

Welcome to Worship at  
Trinity Lutheran Church, Osceola, WI  
Christmas 2 - January 2, 2022

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 #3 - “Lift Up Your Heads, You Mighty Gates”**

**Lift up your heads, you mighty gates!  
Behold, the King of glory waits.  
The King of kings is drawing near;  
The Savior of the world is here.  
Life and salvation he will bring;  
Therefore rejoice and gladly sing.  
To God the Father raise  
Your joyful songs of praise.**

**The King is born in poverty,  
His chariot is humility,  
His kingly crown is holiness,  
His scepter, pity in distress.  
The end of all our woe he brings;  
Therefore the earth is glad and sings.  
To Christ the Savior raise  
Your grateful hymns of praise.**

**How blest the land, the city blest,  
Where Christ the ruler is confessed!  
O peaceful hearts and happy homes  
To whom this King in triumph comes!  
The cloudless sun of joy is he  
Who comes to set his people free.  
To God the Spirit raise  
Your happy shouts of praise.**

**Fling wide the portals of your heart;  
Make it a temple set apart**

**From earthly use for heaven's employ,  
Adorned with prayer and love and joy.  
So shall your Sov'reign enter in  
And new and nobler life begin.  
To God alone be praise  
For word and deed and grace!**

**Redeemer, come! I open wide  
My heart to you; here, Lord, abide!  
Oh, enter with your saving grace;  
Show me your kind and friendly face.  
Your Holy Spirit guide us on  
Until our glorious goal is won.  
Eternal praise and fame  
We offer to your name.**

**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: Genesis 17:1-7**

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty. Walk before me and be blameless. I will make my covenant between me and you, and I will make your descendants very numerous." Abram fell on his face. God spoke with him. He said, "As for me, this is my covenant with you. You will be the father of many nations. Your name will

not be Abram anymore, but your name will be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a large group of nations. I will make you extremely fruitful, and I will produce nations from you. Kings will come out of you. I will establish my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you as an everlasting covenant throughout their generations. I will be your God and the God of your descendants after you. (EHV)

## **Psalm 148**

**Refrain: Forever let us sing the goodness of the Lord.**

**Praise the LORD from the 'heavens,  
Praise him in the 'heights above.**

**Praise him, all his 'angels,  
Praise him, all his 'heavenly hosts.**

**Praise him, 'sun and moon,  
Praise him, all you 'shining stars.**

**Refrain: Forever let us sing the goodness of the Lord.**

**Praise the LORD 'from the earth,  
Lightning and hail, stormy winds that do his 'bidding.**

**You mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all 'cedars,  
Wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and 'flying birds.**

**Kings of the earth and all rul'ers on earth,  
Young men and maidens, old men and 'children.**

**Let them praise the name 'of the LORD,  
For his splendor is above the earth and the 'heavens.**

**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: Forever let us sing the goodness of the Lord.**

## **Second Lesson: Galatians 4:4-7**

But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son to be born of a woman, so that he would be born under the law, in order to redeem those under the law, so that we would be adopted as sons. And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts to shout, “Abba, Father!” So you are no longer a slave, but a son. And if you are a son, then you are also an heir of God through Christ. (EHV)

**Verse of the Day:** Alleluia. All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Alleluia.

## **The Gospel: Luke 1:68-75**

Blessed is the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has visited us and prepared redemption for his people. He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, just as he said long ago through the mouth of his holy prophets. He raised up salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us, in order to show mercy to our fathers by remembering his holy covenant, the oath which he swore to Abraham our father, to grant deliverance to us from the hand of our enemies, so that we are able to serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. (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 #275 - “Blest Be the God of Israel”**

**Blest be the God of Israel,  
Who comes to set us free;**

He visits and redeems us;  
He grants us liberty.  
The prophets spoke of mercy,  
Of freedom and release;  
God shall fulfill his promise  
And bring his people peace.

He from the house of David  
A child of grace has giv'n;  
A Savior comes among us  
To raise us up to heav'n.  
Before him goes his herald,  
Forerunner in the way,  
The prophet of salvation,  
The harbinger of day.

