



A Service of Lessons and Carols

Christmas Eve — December 24, 2012

Our Savior Lutheran Church



Pastor Ben Kratz

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Those who serve:

Music / Sound: Roger Benz
Ushers: Bob Holbrook, Shannon Sikes, Erik Roberson, Caleb Roberson

DECEMBER 24, 2012 THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

Welcome! Thank you for joining us for worship this evening. In our service we gather before our almighty God to offer him our worship and praise. We also gather to strengthen ourselves through the study of God’s holy and powerful Word. If you are a guest, please fill out a Welcome card found in our entryway. You can place it in the offering plate or hand it to Pastor or an usher as you leave.

- ☞ **Restrooms** are located at the end of the hallway as you exit the sanctuary.
- ☞ **Your children** are always welcome at Our Savior, no matter how much noise they might make. If your little one is having a difficult evening, please feel free to take them into the entrance hallway.



THEME: THE CHRIST CHILD IS BORN!

Our worship service this evening is an adaptation of “The Festival of Lessons and Carols” service traditionally held at King's College, Cambridge, England on December 24. The Festival was first held on Christmas Eve, 1918. It was planned by Eric Milner-White, who at the age of thirty-four had just been appointed Dean of King’s after experience as an army chaplain. A revision of the Order of Service was made in 1919, involving rearrangement of the lessons. In almost every year some carols have been changed and some new ones introduced by successive Organists. However, the backbone of the service, the lessons and the prayers, has remained virtually unchanged for nearly 100 years.

CHRISTMAS PRAYER BEFORE WORSHIP

Heavenly Father, with joy we enter into the contemplation of the holy mystery of Your Son's incarnation for us and our salvation. Open our minds to understand, our hearts to believe, and our mouths to proclaim the glory of Him who took our human flesh and blood through the blessed virgin in order to suffer and die in our place. Prepare our hearts to be fitting mangers to cradle Your Son that He may dwell in us and we in Him today and throughout all eternity. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our new-born Savior. Amen.

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICE

WELCOME FROM PASTOR KRATZ

Please stand

OPENING HYMN: #50 *Once in Royal David's City*

CHRISTMAS ENCOURAGEMENT AND PRAYER

(L)eader: Dear people of God, in this Christmas season it is our duty and delight to hear again the message of the angels and, in heart and mind, to go to Bethlehem and see this thing which has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us—the Christ-Child lying in a manger.

Let us read and learn in Holy Scripture the story of the loving purposes of God from the first days after our fall into sin to the glorious redemption brought to us by this holy Child.

But first, let us pray for people all over the world who would delight with us to know the good news of Jesus Christ, and who would join with us in singing his praises. Let us pray for the people of the greater Birmingham area and for all those in our own congregation.

And, because this would please our Lord, let us remember, in his name, the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry and the oppressed, the sick and those who are sad, the lonely and the unloved, the elderly and the little children. We especially remember all those who do not know the Lord Jesus, or who do not love him, or who by sin have grieved his heart of love.

Finally, let us remember before God all those who rejoice with us in heaven, who live in greater light than we, that multitude which no one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, who died in faith, and who live before the throne of God and praise him each day in his temple. We confess that we are united with them as we are united with one another.

To sum up all these petitions, let us pray as Christ himself taught us:

(C)ongregation: 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.

Please be seated

CAROL: #703 *My Soul in Stillness Waits (see insert)*

LESSONS AND CAROLS

FIRST LESSON: Genesis 3:8-15 (Pg. 5)

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

⁸ Then 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. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

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

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

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

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

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

¹⁴ So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this,
"Cursed are you above all the livestock

and all the wild animals!

You will crawl on your belly

and you will eat dust

all the days of your life.

