

Welcome to Worship at  
Trinity Lutheran Church, Osceola, WI  
Christmas 1 - December 26, 2021

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer. Amen.

**Hymn #41 - "Let All Together Praise Our God"**

**Let all together praise our God  
Before his highest throne;  
Today he opens heav'n again  
And gives us his own Son,  
And gives us his own Son.**

**He leaves his heav'nly Father's throne,  
Is born an infant small,  
And in a manger, poor and lone,  
Lies in a humble stall,  
Lies in a humble stall.**

**He veils in flesh his pow'r divine  
A servant's form to take;  
In want and lowliness must die  
Who heav'n and earth did make,  
Who heav'n and earth did make.**

**A wondrous change which he does make:  
He takes our flesh and blood,  
And he conceals for sinners' sake  
His majesty as God,  
His majesty as God.**

**He serves that I a lord may be -  
A great exchange indeed!  
Could Jesus' love do more for me  
To help me in my need,  
To help me in my need?**

**For us he opens wide the door  
Of paradise today.  
The angel guards the gate no more;  
To God our thanks we pay,  
To God our thanks we pay.**

**Confession of Sins:**

**P:** Beloved in the Lord, let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father, asking Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

**C:** **Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess to You that we are by nature sinful and unclean and that we have sinned against You in our thoughts, words, and actions. Therefore we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Your grace and forgiveness for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. O Lord, have mercy on us!**

**P:** Upon this your confession, I as a called servant of Christ and His Word announce to you the grace of God, and in the place of and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**C:** **Amen.**

**First Lesson: 1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26**

But Samuel ministered before the Lord while he was still a young boy, dressed in a special vest made of linen. His mother would make a little robe for him and bring it to him whenever she came up with her husband to offer the annual sacrifice. Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, "May the Lord give you offspring from this woman in place of the son she asked for, whom she loaned to the Lord." Then they would go back to their home. The young man Samuel continued to grow, and he increased in favor with both the Lord and with men. (EHV)

**Psalm 111**

**Refrain: Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.**

**Great are the works 'of the LORD;  
They are pondered by all who de'light in them.**

**Glorious and majestic 'are his deeds,  
And his righteousness endures for'ever.**

**He has caused his wonders to be re'membered;  
The LORD is gracious and com'passionate.**

**Refrain: Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.**

**The works of his hands are faith'ful and just;  
All his precepts are trust'worthy.**

**He provided redemption for his 'people;  
He ordained his covenant for'ever.**

**The fear of the LORD is the beginning of 'wisdom;  
All who follow his precepts have good under'standing.**

**Glory be to the Father and 'to the Son  
And to the Holy 'Spirit,  
As it was in the be'ginning,  
Is now, and will be forever. 'Amen.**

**Refrain: Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.**

### **Second Lesson: Hebrews 2:10-18**

Certainly it was fitting for God (the one for whom and through whom everything exists), in leading many sons to glory, to bring the author of their salvation to his goal through sufferings. For he who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified all have one Father. For that reason, he is not ashamed to call them brothers. He says: I will declare your name to my brothers. Within the congregation I will sing your praise. And again: I will trust in him. And again: Here I am and the children God has given me. Therefore, since the children share flesh and blood, he also shared the same flesh and blood, so that through death he could destroy the one who had the power of death (that is, the Devil) and free those who were held in slavery all their lives by the fear of death. For surely he was not concerned with helping angels but with helping Abraham's offspring. For this reason, he had to become like his brothers in every way, in order that he would be a merciful and faithful high priest in the things pertaining to God, so that he could pay for the sins of the people. Indeed, because he suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. (EHV)

**Verse of the Day:** Alleluia. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts. Alleluia.

**Gospel: Luke 2:41-52**

Every year his parents traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival. When he was twelve years old, they went up according to the custom of the Festival. When the days had ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it. Since they thought he was in their group, they went a day's journey. Then they began to look for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him. After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us this way? See, your father and I have been anxiously looking for you." He said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be taking care of my Father's business?" They did not understand what he was telling them. He went down with them and came to Nazareth. He was always obedient to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart. Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and with people. (EHV)

