

**Christmas Eve**  
**Epiphany Lutheran Church**  
**12-24-2020**  
J.V.Trautwein

**Invocation:** We celebrate this Christmas Eve in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

**Opening Hymn:** [O Come All Ye Faithful](#)

**The Nativity Candle: Advent Wreath**

**Prophecy** – Matthew 1: 20-23

She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.”



**Presentation of Animals**



**Hymn:** [Joy to the World](#)

## Mary and Joseph –Luke 2:1-5

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.

## Presentation of Mary and Joseph



Hymn: [O Little Town of Bethlehem](#)

## The Christ Child

Hymn: **What Child Is This?** [What Child Is This \(with lyrics\) - YouTube](#)

### Luke 2:6-7

While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

## Presentation of the Christ Child

Hymn: [Away in a Manger](#)

## The Angels and Shepherds

Hymn: [Angels We Have Heard On High](#)

### Luke 2:8-14

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah,<sup>ἁ</sup> the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host,<sup>ἁ</sup> praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”<sup>lc</sup>

### Presentation of the Angel, Shepherds, and Sheep



Hymn: [Hark the Herald Angels Sing](#)

#### The Wise Men – Matt.2:1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men<sup>u</sup> from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.” When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for from you shall come a ruler  
who is to shepherd<sup>u</sup> my people Israel.’”

<sup>7</sup> Then Herod secretly called for the wise men<sup>u</sup> and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising,<sup>u</sup> until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped,<sup>u</sup> they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

## Presentation of the Wise Men



Hymn: #300 [The First Noel](#)

**The Christmas Message** ([Video Link](#))

Recently I was scrolling Facebook when, just out of curiosity, I clicked onto a posted video. The video was a German ad with no voice commentary, for it needed none, just a musical background. The more I watched the more I became involved in the visual story which ended with a most meaningful message about Christmas, It was about an elderly man and his Christmas gift. I will take the liberty to make this ad into a tale as I imagine the complete story would be. For the purposes of this story I will give the elderly man the name of Ben.

Ben was retired and living alone after his wife had died. He remained in the house which he and his wife bought over 50 years ago. The house had many fond memories of raising his children and later spending many loving days with his wife. Ben in his younger years kept fit by frequently exercising but in recent years those days had long since passed and he found himself old and physically weak. One year, well after the cold months of winter, he determined to change all of that for he had a Christmas dream to fulfill.

He went out to his shed where he had stored items which he no longer used but just accumulated because he never was able to part with them. He began to search through the accumulated items. After moving many boxes and other items he finally saw what he was looking for in a far corner. It was a forty-five pound kettlebell which he had used in his younger years to exercise. (A kettlebell is a heavy iron ball with a handle attached to it and is use for exercising.)

He took hold of its handle but he could no longer lift it, so he had to drag it with both hands out of the shed. His neighbors heard the noise and looked to see what in the world old Ben was up to. They saw him trying again and again to lift the heavy kettlebell. At first he only managed to lift it an inch or two from the ground. In the meantime he began to take walks every day. At first the walks were rather short but then each week they became longer and longer and his legs became stronger and stronger. But the challenge of the kettlebell also continued. Day after day he would go through the laborious and painful task of trying to lift the weight, while his neighbors continue to be baffled with this old man's seemingly impossible task.

Days turned into weeks and weeks into months. Gradually he was able to lift the weight to his knees, then to his waste, then to his chest then finally he was able to lift it over his head. He still continued until he was able to comfortably hold it high above his head. But his neighbors still were baffled why all of a sudden this old man put himself through this most strenuous and painful activity.

Christmas Eve came and soon the mystery would be revealed. It was now time. He dressed in his finest, picked up a package which he had beautifully wrapped, and off he went. His destination was his daughter's family home. When he arrived his daughter was happy but seemed somewhat surprised to see him. Taking off his coat but still holding the package he hugged his small granddaughter who had rushed to his side. With a great big smile on his face he gave her the package. She quickly opened it finding a cherished family heirloom. Her eyes lit up when she saw a large shining golden star which had always sat atop her grandparents Christmas tree.

But the story does not end there. He then picked up his granddaughter lifting her over his head so she could have the joy and memory of placing the star on top of her family tree for the first time. To give her the cherished star would take on far more meaning by giving her the cherished memory of being lifted up by her grandfather and placing the star atop the tree. He had spent those many months of hard, painful, and sacrificial work in order for his granddaughter to have that moment of joy. His Christmas gift of love was now fulfilled.

Ben's act of love vividly shows us that a gift alone does not mean it is a gift of love. A gift of love is when we give of ourselves, even to the point of sacrifice, in order to bring lasting joy and fulfillment to the recipient. Isn't this the story of Christmas and the message of the angels to those lowly shepherds that night long ago? "But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah,<sup>[a]</sup> the Lord." This was the announcement of God's gift of love for us, the gift of Jesus. This is the truest gift of love for He gives of Himself so that our lives may be lifted up by knowing His love in our lives. God love lifts us up to be able to share and live this love among each other. It is the gift of love, through the birth of Jesus, which brings us peace and leads us to celebrate along with the heavenly host by proclaiming, "Glory be to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors."

My wish for you is that you be lifted up so as to let the light of God's love shine forth for all to see. This will then be a truly blessed and joyful Christmas for you.

**Anthem:** "[O Holy Night](#)" Luciano Pavarotti and Placido Domingo

**The Offering** ([On-Line Giving Link](#))

### **The Prayer**

Almighty and loving God, tonight, we joyously celebrate the birth of your Son that long ago night. May we be filled with the love which you have shown us by walking among us sharing the life which we live? It is this love which renews our lives so as to touch the lives of those in need. Give us the continued commitment to follow the covid-19 safety guidelines so that the spreading of this deadly disease may be limited. We are thankful that vaccines have been developed which will eventually end the suffering from this pandemic. Continue to be with the healthcare workers who are tirelessly treating those who are suffering and dying. Comfort all those who may be experiencing loneliness – enfold them in your loving arms. We pray this in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

## The Lord's Prayer

## The Benediction

The Love Joy and Peace of the Nativity be with you all.

**The Closing Hymn:** Silent Night [Silent Night Lyrics - Christmas Eve Candlelight Service \(piano, organ, a cappella\) - YouTube](#)



**Announcements:** The World Hunger Appeal is still active until the end of the year. You may contribute on-line. [https://tithe.ly/give\\_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/2627291](https://tithe.ly/give_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/2627291)

This Sunday's email worship will be special- stay tuned.