On prisoners of darkness  
The sun begins to rise,  
The dawning of forgiveness  
Upon the sinner's eyes.  
He guides the feet of pilgrims  
Along the paths of peace.  
Oh, bless our God and Savior  
With songs that never cease!

The Sermon:      Luke 1:68-79  
                          “The Song of Zechariah”

Who was **Zechariah**, and what **part** did he play in the overall story of the **Bible**? Both he and his wife, **Elizabeth**, are only mentioned **once** in the Scriptures - right **here** in Luke, chapter 1. And yet, the song which bears his **name** is one of the most **beautiful** found in the entire Bible. This morning we're going to consider **The Song Of Zechariah** in two parts. The **first** part is a hymn of **praise**, while the **second** part is a hymn of **prophecy**.

Where did Zechariah get the **idea** for this hymn? Was it that he was such an excellent **song writer**? Was this just **one** out of the **many** songs which he had written? The circumstances **surrounding** this song definitely point **away** from those suggestions. Zechariah was merely a humble **priest**. For the past 9 months, he had been unable to **speak** because he hadn't believed the Angel **Gabriel** when

he told him that **Elizabeth**, his **wife**, would have a **son**. This period of **speechlessness** gave Zechariah some time to **think** about the **promise** which Gabriel had made. But it **also** gave him time to think about **another** promise - a promise which the LORD had made **hundreds** of years earlier. No doubt Zechariah spent countless hours **reading** and **re-reading** the Old Testament **prophecies** concerning the coming of the Messiah, and it was through this **study** of the Word of God that the Holy Spirit worked saving **faith** in the heart of Zechariah. All of his **doubts** had been **removed**, and Zechariah now saw all of the prophecies about the Messiah as if they had already been **fulfilled**. Not only was the Messiah **coming**, but His advent was **complete**. The long-awaited Savior of the world had **come!**

It was at this time that the **Holy Spirit** chose to speak **through** Zechariah. He had filled the **heart** of Zechariah with **faith** and **joy**, and now that **same** Holy Spirit was using Zechariah as a **mouthpiece**, to spread that faith and joy to **others**.

The same thing still happens **today**. Whenever a Christian pastor steps into a pulpit to deliver a **sermon**, he prays that the Holy Spirit will be **with** him, and that He will give him the **words** to speak, just as He had promised to do for **Moses** when the LORD said, *“Who **made** a mouth for people? Or who makes someone **mute** or **deaf**, able to **see** or **blind**? Is it not **I**, the **LORD**? Now **go**, and I will be **with** your mouth, and I will **teach** you what you will speak.”* Without the guidance of the LORD, we would be unable to **understand** the prophecies concerning the Savior, which He has set before us in His Word. But, the LORD has not only laid these clear prophecies before us, He has **also** shown us the fact that these prophecies have all been **fulfilled**. They were **fulfilled** by **Jesus Christ**, His **Son**, whose **birth** we have just **celebrated**. Yes, Zechariah had written a **beautiful** hymn of **praise**, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

But, **for whom** was this hymn written? Verse 68 reads, *“Blessed is the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has visited us and prepared redemption for **his** people.”* Zechariah was praising, *“The LORD, the LORD, the **compassionate** and **gracious** God, slow to **anger**, and overflowing with **mercy** and **truth**, maintaining mercy for **thousands**, forgiving **guilt** and **rebellion** and **sin**.”* God has revealed **all** of His **goodness** and **mercy** to us, through the **horn** of salvation which He raised up out of the house of **David**. This **horn** goes by many **other** names too. He’s called **Wonderful Counselor**, **Mighty God**, **Everlasting Father**, and **Prince of Peace**. He is the **King of kings**, and the **Lord of lords**. He is **Jesus Christ**, our **Lord** and **Savior**. With so many **powerful** and **glorious** names to **draw** from, why did Zechariah refer to Him simply as the **horn** of salvation?

In the Old Testament, the horns of the **altar** were a place of **refuge**. People who were in **trouble** could **go** there, and find **safety** from their enemies. However, as soon as they **let go** of those horns, they would again be **exposed** to the **same dangers** which had confronted them before.

We have a place of refuge **too**, in our **horn of salvation, Jesus**. As long as we cling to **Him**, we're **safe** from the **devil**, and any of the evil forces he is able to raise up **against** us. But if we **let go** of Jesus, and **desert** Him, then we become **easy prey** for the devil and his evil angels.

