

Redeemer Lutheran Church San Antonio, Texas

December 25, 2023
Christmas Day

NOTES: Offerings will not be collected by passing plates. Please place your attendance cards and offering in the plates located by the narthex.

We offer large print copies of the liturgy, and for Holy Communion we offer gluten free wafers and non-alcoholic white grape juice.

Masks are not required, but you can wear one at your own discretion. There is no specified seating for bible class or worship.

Prelude

The Other Christmas Stories

Galatians 4:4-7 “But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.” So, you are no longer a slave, but God’s child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.”

John 1:14 “The 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.”

Hebrews 2:14-18 “Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of

death — that is, the devil — and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. For this reason, he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.”

Hebrews 4:14-16 “Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

Christmas Hymn:

“O Come, All Ye Faithful” – LSB # 379

Call to Worship

Pastor: In snow-capped churches, and on sand-strewn beaches, in desert landscapes stretches, God’s people gather in joy to celebrate a birth. With hopes strewn in our hearts like wrapping paper under a tree, we offer our thanks and praise for the gift of grace swaddled in love. With eyes wide open like little children, with hearts full of wonder and laughter, we join our lives with Mary and Joseph, and with the shepherds who ran to tell the good news.

Christmas Morning Prayer

All: Grace dawned this morning, streaking our bleary eyes with bright shafts of beauty and goodness. Joy sang us awake with carols of wonder written by the shepherds, the tunes of the Old Testament promises composed by the Holy Spirit.

We Rejoice and Give Thanks

Pastor: God in Community, Holy in One, our Grace, our Joy, our Hope, even as we pray as your Child taught us saying;

All: 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.

Call to Reconciliation

Pastor: On this morning of love and joy, of laughter and families, we must remember and confess how we dampen the spirits of others, speak hurtful words to those we love, turn our backs on those in need. We need a forgiving heart and gracious words for we represent the Christmas Savior who said “love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, forgive as you have been forgiven”

Unison Prayer of Confession

All: Manger-dwelling God, we heard the songs of the angels, yet we easily tune-out the cries of the needy; we feel

the breath of our born and unborn children on our faces, yet remain untouched by your Spirit of peace; we are surrounded by gifts as precious as those brought by the Wise Ones, yet have trouble sharing with those who are from other countries, other faiths. We are sinful people who need the Light of Salvation!

Christmas Hymn:

“A Great and Mighty Wonder” – LSB # 383

All: Forgive us, Grace swaddled in mystery. We believe in Christmas, help us to believe in you even more; we hunger for happiness, feed us on your peace; we long for community and acceptance, surround us with brothers and sisters we find in all those, of every age and every place, who follow and serve alongside our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, whose birth we celebrate this day. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Pastor: Born that day was grace – for the sinful, broken and bereft of grace and mercy; born that day was hope – for the vulnerable and forgotten; born that day was love – for all of us! Thanks be to God, we are forgiven! We will go to tell others of all we have seen, heard, experienced, and know. Amen.

Christmas Hymn:

“Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming” – LSB # 359

Isaiah 11:1-4; 35:1-4; 35: 3-4

“A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The 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 — and 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; but 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.” “Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; say to those with fearful hearts, “Be strong, do not fear; your God will come; he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you.”

Christmas Hymn:

“Now Sing We, Now Rejoice” – LSB # 386

Titus 3:4-7

“But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he 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, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.”

Christmas Hymn:

“O Little Town of Bethlehem” – LSB # 361

Pastor: On this morning when we celebrate his birth, in the Bethlehem of our hearts where Christ is daily born, and in

the days to come when we will follow him to Jerusalem, we sing songs of that mystery of redemption that we call faith:

All: Christ was born, so we might have life; Christ died, so we might have forgiveness; Christ was raised, so we might have resurrection; Christ will be born again, to gather us together with him.

Christmas Hymn:

“It Came Upon the Midnight Clear” – LSB # 366

Luke 2:1-20

“In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register.

Christmas Hymn:

“Away in a Manger” – LSB # 364

So 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. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and 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.

Christmas Hymn:

“Hark the Herald Angels Sing” – LSB # 380

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

Christmas Hymn:

“Angels We Have Heard on High” – LSB # 368

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” When 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.”

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

Christmas Hymn:

“Come On Ring Those Bells” – (Insert)

Come; Eat, Drink, Find Your Rest in Me!

(Author Unknown)

Come, not because you are strong but because you are weak.

Come, not because of any goodness of your own but because you need mercy and help.

Come, because you love the Lord a little and would like to love him more.

Come, because he loves you and gave himself for you.

Take this bread, share this wine. In these, Christ comes to us, is present with us, with love from God. The gifts of God for the people of God.

We are here because Jesus has called us – strangers and friends, locals and visitors, believers, and doubters, the certain and the curious. It is always a mixed company that Jesus gathers and invites to his table where, in bread and wine, he is and he meets us and through him we, who are different, are joined to each other.

So come, not because you understand, but because you are understood. Come, not because of how you feel, but because God has food for you (I am the Bread of Life).

Come, not because you deserve a place, but because Jesus invites you, just as you are.

The Words of Institution for Christmas Communion 1 Corinthians 11:23ff

“The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and

said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes. So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves.”

All: In the silence of these holy moments, pour out your Spirit upon those gathered on this morning and on the gifts of the Feast of Joy. As we are welcomed here, may we remember and include all rejected by the world. As we are fed by the bread, may we be strengthened to go and bring tangible hope to all who are famished by despair.

As we drink from grace’s cup, nourish us, so we may go to overflow with love and peace for everyone we meet in every season. And when all history and time ends in silence, and we are gathered with our sisters and brothers around the feast of the lamb, we will join the angels in singing carols to your forever, God in Community, Holy in One. Amen.

The Distribution of Christ’s body and blood

Holy Communion:

Please come up single file, socially distanced, in the center aisle. Pastor will distribute both the bread and wine,

prompting you for each element. We have gluten-free wafers available, and we have non-alcoholic white grape juice in the center of the tray. After you are dismissed, please return down the side aisle(s).

The Sending Word

Let us go, to join the angels in singing of God's glory and grace. Let us go to share the good news, that Jesus, the brother of the vulnerable and forgotten is in our midst still. Let us go to offer peace and goodwill to everyone, joining the Spirit in telling of all we have seen and heard.

Christmas Hymn:

“Joy to the World” – LSB # 387

Announcements

Postlude

Please take the bulletin home or discard in the trash before you leave.