet the six-winged seraph, Cherubim with sleepless eye,
Veil their faces to the presence As with ceaseless voice they cry:
"Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia, Lord Most High!"

LSB383 A Great and Mighty Wonder

Germanus

1. A great and mighty wonder, A full and holy cure:
The virgin bears the infant With virgin honor pure!

Refrain: Proclaim the Savior's birth:

"To God on high be glory And peace to all the earth!"

2. The Word becomes incarnate And yet remains on high,
And cherubim sing anthems To shepherds from the sky. *Refrain*
3. While thus they sing your Monarch, Those bright angelic bands,
Rejoice, O vales and mountains, And oceans, clap your hands. *Refrain*
4. Since all He comes to ransom, By all be He adored,
The infant born in Bethl'em, The Savior and the Lord. *Refrain*
5. All idols then shall perish And Satan's lying cease,
And Christ shall raise His scepter, Decreeing endless peace. *Refrain*

LSB386 Now Sing We, Now RejoiceLatin and German, 14th cent.

1. Now sing we, now rejoice, Now raise to heav'n our voice;
He from whom joy streameth Poor in a manger lies;
Not so brightly beameth The sun in yonder skies.
Thou my Savior art! Thou my Savior art!
2. Come from on high to me; I cannot rise to thee.
Cheer my wearied spirit, O pure and holy Child;
Through Thy grace and merit, Blest Jesus, Lord most mild,
Draw me unto Thee! Draw me unto Thee!
3. Now through His Son doth shine The Father's grace divine.
Death was reigning o'er us Through sin and vanity
Till He opened for us A bright eternity.
May we praise Him there! May we praise Him there!
4. Oh, where shall joy be found? Where but on heav'nly ground?
Where the angels singing With all His saints unite,
Sweetest praises bringing In heav'nly joy and light,
Oh, that we were there! Oh, that we were there!

LSB387 Joy to the World

Isaac Watts

1. Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King:
Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing, And heav'n and nature sing.
2. Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let men their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat the sounding joy.
3. No more let sins and sorrows grow Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found, Far as the curse is found.
4. He rules the world with truth and grace And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love, And wonders of His love.

*The Feast of the
Nativity of Our Lord*

December 25, 2024, 9:00 AM



*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God. John 1:1-4*



In loving memory of
Dr. Robert & Katherine Leininger
and Fred, Betty, Teresa, & John Beckman
by Kevin & Maribeth Leininger

In loving memory of Willie Manning
by Rose Manning

In honor of Robert & Loretta Manth, Albert & Caroline Manth,
Ferdinand & Henrietta Bornkamp, and Mrs. Clara Tegtmeyer
by Jennifer Manth

In loving memory of our parents Walter & Georgianna Ostermeyer
“Savior of the nations, come!”
by their thankful children Karen, David, Kim, and Kirk

In loving memory of my father John A. Pless
by Rev. John T. Pless

“Joy, joy, for Christ is born, The babe, the son of Mary!”
In loving memory of our parents Darwin & Arlene Punke
and Earl Klein
by Pastor & Marge Punke

In loving memory of my parents Albert A. & Emma B. Dirks
by Marilyn Shafter

In loving memory of my wife Jill Stokes, my parents David & Savannah
Stokes, and my sister and nephew Artis & Michael Barksdale
by Clarence Stokes

“O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!”
by André Woodard

In memory of beloved parents Manfred and Lore Ziegler
by Rev. Dr. Roland & Anne Ziegler



In loving memory of
Elizabeth Hope Bahr
by Rev. Michael & Amber Bahr

In loving memory of William Bengs and Walter & Adeline Bengs
by Clarann Bengs

In loving memory of our parents
Paul & Esther Bieberich and David & Agnes Shutt
by Don & Beth Bieberich

In loving memory of our parents Paul & Esther Bieberich and
Paul & Hilda Menze
by Dwight & CarolLu Bieberich

To the Glory of God
by Mike & Rita Davies

In memory of Eileen Porter
by Julie Ganaway

In loving memory of my mother Virginia Hollman
and grandparents Frank & Hulda Sonne
by Beth Hollman

In memory of my beloved wife Virginia Hollman
by Richard Hollman

In loving memory of Ralph & Doloris Beck
by Connie Houser

In loving memory of our parents
Alonzo & Ora Edmonds and Alma Jackson
by Frank & Alanza Jackson

In loving memory of Spiro & Anne Kostoff
and Karen Kostoff Wood
by the family

“To honor the Christ Child”
by Rev. George & Lois Lange

Celebrate

The Birth Of Christ

Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

2313 Hanna Street, Fort Wayne, IN 46803 | 260-744-1389
pastor@zionfw.org, church@zionfw.org | website: www.zionfw.org

Zion Lutheran Church is the body of Christ at Hanna and Creighton in Fort Wayne, Indiana that:

- Receives Christ's gifts in Word and Sacraments; and
- Responds to God's love in Christ by
 - Reaching out to those who do not know His love; and
 - Revealing His love in acts of kindness and mercy.