**The Apostles' Creed:**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

**Hymn #133 (TLH) - "*Within the Father's House*"**

**Within the Father's house  
The Son has found His home,**

**And to His Temple suddenly  
The Lord of Life has come.**

**The doctors of the Law  
Gaze on the wondrous Child  
And marvel at His gracious words  
Of wisdom undefiled.**

**Yet not to them is giv'n  
The mighty truth to know,  
To lift the earthly veil which hides  
Incarnate God below**

**The secret of the Lord  
Escapes each human eye,  
And faithful pondering hearts await  
The full epiphany.**

**Lord, visit now our souls  
And teach us by Your grace  
Each dim revealing of Yourself  
With loving awe to trace.**

**Till from our darkened sight  
The cloud shall pass away  
And on the cleansed soul shall burst  
The everlasting day.**

**Till we behold Your face  
And know as we are known  
The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost  
Co-equal Three in One.**

**The Sermon:     Luke 2:41-52  
                  “The Search For Jesus”**

A lot of territory has been covered between the Gospel from Christmas Day and our text for this morning. To be more specific, **twelve years** have passed. In our text for today, Jesus is no longer the **Babe** of Bethlehem. He is twelve years old, and He's going with His parents to the **Temple** in Jerusalem. That's a rather

difficult adjustment for us to make, especially in such a **short** amount of time. After all, we've spent such a **long** time - the whole Advent Season - just preparing for the **arrival** of the Christ Child, that we'd like to take some time to **savor** the peace and the joy that His birth brings to us. But all of a sudden, Jesus is no longer a **child**. In a way that reminds me of the parents who say, "Yes, our daughter is 6 years old now - going on 12 - or 12 years old, going on 18!" Childhood needs to be thoroughly **enjoyed** and **savored** while it's there, because it has the tendency to **slip away** on us. In most cases, adulthood arrives **faster** than we had hoped it would.

But of course all children must **grow up**, and in that respect, Jesus was no exception. In our text He had gone to Jerusalem to celebrate the Festival of the **Passover**. This festival was one of **three**, which all male Jews of mature age were **required** to attend. The other two were the Festival of **Pentecost**, the Festival of **Tabernacles**. Upon reaching the age of 12, Jesus became a "bar mitzvah" - a son of the covenant - and He took up His responsibilities as a mature male - **one** of which was attending those **festivals**. It wasn't always **easy** to make those journeys from Nazareth to Jerusalem three times a year. The carpenter shop would have to be closed, and additional expenses would be incurred for food and lodging during the journey - not to mention everything which would be spent during the seven days of the festival itself. But, people always seem to find a way to **do** those things which they feel are **important**, and Joseph was no exception. He was convinced that these trips were extremely important for himself **and** for his family, so he set aside the time and the money which were necessary to make the journeys a reality.

This was a fine **example** to set for **Jesus**, in spite of the fact that He as the Son of **God** really didn't **need** an example to follow. It becomes very clear later on in our text that Jesus **already knew** what was **important** in terms of religion. I'm sure Jesus would have known what was right and wrong even **without** a God-fearing mother and step-father, but the example in our text is not only there for **Jesus** - it's there for **us**. You see, we are all **sinful** human beings. Sinful human beings have sinful human **children**, and sinful human children **learn** primarily by **example**. I'm sure Joseph could have found **other** things to do rather than go to Jerusalem, and he probably could have **rationalized** many of them too. Nevertheless, we find him, and Mary, and Jesus, going **as a family** to worship their God.

The **difficulty** in our text arose when the seven days of the festival had **ended**, and the time had arrived to return **home** again to Nazareth. **Jesus** stayed **behind**! Now, Mary and Joseph didn't even **realize** that Jesus was **missing** until

**evening** came. That almost sounds like it could have been the basis for the Home Alone movies, doesn't it! We might even wonder what kind of parents Mary and Joseph could have been, when they didn't even **miss** their child for **a whole day**. But actually, there's a very simple explanation for what happened. In those days the women and children traveled in the **front** of the caravan, while the **men** followed along **behind**. Since Jesus was right at that "in-between" age, Joseph probably figured that Jesus was up in front with **Mary**, and she thought that He was in **back** with **Joseph**. At any rate, when they discovered that He was **not** with **either** of them, **The Search For Jesus** began.

