

Welcome to Worship at
Trinity Lutheran Church, Osceola, WI
Christmas 2 - January 3, 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 #6 - "Come, O Long-Expected Jesus"

**Come, O long-expected Jesus,
Born to set your people free;
From our sins and fears release us
By your death on Calvary.
Israel's Strength and Consolation,
Hope to all the earth impart,
Dear Desire of ev'ry nation,
Joy of ev'ry longing heart.**

**Born your people to deliver,
Born a child and yet a king,
Born to reign in us forever,
Now your gracious kingdom bring.
By your own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By your all-sufficient merit
Raise us to your glorious throne.**

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: Micah 5:2-5

But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, from you, will go out the one who will be the ruler for me in Israel. His goings forth are from the beginning, from the days of eternity. Therefore the Lord will give them up, until the time when the woman who is in labor bears a child. Then the remaining survivors from his brothers will return to the people of Israel. He will stand and shepherd with the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. They will dwell securely, for at that time he will be great to the ends of the earth. This one will be their peace. When Assyria invades our land and tramples on our citadels, we will raise against him seven shepherds and eight leaders of men. (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: 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. You, O Lord, are our Father, our Redeemer. Your name
is from everlasting. Alleluia.

Gospel: John 7:40-43

After hearing his words, some of the people said, "This is truly the Prophet." Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Surely the Christ does not come from Galilee, does he? Doesn't the Scripture say that the Christ comes from David's descendants and from the little town of Bethlehem where David lived?" So the people were divided because of him. (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 #34 - "*Now Sing We, Now Rejoice*"

**Now sing we, now rejoice,
Now raise to heav'n our voice;
He from whom joy streameth
Poor in a manger lies;
Not so brightly beameth
The sun in yonder skies.
Thou my Savior art!
Thou my Savior art!**

**Come from on high to me;
I cannot rise to thee.
Cheer my wearied spirit,
O pure and holy Child;
Through thy grace and merit,
Blest Jesus, Lord most mild,
Draw me unto thee!
Draw me unto thee!**

**Now through his Son doth shine
The Father's grace divine.
Death o'er us had reigned
Through sin and vanity;**

He for us obtained
Eternal joy on high.
May we praise him there!
May we praise him there!

Oh, where shall joy be found?
Where but on heav'nly ground?
Where the angels singing
With all his saints unite,
Sweetest praises bringing
In heav'nly joy and light.
Oh, that we were there!
Oh, that we were there!

The Sermon: Hebrews 2:10-18
 “Live Free From The Fear Of Death”

Are you afraid of **death**? For most people, death conjures, up all sorts of **horrible** images in their minds. They equate death with **darkness** - with **pain** - and with **evil**. Death is the point of **no return**. Every year on Good Friday, our world pauses to remember the death of **Jesus**, our **Savior**. The crown of **thorns**, the **nails** piercing His flesh, the numbing **pain**, the punishing **thirst**, and worst of all the soul-stabbing **agony** of being left all alone to struggle with **demons** as He bore the sins of the **world** in total **darkness** on the cross - all of these things make for a very **dramatic** and **frightening** event. At the same time, they also illustrate a harsh **reality**. Death was **not kind** to Jesus, and yet, those events were all a part of **God's plan**. Our text begins, “*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**.*” God allowed death to be **merciless** to **Jesus**, so what might He allow death to do to **us**, His **brothers**? The thought is pretty **scary** to say the least. However, we need to remember that the things which **death** did to **Jesus** are **nothing** compared to what **Jesus** did to **death**. So, today we're going to take a look at the **good** side of death, as we learn that in **Jesus**, we **Live Free From The Fear Of Death**.