The Pastoral Ministry at Zion

Senior Pastor: Rev. Douglas D. Punke, MDiv (341-5397)
Field Workers: Matthew Harrison, Nathaniel Demlow

The Teaching Staff at Lutheran South Unity

Principal: Amber Bahr (744-0459; www.lsusfw.org)
Teachers: Yvonne Schwantz (8th, MS ELA), Michael Cullen (7th, MS Science),
Chase Mertz (6th, MS Social Studies), Danielle Ramsey (5th), Abbey Kohler (4th),
Tiffany Scheurich (3rd), John Fink (2nd), Hannah Fink (1st), Rachel Wiegman (K-A),
Michelle Madden (K-B), Natalie Reynolds (Art), Open Position (Music),
Lizzy Hoham (Progress Partners Coach), Cathie Wakeland (Literacy Coach), Gary Arrington (PE, AD)

The Support Staff

Organist and Director of Parish Music: Michael Hollman, MM
Church Office Manager: Melvia Culpher



What Doctor Luther Says:

About the Church's Treasure: the Holy Gospel

Thesis 62 — The true treasure of the church is the most holy gospel of the glory and grace of God.

[A]ccording to the Apostle in Rom. 1 [:3-6], the gospel is a preaching of the incarnate Son of God, given to us without any merit on our part for salvation and peace. It is a word of salvation, a word of grace, a word of comfort, a word of joy, a voice of the bridegroom and the bride, a good word, a word of peace. Isaiah says, chapter 52 [:7], “How beautiful ... are the feet of those who bring good tidings, who publish peace, who preach good tidings.” But the law is a word of destruction, a word of wrath, a word of sadness, a word of grief, a voice of the judge and the defendant, a word of restlessness, a word of curse. For according to the Apostle, “The law is the power of sin” [Cf. I Cor. 15:56], and “the law brings wrath” [Rom. 4:15]; it is a law of death [Rom. 7:5, 13]. Through the law we have nothing except an evil conscience, a restless heart, a troubled breast because of our sins, which the law points out but does not take away. And we ourselves cannot take it away. Therefore for those of us who are held captive, who are overwhelmed by sadness and in dire despair, the light of the gospel comes and says, “Fear not” [Isa. 35:4], “comfort, comfort my people” [Isa. 40:1], “encourage the fainthearted” [I Thess. 5:14], “behold your God” [Isa. 40:9], “behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” [John 1:29]. Behold that one who alone fulfils the law for you, whom God has made to be your righteousness, sanctification, wisdom, and redemption, for all those who believe in him [I Cor. 1:30]. When the sinful conscience hears this sweetest messenger, it comes to life again, shouts for joy while leaping about full of confidence, and no longer fears death, the types of punishments associated with death, or hell.

Luther's Works, 31:230-1.



Beloved in Christ,

I shared with you from Dr. Luther last year. Here is a bit more, juxtaposing Jesus as the Son of God and the fleshly Son of Mary: “She ‘... wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger.’ Why not in a cradle, on a bench, or on the ground? Because they had no cradle, bench, table, board, nor anything whatever except the manger of the oxen. That was the first throne of this King. There in a stable, without man or maid, lay the Creator of all the world. And there was the maid of fifteen years bringing forth her firstborn without water, fire, light, or pan, a sight for tears! What Mary and Joseph did next, nobody knows. The scholars say they adored. They must have marveled that this Child was the Son of God. He was also a real human being.

... He was a true baby, with flesh, blood, hands, and legs. He slept, cried, and did everything else that a baby does only without sin. ...

Mary was not only holy. She was also the mother of the Lord. With trembling and reverence, before nestling him to herself, she laid him down, because her faith said to her, “He will be the Son of the Highest.”...

[Yet] I would not have you contemplate the deity of Christ, the majesty of Christ, but rather his flesh. Look upon the baby Jesus. Divinity may terrify man. Inexpressible majesty will crush him. That is why Christ took on our humanity, save for sin, that he should not terrify us but rather that with love and favor he should console and confirm.

... To me there is no greater consolation given to mankind than this, that Christ became man, a child, a babe, playing in the lap and at the breasts of his most gracious mother. Who is there whom this sight would not comfort? Now is overcome the power of sin, death, hell, conscience, and guilt, if you come to judge this gurgling Babe and believe that he is come, not to judge you, but to save.” From Martin Luther’s Christmas Book. In fact, both of these identities is what makes Christmas so special. In Jesus, the transcendent Son of God becomes the immanent Savior of the world.

God grant you the peace which passes all understanding in God’s Son, born for you. And God grant you a blessed New Year. Glory to God in the highest!

Yours in Christ,

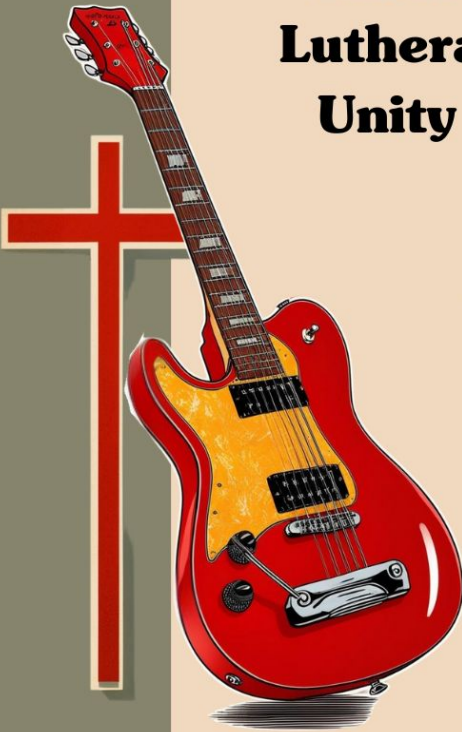
Pastor Pinke



Rockin' *My Salvation*



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Date!**

Feb. 22, 2025
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