Since Jesus wasn't among **any** of their relatives, Mary and Joseph assumed that He must have stayed behind in **Jerusalem**. But **where**? All in all, it took **three days** before they **found** Him - one day as they **left** the city, another day to **return**, and a **third** day was spent scouring the **city** in their **Search For Jesus**. Actually, Mary and Joseph could have saved themselves a day by going **directly** to the Temple. They should have **known** that was where Jesus would be. He had just spent seven days worshipping God with them - and then spent an **additional** three days **beyond** what was **required** - learning **and** worshipping. That's an excellent example for **us** to follow. Jesus didn't stop with as **little** worship as He could **get by** with. You wouldn't have heard **Jesus** saying, "I go to church **almost every week**. I don't think God will mind if I take a week **off** once in a while!" Taking time **away** from His heavenly Father was **not** a part of Jesus' way of thinking. Rather, being **close** to His heavenly Father, and doing that Father's **work** was **more important** to Him than anyone or anything. And that's exactly what God would like to see in **us**, as He **tells** us in the First Commandment.

Parents, do you know where **your** children are - right **now**? They should be sitting with **you**, learning from **your example** how to **conduct** themselves in a **worship** service. They should be learning how to sit **quietly**, how to **meditate**, how to participate in the **liturgy**, how to **sing**, and how to **pray** - all by watching **you**. Family **worship** begins at a very early age, and it is very **wrong** of us **not** to use those formative years to **teach** our children how to **worship**.

Many years ago, I read an article in the newspaper which dealt with **value** systems for children. The article began by saying, "We have a nation of young people **without** values." Why? - because many **parents** are not taking the responsibility of teaching **their** values to their children. Instead, they're leaving it up to the children's **peers** - or to **television** - or to the **computer**. I'm sure those are **not** the forces we want to be guiding **our** children's lives. I remember hearing about parents who said, "We don't want to **force** our religious ideas and beliefs on

our children. So, we have decided to let the children decide for **themselves** what religion they would like to be.” That kind of logic is about as effective as driving to California without a road map. If you head **west**, eventually you may **get** there. But, it would be much **easier** if you knew all along which **roads** to take.

Our children should **never** be presented with the **option** of **worshiping** God, or **not** worshiping God - of **attending** Sunday School, or **not** attending Sunday School - of **praying**, or **not** praying. Children just don't have the **experience** which is necessary to **make** such important choices. I'd like to offer you a quote from J. Edgar Hoover. He said, *“Why all this **timidity** in the realm of your child's **spiritual** guidance and growth? Are you going to wait and let him decide what **church** he will go to when he is old enough? Quit **kidding**. You didn't wait until he was old enough to decide whether or not he wishes to remain **dirty** or be **clean**. Do you wait until he is old enough to decide if he wants to take **medicine** when he is sick?”* Parents who leave the religious morals of their children in the hands of **society** are leaving the door wide open for **Satan**. And you can be **sure** that **he** won't leave the choice up to anyone **else**!

Again, quite a few years ago I read some **statistics** on the number of children who remain **faithful church members** when they become adults. Even though the numbers **may** have changed somewhat, I'm still pretty confident that they hold true today as well. When both Mom and Dad attended church regularly **with** their children, **72%** of those children did the same as adults. If only **Dad** attended regularly, **55%** of the children remained faithful. If only **Mom** attended regularly, the number dropped drastically to only **15%**. And if **neither** parent attended church, only **6%** of the children followed through on their **own**. That's rather **shocking**, isn't it? The statistics speak for themselves. If **we** don't teach our children what to do **by our example**, then Satan will be happy to step in and fill the void.

As I said before, Jesus had a fine example from His **earthly** mother and step-father. But He also had the example of His **heavenly** Father. Jesus stayed and worshiped with His parents for the full seven days of the festival, and then He **continued** to worship - for **another** three days! That kind of **all-absorbing** worship obviously has some **benefits** in it. I'm sure that Mary and Joseph **grew** through the experience. It seems that they had temporarily **forgotten** the words of the angel Gabriel, telling them that their child would be **God's** Son, and the **Savior** of the world. I doubt that they **ever** forgot it **again**. Mary and Joseph had also allowed human **worry** to cloud their thinking, and to trouble their minds. They didn't immediately understand the **answer** which Jesus gave them when they

finally **found** Him in the Temple. But we're told that Mary treasured all these things in her heart. As she **considered** them and **reconsidered** them again and again, I'm sure the LORD granted her increased **understanding**, because what she was considering was the **Word of God**.