Jesus is our horn of salvation in **another** way too. The horn was used as a symbol of **power**. It was a **strong, firm, and unwavering** source of help. That description fits **Jesus** to a **tee**. He tells us, "*Whatever you ask the Father in my name, he will give you.*" Nothing could be **more comforting** than knowing that Jesus is ever-**present** with His **almighty** power to keep **all** harm and danger **away** from us. Of course, that **doesn't** mean that we'll never be faced with **pain** or **suffering**, or **peril**. But it **does** mean that Jesus will make those hardships work for our **good**.

We are extremely **blessed** to have a Savior who will **never** fail us. But, what was it that **prompted** God to **send** this **horn** of salvation to us? It was His own **promise**. God had made a promise to **Abraham** many years earlier. He had established a solemn **covenant** with Abraham, and when God **makes** such a covenant, He also sees to it that the covenant remains **unbroken**. Abraham had waited for the arrival of the promised **horn of salvation**, as did **all** of the Old Testament prophets. But the LORD simply told them, "He's still **coming**." That had to be **sufficient** for them - and it **was**. They were saved by the **grace** of God, through faith in the **promised Savior**.

We are **also** saved by **faith**, but the **difference** is that God has now **fulfilled** His promise to **send** the Savior, and so **we** believe in the Savior who **has come**. That makes our salvation even **more certain**, and the **certainty** of our salvation should prompt us to **serve** the LORD with **holiness** and **righteousness** all the days of our life. We don't have to **wait** for our salvation to be **completed** at some time in the **future**. It was **finished** when Jesus died on the **cross**. All **we** have to wait for is the **second** coming of Jesus. Jesus Himself commanded us to **watch** and **pray**, because we don't know the **day** or the **hour** when He will return. But up **until** that day, we have the **assurance** that He will **deliver** us **out** of the hand of our **enemies**. Therefore, we **never** need to be **afraid** of what might happen to us in the **future**,

because the **future** belongs to the LORD. And on **that** note, Zechariah's song of praise ends.

But, Zechariah's song wouldn't be **complete** without its **second** part - a song of **prophecy**. This song, which concerns the birth of his son, **John**, is just as important as his song of **praise**, because it prepares us for receiving the LORD. Whenever we know that a **guest** is coming to our home, we want to make sure that everything in the house is **in order**. And so, we **prepare**. We **cook**, and we **clean**, and we get the guest room **ready**, so when our guest **arrives** there's nothing **else** to do. That was the work of **John the Baptist** - to do a **housecleaning** job on our **hearts**.

John's message was, "***Repent**, because the kingdom of heaven is **near!***" Repentance was **necessary** before the LORD would come into the hearts of the people, so John preached the **Law** to them. He gave them sermon after sermon filled with **fire** and **brimstone**, so the people would first become **aware** of their **sinful** lives, and then with God's help, would go about **changing** them. After all, who takes a **bath** if he never gets **dirty**? Who goes to see a **doctor** if he never gets **sick**? And who needs a **Savior** if we can save **ourselves**?

John's message was to make **sure** that **everyone** knew that they **needed** a Savior, and that includes **us** too. Sin is a **disease** which continues to **eat away** at us. It's like **leprosy** - which **begins** in a **small** way at the body's **extremities**, but which eventually destroys the **whole body**. We have to be **aware** that this is what **sin** does to **each** of us, and we need to **realize** that on our **own**, we can't do a single thing to **stop** it. That was John's message to the **world**, and **through** that message he prepared a path for the **Savior** straight into the **hearts** of people everywhere. As soon as they felt their **need** for a **Savior**, they would be **receptive** to Jesus. John had preached them into the valley of the shadow of **death** - a death which was **eternal** - because they hadn't **repented** of their sins. But at the same time, he had brought them **back** into the **light** again - the light of **eternal life** - which can only come through our **Savior**, Jesus.

During this Christmas Season, let's remember people like **Zechariah** and the **other** Old Testament believers. Let's model **our** faith after **theirs**, because they believed even **before** the events had taken place. Then we too will be able to sing to our God **The Song Of Zechariah** - a song of **praise** and **prophecy** - because our God has shown us great **mercy** through the Gift of His **Son**. Amen.