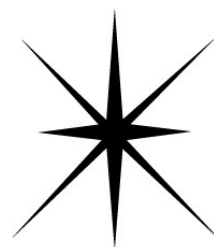
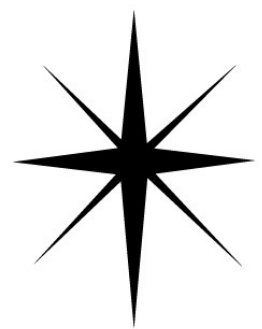
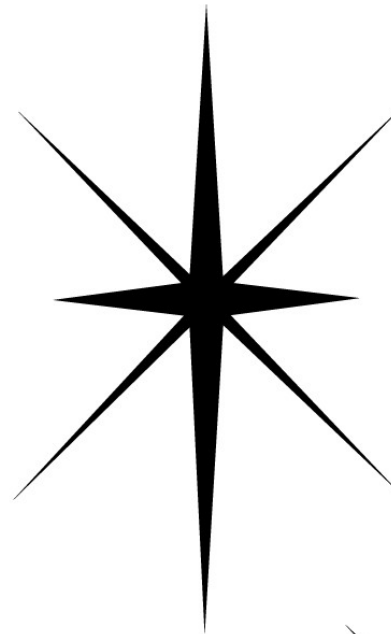
¹⁵ And I will put enmity

between you and the woman,

and between your offspring and hers;

he will crush your head,

and you will strike his heel."



CAROL: #42 *Come, Your Heart and Voices Raising (verses 1, 4, 5)*

SECOND LESSON: Genesis 22:15-18 (Pg. 32)

God's promises to Abraham

¹⁵The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time ¹⁶and said, "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, ¹⁸and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."

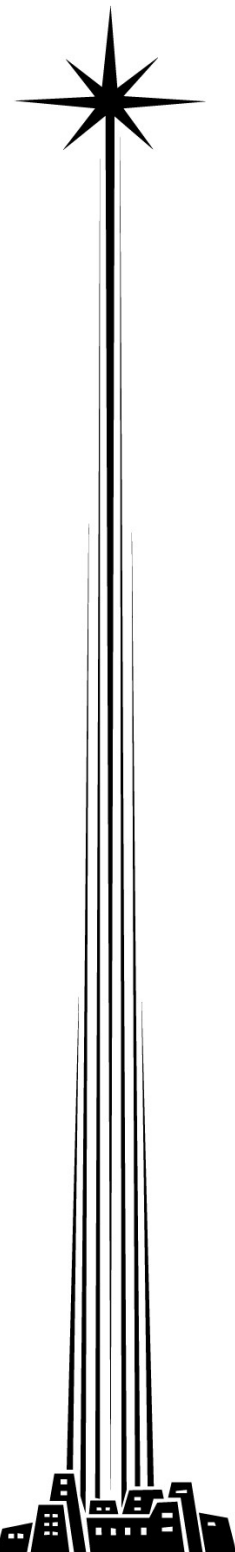
CAROL: #41 *Let All Together Praise Our God*

THIRD LESSON: Isaiah 9:2,6,7 (Pg. 1072)

The people who have walked in darkness have seen a great light

- ² The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of the shadow of death
a light has dawned.
- ⁶ For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
- ⁷ Of the increase of his government and peace
there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the LORD Almighty
will accomplish this.

CAROL: #61 *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*



FOURTH LESSON: Isaiah 11:1-9 (Pg. 1076)

A Branch from the stem of Jesse

- 11** A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.
- ² The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and of power,
the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD—
- ³ 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;
- ⁴ 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.
- ⁵ Righteousness will be his belt
and faithfulness the sash around his waist.
- ⁶ The 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.
- ⁷ The cow will feed with the bear,
their young will lie down together,
and the lion will eat straw like the ox.
- ⁸ The infant will play near the hole of the cobra,
and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest.
- ⁹ They will neither harm nor destroy
on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.

CAROL: #47 *Behold a Branch is Growing (verses 1, 2, 4)*



FIFTH LESSON: Luke 1:26-35, 38 (Pg. 1588)

The angel Gabriel visits Mary

²⁶In the sixth month, 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 be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name 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 the house of Jacob 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 upon 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 it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

CAROL: #707 *Peace Came to Earth* (see insert)

SIXTH LESSON: Luke 2:1-7 (Pg. 1590)

The birth of Jesus

2 In 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.) ³ And everyone went to his own town to register.

⁴ 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. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

CAROL: #68 *Away in a Manger*



SEVENTH LESSON: Luke 2:8-20 (Pg. 1591)

The shepherds visit the manger

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

¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”

¹⁵ 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.”

