



**Saint John Lutheran Church  
and School**  
**Wednesday, December 17, 2025**

**Large Print Bulletin**

## Crèche

### As We Gather

“Prepare!” is often the watchword of the season as the world gets ready for another celebration of Christmas. An integral part of any preparation is decoration. We see decorations everywhere this time of year. The world may not comprehend the real meaning of Christmas, but even secular preparations use many of the same decorations beloved by Christians—an appropriation we shouldn’t mind at all, because these decorations point us to Christ. This year, as we look forward again to the coming of the Messiah, we take a fresh look at how the adornments of the season draw our eyes to Jesus, that we may more richly behold the love, peace, joy, and hope He comes to bring as this beauty is set before us.

Tonight, we focus on the crèche—those miniature models of the nativity scene that abound each December. Unlike lights and evergreens, the symbols that aided our meditation these last two weeks, the crèche is distinctly Christian. In it, we behold Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, the Magi, the angels, the stable animals, and, at the center, baby Jesus. Some places introduce the characters in chronological order; others put them all out at once. Either way, the crèche represents a crucial, historical event: God taking on human form and human nature so that He could take our place and redeem us from all sin. We behold it with fresh eyes this evening.

**People, Look East**

*st. 1*

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**1 People, look east. The time is near  
Of the crowning of the year.  
Make your house fair as you are able,  
Trim the hearth and set the table.  
People, look east, and sing today—  
Love, the Guest, is on the way.**

Text: Eleanor Farjeon, 1881–1965 Text: Public domain

**Versicles and Gloria Patri** *Isaiah 40:3b, c, 5; Psalm 118:26*

**P** Prepare the way of the LORD;

**C make straight in the desert a highway for our God.**

**P** Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!

**C We bless you from the house of the LORD.**

**P** And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,

**C and all flesh shall see it together.**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

**332 Savior of the Nations, Come**

**1 Savior of the nations, come,  
Virgin's Son, make here Your home!  
Marvel now, O heav'n and earth,  
That the Lord chose such a birth.**

**2 Not by human flesh and blood,  
By the Spirit of our God,  
Was the Word of God made flesh—  
Woman's offspring, pure and fresh.**

**3 Here a maid was found with child,  
Yet remained a virgin mild.  
In her womb this truth was shown:  
God was there upon His throne.**

**4 Then stepped forth the Lord of all  
From His pure and kingly hall;  
God of God, yet fully man,  
His heroic course began.**

**5 God the Father was His source,  
Back to God He ran His course.  
Into hell His road went down,  
Back then to His throne and crown.**

**6 For You are the Father's Son  
Who in flesh the vict'ry won.  
By Your mighty pow'r make whole  
All our ills of flesh and soul.**

**7 From the manger newborn light  
Shines in glory through the night.  
Darkness there no more resides;  
In this light faith now abides.**

△ **8 Glory to the Father sing,  
Glory to the Son, our king,  
Glory to the Spirit be  
Now and through eternity.**

Text: attr. Ambrose of Milan, 340–397; German version, Martin Luther, 1483–1546; (sts. 1–2): tr. William M. Reynolds, 1812–76; (sts. 3, 6): tr. Lutheran Service Book, 2006; (sts. 4–5, 8): tr. F. Samuel Janzow, 1913–2001; (st. 7): tr. Gifford A. Grobier, 1973 Text (sts. 1–2): Public domain Text (sts. 3, 6–7): © 2006 Concordia Publishing House; (sts. 4–5, 8): © 1978 Concordia Publishing House. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110005513

**Salutation**

P The Lord be with you.

**C And also with you.**

**Prayer**

P Let us pray.

Almighty God, You sent Your Son into our flesh to live among us in our world so that we would be saved from all sins in every time and place. As we survey anew Jesus' journey from the manger to the cross, grant that we may draw great comfort and confidence in the reality of Your birth that our faith may grow.

**C Amen.**

**First Reading**

*1 John 1:1–4*

P A reading from First John, the first chapter.

<sup>1</sup>That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— <sup>2</sup>the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— <sup>3</sup>that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup>And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

P O Lord, have mercy on us.

**C Thanks be to God.**

## **Choir Sings**

### **Responsive Reading**

*Philippians 2:1–8*

P So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

**C Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.**

P Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

**C And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.**

**Second Reading**

*Matthew 1:18–25*

P A reading from St. Matthew, the first chapter.

<sup>18</sup>Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup>And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. <sup>20</sup>But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup>She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." <sup>22</sup>All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

<sup>23</sup> "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and they shall call his name Immanuel"

(which means, God with us). <sup>24</sup>When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, <sup>25</sup>but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

P O Lord, have mercy on us.

**C Thanks be to God.**

**338 Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus**

**1 Come, Thou long-expected Jesus,  
Born to set Thy people free;  
From our fears and sins release us;  
Let us find our rest in Thee.  
Israel's strength and consolation,  
Hope of all the earth Thou art,  
Dear desire of ev'ry nation,  
Joy of ev'ry longing heart.**

**2 Born Thy people to deliver;  
Born a child and yet a king!  
Born to reign in us forever,  
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.  
By Thine own eternal Spirit  
Rule in all our hearts alone;  
By Thine all-sufficient merit  
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.**

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707–88, alt.Text: Public domain

**Sermon**

**Offering**

**Lord's Prayer**

P Lord, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**C 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.**

### **Advent Litany**

**P** In peace, let us pray to the Lord:

**C Lord, have mercy.**

**P** For eyes to behold the Father's hand in all creation, let us pray to the Lord:

**C Lord, have mercy.**

**P** For awareness of beauty and the living traditions of the church that bring Christ to our eyes through arts and crafts, let us pray to the Lord:

**C Lord, have mercy.**

**P** That we may see the signs of Christ's return even as we celebrate His birth, and encourage one another all the more as we see the Day drawing near, let us pray to the Lord:

**C Lord, have mercy.**

P That we may be living testimonies of new life in Christ through our loving service to our neighbor—both in word and in deed—let us pray to the Lord:

**C Lord, have mercy.**

P That we may be thankful for the bountiful harvest we enjoy amid the many festivities of this season, and be generous to the poor, let us pray to the Lord:

**C Lord, have mercy.**

P That we may love one another as God so loved us, forgive one another, and work together in the unity we have in Christ Jesus, let us pray to the Lord:

**C Lord, have mercy.**

P That we may not be lured into temptation or despair or be distracted by the false Christmases around us, but always hold the true meaning of Christmas in our hearts, let us pray to the Lord:

**C Lord, have mercy.**

## **Choir Sings the Benediction**

**357 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel**

**1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel,**

**That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear. Refrain**

**Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel!**

**2 O come, Thou Wisdom from on high,  
Who ord'rest all things mightily;  
To us the path of knowledge show,  
And teach us in her ways to go. Refrain**

**3 O come, O come, Thou Lord of might,  
Who to Thy tribes on Sinai's height  
In ancient times didst give the Law  
In cloud and majesty and awe. Refrain**

**4 O come, Thou Branch of Jesse's tree,  
Free them from Satan's tyranny  
That trust Thy mighty pow'r to save,  
And give them vict'ry o'er the grave. Refrain**

**5 O come, Thou Key of David, come,  
And open wide our heav'nly home;  
Make safe the way that leads on high,  
And close the path to misery. Refrain**

**6 O come, Thou Dayspring from on high,  
And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;**

**Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
And death's dark shadows put to flight. Refrain**

**7 O come, Desire of nations, bind  
In one the hearts of all mankind;  
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease,  
And be Thyself our King of Peace. Refrain**

### **Acknowledgments**

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