## **Prayers:**

Precious Savior, we rejoice at Your **birth** because we know that You came as the **Lamb** of God to take away the **sin** of the world. But we also look **beyond** the manger to the **cross**, where Your precious **blood** was shed to **remove** our sins from God's sight forever. Bless our **faith** as we contemplate the **mystery** of Your birth. Bless us as we bow our heads in humble **contrition**, **confessing** our sins before Your **cross**. May we never lose **sight** of the cross as the **purpose** for Your coming to the earth. As we bring our hearts to You in loving **adoration**, and in true **penitence** and **trust**; forgive our **sins**, quicken us with **hope**, settle us with **peace**, and renew in us the **joy** of everlasting life.

Precious Savior, You are the **Light** of all the earth. The message of **salvation** in Your name is meant to gladden **every** heart. And so we pray: **Send out** Your light and Your truth to nations **everywhere**, that every knee may **bow** before You, and every heart may **worship** You as the one true **God**. Encourage and equip us as **witnesses** to bring the message of the Gospel to **others**, beginning with our own **families**, and the unchurched people of our **neighborhoods**.

Finally, dear Jesus, shower us with Your many **blessings** in this new year, satisfying our **needs** as You choose to do. And as we watch for Your glorious **return**, may we do so with **confidence** and **joy**. Hear our prayers which we offer to our heavenly Father in Your name, and always be ready to **intercede** with Him on our behalf. We worship and serve You, our Savior and King. 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 #86 - *“The Only Son from Heaven”***

**The only Son from heaven,  
Foretold by ancient seers,  
By God the Father given,  
In human form appears.  
No sphere his light confining,  
No star so brightly shining  
As he, our Morning Star.**

**Oh, time of God appointed,  
Oh, bright and holy morn!  
He comes, the King anointed,  
The Christ, the virgin-born,  
Grim death to conquer for us,  
To open heav’n before us  
And bring us life again.**

**Awaken, Lord, our spirit  
To know and love you more,  
In faith to stand unshaken,  
In spirit to adore,  
That we, through this world moving,  
Each glimpse of heaven proving,  
May reap its fullness there.**

**O Father, here before you  
With God the Holy Ghost  
And Jesus, we adore you,  
O Pride of angel host.  
Before you mortals lowly  
Cry “Holy, holy, holy,  
O blessed Trinity!”**

**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 #750 - “Christ, the Word of God Incarnate”**

**Christ, the Word of God incarnate,  
Lord and Son of Abraham;  
Christ the radiance of the Father,  
Perfect God, the great I Am;  
Christ, the Light, you shie unvanquished,  
Light and life you bring to all;  
Light our path with your own presence,  
Grant us grace to heed your call.**

**Christ, the lying bread from heaven,  
Food for body, food for soul;  
Christ, the manna, daily given,  
Nourish, strengthen, make us whole.  
Feed us with the food of heaven,  
Foretaste of the feast to be;  
Quench our thirst with living water  
Springing up eternally.**

**Christ, the shoot that springs triumphant  
From the stump of Jesse’s tree;  
Christ, true vine, you nurture branches  
To bear fruit abundantly.  
Graft us into you, O Savior;  
Prune our hearts so we remain  
Fruitful branches in your vineyard  
Till eternal life we gain.**

**Christ, our good and faithful Shepherd,  
Watching all your lambs and sheep;**

**Christ, the gate that guards the sheepfold,  
Never-failing vigil keep.  
When we stray, Good Shepherd, seek us,  
Find us, lift us, bear us home;  
Lamb of God, our Shepherd, keep us;  
Let us hear your voice alone.**

**Christ, the way that leads unfailing  
To the Father's home on high;  
Christ, the truth that frees the captive;  
Christ, the life that cannot die.  
Mediator to the Father,  
Sacrifice and Great High Priest;  
Lead us to your heav'nly mansions,  
There to share your wedding feast.**

**Christ, the Alpha and Omega;  
Christ, the firstborn from the dead;  
Christ, the life and resurrection;  
Christ, the Church's glorious head;  
Praise and thanks and adoration  
And unending worship be  
To the Father and the Spirit  
And to you eternally.**