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

CAROL: #63 *Angels We Have Heard on High*



EIGHTH LESSON: Matthew 2:1-12 (Pg. 1497)

The Magi worship the newborn King

2 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem ² and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.”

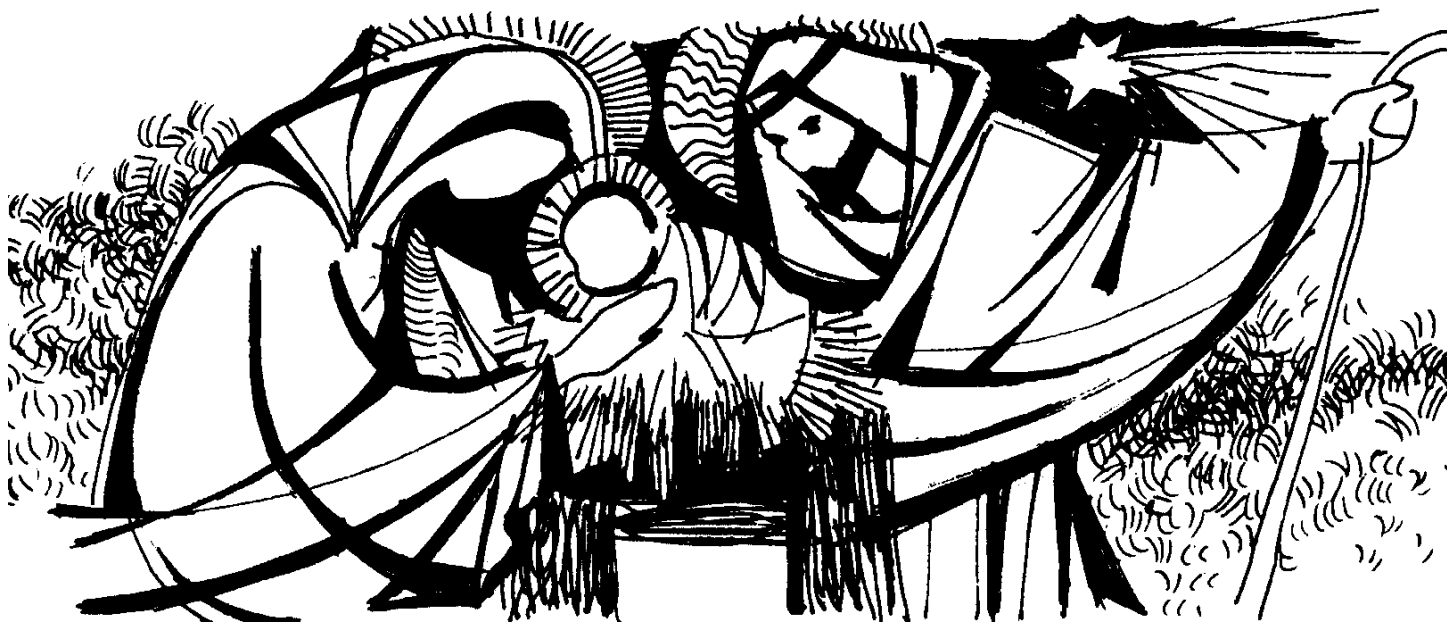
³ When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵ “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:

⁶ “ ‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for out of you will come a ruler
who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.’ ”

⁷ Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

⁹ After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹ On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

CAROL: #83 *As with Gladness Men of Old (verses 1-3)*



NINTH LESSON: John 1:1-14 (Pg. 1645)

The mystery of the incarnation

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He 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 men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

⁶There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. ⁸He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. ⁹The true light that gives light to every man 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 received 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, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

CAROL: #61 *Joy to the World*

OFFERING

Moved by God's love in Christ, we offer him our first and best gifts, purely out of thanks to him. The members of Our Savior Lutheran Congregation have joined together to do the Lord's work in this community and around the world. If you are a guest today, you need not feel obligated to participate in this offering which supports our ministry.