That's also where the answer lies to our **Search For Jesus** - in God's **Word**. People all over the world are **searching** for peace and happiness. Some are **searching** among their relatives and friends - others in drugs and alcohol - still others in their pursuit of **leisure**, or in their persistent hard **work**. But their search will not come to an **end** until they're ready to let **God** speak to them in His **Word**, and until they're willing to make **use** of that Word in their daily **lives**. We are privileged to **have** that Word of God - every day in our homes, and every week in our church. May we truly **treasure** God's Word in our hearts. May we **teach** it to, and **model** it for our **children**. And finally, may we every **day** in every **way**, **use** that precious Word in our lives. May we all **continue** to be truly blessed in our **Search For Jesus**. Amen.

### **Prayers:**

Lord Jesus Christ, we believe that Your advent as our Savior was **foretold** by men of old. We believe that in Your lowly **birth** of the Virgin Mary, the Scriptures have been **fulfilled**; and that **You**, the very Son of **God** through whom all things were created, assumed a **human** form. We believe that You came here in **lowliness** as the Paschal Lamb of God, to bear our sins in Your own body on the **cross**, and to suffer and **die** for us there.

Heavenly Father, we ask You to send Your Holy Spirit into our hearts that we may learn **much** from the example of the 12-year old Jesus in the Temple at Jerusalem, who sat among the **teachers**, both **hearing** them and asking them **questions**. Fill our hearts with a deep love for **Your house**, so we will be regular and faithful in our **church** attendance, love the **Word** as our Savior did, and make that Word our lifelong **study** and **guide** for living.

Send Your Holy Spirit into the hearts of our **parents**, that they may bring their **children** to church as Mary and Joseph did, that they may pray fervently **with** them and **for** them, and bring them up in Your **nurture** and **admonition**. If our sons and daughters should become **lost** in sin, and **stray** from the path of righteousness, or become **indifferent** to You and Your Word, help us to **search** for them until we **find** them. Put the right words into our mouths that we may properly **admonish** them, and bring them **back** to **You**.

Watch over **all** our footsteps during the coming year, and guide us by Your Holy **Word**. Help us to take care of our heavenly **Father's** business. Teach us to seek first **Your** kingdom and **Your** righteousness. Fill our hearts with such an abundance of **love** for You, that it will overflow to our needy brothers and sisters in the world. Help us to speak to them about their soul's salvation. And finally, when our last hour comes, may **we**, and the children You have **given** to us, together with **all** those souls who have been **won** for You - may we may be gathered together into Your **heavenly** Temple, to dwell with You **forever**. Amen.

**The Lord's Prayer (sung to "Away in a Manger")**

**Our Father in heaven all praise to Your name!  
Your kingdom among us, Your will done the same  
By mortals and angels. Come, Lord reign alone;  
Oh, hear us and bless us from heaven's high throne.**

**The bread that we yearn for provide us each day;  
As we forgive others, our sins take away;  
In times of temptation, to lead us; be near.  
From evil deliver Your children most dear.**

**For Yours is the kingdom, o'er all things You reign.  
And Yours is the power; all things You maintain.  
To You be the glory, resounding again  
From all of creation, forever! Amen.**

**Hymn #366 - "O Jesus So Sweet, O Jesus So Mild"**

**O Jesus so sweet, O Jesus so mild!  
For sinners you became a child.  
You came from heaven to fulfill  
Your Father's just and holy will.  
O Jesus so sweet, O Jesus so mild!**

**O Jesus so sweet, O Jesus so mild!  
With God we now are reconciled.  
You have for all the ransom paid,  
Your Father's righteous anger stayed.  
O Jesus so sweet, O Jesus so mild!**

**O Jesus so sweet, O Jesus so mild!  
Joy fills the world which sin defiled.  
Whate'er we have belongs to you;  
Oh, keep us faithful, strong, and true.  
O Jesus so sweet, O Jesus so mild!**

P: Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace, according to Your Word, for my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Your people Israel. 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.

**The Blessing:**

P: The Lord bless you and keep you,  
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.  
The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.

C: Amen.

**Hymn #64 - "Let Us All with Gladsome Voice"**

**Let us all with gladsome voice  
Praise the God of heaven,  
Who, to bid our hearts rejoice,  
His own Son has given.**

**To this vale of tears he comes,  
Here to serve in sadness,  
That with him in heav'n's fair homes  
We may reign in gladness.**

**We are rich, for he was poor;  
Is not this a wonder?  
Therefore praise God evermore  
Here on earth and yonder.**

**O Lord Christ, our Savior dear,  
Bless us and be near us.  
Grant us now a glad new year.  
Amen, Jesus, hear us!**