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**Christmas Day**

“Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre, with the lyre and the sound of melody! With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord!” *Psalm 98:5-6*

**AS WE GATHER**

We do not often emphasize the psalms during the Advent season, instead being eager to read about the prophecies, anticipating Jesus’ coming. Yet the psalms are God’s Word during terrible times to people who lived before God’s promises were fulfilled in our Savior’s coming. This Advent we have focused on several psalms as we use them to prepare to celebrate our Lord’s birth with open eyes and ears.

The traditional psalm for Christmas Day, Psalm 98, is a psalm of rejoicing. Sing to the Lord a new song! This is a day for praising God, rejoicing with one another, and spreading the joy to all whom we meet!

**+ PREPARATION +**

**INVOCATION and OPENING SENTENCES** *Isaiah 9:6; Psalm 98:1*

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the +Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**People: Amen.**

Pastor: To us a child is born, to us a son is given;

**People: and the government shall be upon His shoulder.**

Pastor: Oh sing to the Lord a new song,

**People: for He has done marvelous things!**

**CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION**

Pastor: God offers grace and mercy even to us wayward citizens of His kingdom. Let us therefore confess our sins to God in the name of our newborn Savior, so that in forgiving us, He may do yet another marvelous thing.

**People: We confess, heavenly Father, that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed. We have not responded to Your love in joyful and daily thanksgiving. We cannot save ourselves; therefore, for Jesus’ sake, forgive us, bless us, and increase joy and gladness in us until we sing Your praises with the heavenly host.**

Pastor: Our Savior came to earth to pay for all sins and to restore us to the joys of eternity with those who have gone before us and all the heavenly host. Therefore as a called and ordained servant of Christ and by His authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the +Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**People: Amen**.

**+ SERVICE OF THE WORD +**

**CAROLS** *“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”* (*LSB* 380) and *“Now Sing We, Now Rejoice”* (*LSB* 386)

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Pastor: Let us pray. Almighty God, to whom all creation gives thanks and praises You for fulfilling all Your ancient promises in sending our Savior to rescue us, grant us such joy that it overflows our thoughts and words into joyful acts of devotion to You and in service to the people around us; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People: Amen.**

**OLD TESTAMENT READING** Isaiah 62:10-12

Go through, go through the gates; prepare the way for the people; build up, build up the highway; clear it of stones; lift up a signal over the peoples. Behold, the Lord has proclaimed to the end of the earth: Say to the daughter of Zion, “Behold, your salvation comes; behold, His reward is with Him, and His recompense before Him.”

And they shall be called The Holy People, The Redeemed of the Lord; and you shall be called Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**EPISTLE** Titus 3:4-7

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**CHRISTMAS GOSPEL** Luke 2:1-20

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+2%3A1-20&version=ESV#fen-ESV-24967a)] Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths and laid Him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in the highest,
    and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**People: Praise to You, O Christ.**

**NICENE CREED** (*back, inside cover*)

**CAROL** *“Joy to the World”* (*LSB* 387)

#### **PSALM** 98

**SERMON *“Rejoice”***

**RETURNING OF OUR FIRST FRUITS**

# PRAYER OF THE CHURCH and LORD’S PRAYER

Pastor: On this joyful day, let us go to God in prayer for all people in their various needs.

**People: “In those days a decree went out.”**

Pastor: Grant guidance to all who make and administer the laws of the nations, that they serve You in their positions, work for justice in all they do, and strive for peace around the world.

**People: “Joseph also went up.”**

Pastor: Give protection for all who travel during this holiday season, gracious Lord. Grant that they reach their destinations and return home in safety and joy.

**People: “He was of the house and lineage of David.”**

Pastor: Provide justice to all, including those who have been forgotten by society. Lord Jesus, remind them of Your love for us all.

**People: “The time came for her to give birth.”**

Pastor: Bring healing and comfort to all who face illness and grief this day. Grant that families come together in comfort and joy, and that the lonely be surrounded with caring friends. Guide all in the healing professions to use their gifts to Your glory, heavenly Father.

**People: “There were shepherds out in the field.”**

Pastor: Strengthen all who work long hours, who tend fields and flocks, and who distribute goods and services, gracious God. Grant that many people find nourishing food, warm clothing, and decent shelter through their efforts.

**People: “Unto you is born . . . a Savior.”**

Pastor: We raise songs of praise for the gift of Your Son, heavenly Father. Grant that the Church around the world be filled with the joyful news of our Savior’s birth, spreading the proclamation of glory to God in the highest and peace to God’s people on earth.

**People: “Mary treasured up all these things.”**

Pastor: Be with us all, Lord our God, so that the peace and joy we know today will continue into the new year, for we bring all these prayers to Your heavenly throne in the name of our newborn Savior, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

**+ SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT +**

**Divine Service and the Close Fellowship of Holy Communion**

*Our Lord speaks and we listen. His Word bestows what it says. Faith that is born from what is heard acknowledges the gifts received with eager thankfulness and praise. The gifts include the Holy Supper in which we receive His true body and blood to eat and drink. Those welcome to the table acknowledge the real presence of the body and blood of Christ, confess their own sinfulness, and in true faith wish to receive the forgiveness and strength promised through this Holy Sacrament, as* ***instructed*** *… and* ***in unity of faith*** *… with God’s people here in this congregation. It is our sincerest desire that you join in the intimacy of this fellowship. However,* ***if you are not, yet, an instructed and confirmed member-in-good-standing of a congregation of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, please visit with the pastor about such a fellowship before communing****. If you wish to come forward for a blessing, you are welcome to join us at the rail to receive such. Please cross your arms in front of you to indicate that desire.*

**WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

**DISTRIBUTION**

 *“What Child Is This”* (*LSB* 370)

 *“Angels We Have Heard on High”* (*LSB* 368)

**POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING**

Pastor: Let us pray. We give thanks, Lord our God, that we have beheld our Savior in the Child of Bethlehem, and we pray that You will instill in us such faith that our joy this day will continue until we sing Your praises in the eternity You have prepared for us and all who call to You in the name of Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People: Amen.**

### BENEDICTION

**CAROL** *“Go Tell It on the Mountain”* (*LSB* 388)