Please stand

PRAYER

P: When all was still and it was midnight, your eternal Word, O Lord, descended from the almighty throne to dwell among us. May we receive him in the peace of forgiven hearts and proclaim your gracious good will to all people on earth for he is God with us, Emmanuel, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

BLESSING

L: Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts

C: **Alleluia.**

L: To us a child is born.

C: **To us a son is given**

L: Sing to the a Lord a new song.

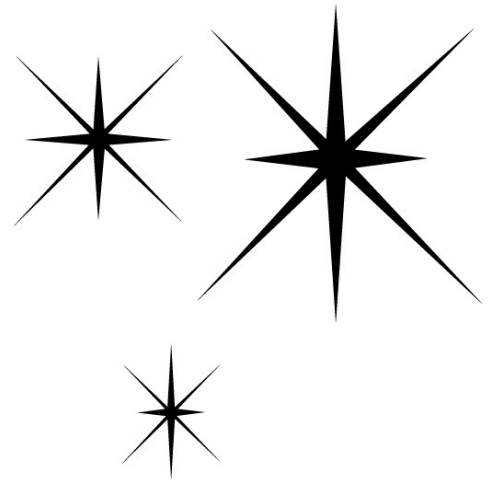
C: **For he has done marvelous things**

L: Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.

C: **Alleluia, Alleluia.**

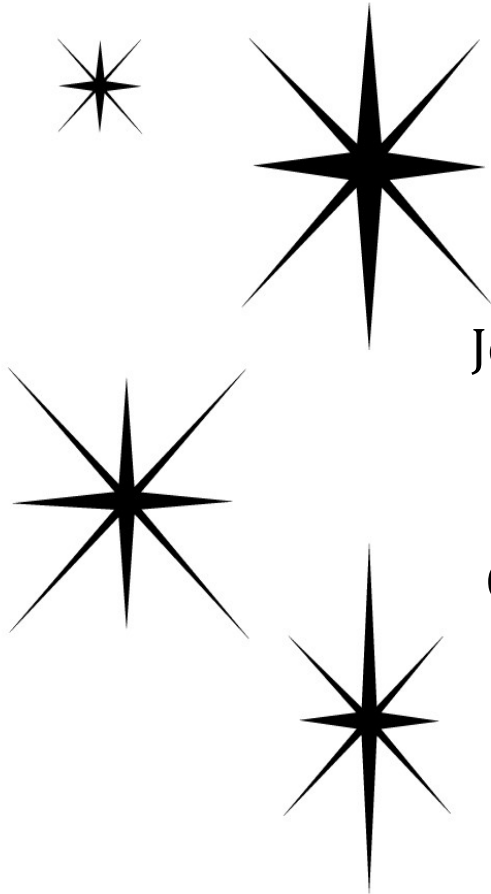
L: May he who by his incarnation gathered things earthly and heavenly into one, fill us with such joy that comes with the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins and the hope of eternal life. And the blessing of God Almighty—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—be upon you and remain with you always.

C: **Amen.**



CAROL: #60 *Silent Night*

Please be seated



Join us tomorrow as we celebrate the
Festival of the Nativity of our Lord.

Christmas Day Worship - 10:15 am

About Our Savior...

Our Savior Lutheran Church is a growing church that serves the southern neighborhoods of Birmingham. We are a Christian church that is looking forward to serving people with God's Word.

Our Savior's message is a wonderful message for you. Our theme is "**A Place to Belong.**" That means that because of our Savior's love for you, you belong to him. You belong to his family. His love will always outweigh the wrongs you have done and the sadness you have had! Our loving God always loves us more.

If you are new to the area or looking for a church home, accept our invitation to meet our pastor and find out more about us. Besides weekly worship, we also offer Bible class to individuals and groups of all ages, Christian counseling, and literature. Please come and worship with us again! Think of this as your community church, and know that you are welcome to join us here anytime.

We hope you find Our Savior "A Place to Belong!"



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Our Savior Lutheran Church is a member of a group of more than twelve hundred churches called Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Church or WELS. The WELS is a world-wide church with congregations serving all fifty of the United States, as well as Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, and over 25 countries through world mission work.

