

Celebration Lutheran Church

December 31, 2017

9:30 am

Martin Luther based his carol "From Heaven Above" (ELW 268) on a refrain used for a sixteenth century singing game. In the game, the song sets up a riddle to be solved. Within the nativity story, who would have proclaimed this text? "

"From heaven above to earth I come
to bear good news to every home!
Glad tidings of great joy I bring
to all the world, and gladly sing:"

In the hymn, the stanzas in quotation marks become the words of the angels rejoicing at Jesus' birth, while the other stanzas offer commentary and prayers. By sending Jesus into our world, God answers the riddle of sin and our human condition. We are set free to proclaim with the angels: "Glory to God in highest heaven, who unto us the Son has given."

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GATHERING

THE HOLY SPIRIT CALLS US TOGETHER AS THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

PRELUDE **He Whom Shepherd Men Came Praising/Now Sing We,
Now Rejoice** P. Manz

GATHERING SONG **Good Christian Friends Rejoice** (ELW#288)

DIALOG
Who are these angels who come to earth,
Bearing the news of the Christ child's birth?
Who are these shepherds who run to see,
And worship the babe on bended knee?
Who is this child, so small, so slight,
Of whom the angels sang that night?
Who is this king, a manger his throne,
Who humbles himself to make us his own?
Who is this God who sends a Son
Into our midst, the promised one

GREETING & PRAYER *We greet one another in the name of God.*

THE WORD

GOD SPEAKS TO US IN SCRIPTURE, PREACHING AND SONG.

WHO ARE THESE ANGELS WHO COME TO EARTH?
Reading: Luke 2:8-14
(Brief silence for prayer and meditation)
Glory to God in highest heaven,
who unto us the Son has given.
Carol: **From Heaven Above** (ELW 268, vs. 1-3)

WHO ARE THESE SHEPHERDS WHO RUN TO SEE?
Reading: Luke 2:15-20
(Brief silence for prayer and meditation)
Glory to God in highest heaven,
who unto us the Son has given.
Carol: **From Heaven Above** (ELW 268, vs. 4-6)

WHO IS THIS CHILD, SO SMALL, SO SLIGHT?
Reading: Hebrews 1:1-4
(Brief silence for prayer and meditation)
Glory to God in highest heaven,
who unto us the Son has given.
Carol: **From Heaven Above** (ELW 268, vs. 7-9)

WHO IS THIS KING, A MANGER HIS THRONE?
Reading: Isaiah 9:2-7
(Brief silence for prayer and meditation)
Glory to God in highest heaven,
who unto us the Son has given.
Carol: **From Heaven Above** (ELW 268, vs. 10-11)

WHO IS THIS GOD, WHO SENDS A SON?
Reading: John 1:1-14
(Brief silence for prayer and meditation)
Glory to God in highest heaven,
who unto us the Son has given.
Carol: **From Heaven Above** (ELW 268, vs. 12-14)

MEDITATION

OUR RESPONSE

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD IN ACTION, PRAYER, AND PEACE.

HYMN OF THE DAY **In the Bleak Midwinter** (ELW#294)

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION Gracious God, you come from heaven above into the midst of our world.
Fill our hearts with the joy of the angels at your birth.
(silent prayer)
You come from heaven above to the lowliest of human conditions.
Watch over those in need, the sick, the hungry, the grieving.
(silent prayer)
You come from heaven above to walk the way of the cross.
Guide us to follow your path of forgiveness, mercy, and peace.
(silent prayer)
You come from heaven above to become flesh and live among us.
May we see your glory, full of grace and truth. Amen.

PEACE The peace of the newborn Christ be with you always.
And also with you.
You are invited to share a word and/or gesture of Christ's peace with your worshiping neighbor. "Peace be with you," "God's peace," and other words are appropriate. Handshakes, hugs, and the kiss of peace is also appropriate.

OFFERING *We receive your tithes and offerings for the church's mission as a sign of the giving of our whole selves in grateful response for all of God's gifts. We sing this song as the gifts are gathered.*

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing (ELW #270)
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born king;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled."
Joyful, all you nations, rise; Join the triumph of the skies;
With angelic hosts proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

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

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 God-head see! Hail, incarnate deity!
Pleased as man with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel!
Refrain

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 we no more may die,
Born to raise each child of earth, born to give us second birth.
Refrain

THE MEAL

GOD FEEDS US WITH THE PRESENCE OF JESUS CHRIST.

GREAT THANKSGIVING (Insert)

INVITATION TO THE TABLE *All who are seeking Jesus as their Savior and are in need of God's grace and forgiveness are welcome to the Table.*

DISTRIBUTION *We commune by intinction: receive the bread (or gluten free wafer); proceed to the cup, dip your bread into the cup.*

COMMUNION SONGS

Lamb of God

O Lamb of God, you bear the sin
of all the world away;
you suffered death our lives to save:
have mercy now, we pray.

O Lamb of God, you bear the sin
of all the world away;
you set us free from guilt and grave:
have mercy now, we pray.

O Lamb of God, you bear the sin
of all the world away;
eternal peace with God you made:
give us your peace, we pray.

O Little Town of Bethlehem (ELW#279)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION Let us Pray.
O Lord our God, we give you thanks for the gifts of bread and wine, the body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ. Send us out into your world to proclaim with joy:
Glory to God in highest heaven, who unto us the Son has given. Amen

BLESSING

SENDING

GOD BLESSES US AND SENDS US IN MISSION TO THE WORLD.

ANNOUNCEMENTS *Opportunities for deepening discipleship are shared.*

BENEDICTION

SENDING SONG **Love Has Come** (ELW#292)

Stow *We "stow" the gospel in our heart for the week.*
No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known. John 1:18

DISMISSAL Go in Peace. Christ is with you. **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE **Angels We Have Heard on High** *D. Wood*