Exactly what did Jesus **do** to death while He hung on the cross? Our text tells us, “*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**).*” On Good Friday, Jesus **destroyed** the one who holds the **power** of death. That was totally the **right** thing to do, because if you stop and

think about it, **death** is not our biggest **problem** - **sin** is. And sin in turn was instigated by the **Devil**. So, when Jesus came to **rescue** us, He dealt with death merely as a **symptom**. His **real** assault was against **sin** and its **originator**, the **Devil**. Jesus handled sin by keeping all of God's laws **perfectly**, and then making Himself **liable** for all of the world's **failed** efforts to live perfect lives. In other words, Jesus took on **Himself** the punishment for all of our **sins**. Jesus **defeated** the Devil by exposing Himself to Satan's most **severe** temptations, and his most **galling** sneers, and **overcoming** them during His crucifixion. This was a very **difficult** task. In Psalm 22, the Holy Spirit describes the **anguish** of Jesus as He goes into battle against the Devil and his cohorts with these words, "*Many bulls surround me. Strong bulls from Bashan encircle me. Enemies open their mouths wide against me, like a lion that tears its prey and roars. Like water I am poured out. All my bones are pulled apart. My heart has become like wax. It has melted in the middle of my chest. My strength is dried up like broken pottery, and my tongue is stuck to the roof of my mouth. You lay me in the dust of death.*"

In spite of the **difficulty** of this task, Jesus would have to face it with no **supporting cast**. He would have to withstand these temptations **all alone**. His followers had **deserted** Him and fled. And because on the cross Jesus took on the identity of the **sins** of the world, even **God the Father** turned away from Him in disgust, as the words of Jesus from the cross make painfully **clear**. Yet, Jesus met His challenge **successfully**. At the conclusion of the three hours of mid-day darkness, Jesus declared, "*It is finished.*" The work which He had set out to do, had been **completed** - the power of the Devil had been **destroyed**.

In the Book of Revelation, St. John used some very powerful **language** to describe this victory. He wrote, "*I saw an angel (ie. Jesus) coming down from heaven. He had the key to the abyss (ie. hell) and a great chain in his hand. He seized the dragon, the ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, bound him for a thousand years, threw him into the abyss, locked it, and set a seal on it, so that he could no longer deceive the nations.*" Jesus, through His triumph on the cross, made Satan a **prisoner** in his own dark kingdom.

Jesus has provided us with a **cure** for the disease of sin - **rescue** from the power of the Devil - and **Freedom From The Fear Of Death**. Stop and think about it. If you've been inflicted with some terrible form of **cancer**, but your doctor has a sure-fire **cure** for it - you don't really need to be **afraid** of the disease anymore, do you? Or, if you receive in the mail a big **bill** for something, but you've already saved up the money to **pay** the bill, it shouldn't **frighten** you, should it? In the same way, since Jesus **conquered** death and brought it under His

control by paying the debt which we owed because of our sin - therefore, we no longer have any reason to be **afraid**, even when the pale and gaunt figure of the grim **reaper** stares us directly in the face. By destroying the **power** of the Devil, Jesus set us **Free From The Fear Of Death**.

Nevertheless, a fear of death is still very **common** - even among Christians. In many ways our fear of death is very similar to a child's fear of a dark **basement** or **attic**. Do you **remember** those fears? Do you remember **avoiding** certain places because you suspected that someone or something **bad** was waiting for you there? Do you remember asking your father or mother to go down into the basement **with** you? Do you remember asking someone to turn on a **light** in order to help soothe some of your anxieties? Well, whether you remember those fears or **not**, children **have** such fears because darkness is an **unknown** quantity. We **fear** what we do not **know** - we **fear** what we cannot **see**. And that's where **Jesus** comes in. Jesus has taken **away** the fear of death, by encountering it **for** us, and then showing us that like a **toothless** dog, its **bark** is worse than its **bite**.

In fact, Jesus shows us that encountering death **isn't** like entering into the dark **unknown** at all. Instead, it's far more like walking through the front door of our **home**, and that's not threatening at all, is it? **Soldiers** can hardly **wait** to leave the battlefield and go **home**. **College** students count the days until they can leave the dorm and go **home** for Easter break. During the time which Jesus spent here on the earth, completing the assignment which the Heavenly Father had given to Him, Jesus **also** looked forward to the joys and comforts of His **heavenly home**. Why should **we** be any **different**? Because Jesus did His work **completely** and **perfectly** - washing away our sins and cleansing us with His own **blood** - you and I can also look **forward** to going to our **heavenly home** - even though we've never **been** there before, and even though we have to pass through the door of **death** in order to get there.

How is it possible for us to **feel** that way? Maybe I can illustrate it for you with a little **story**. Back in the days when small-town doctors still routinely made house calls, a local physician was called to the bedside of a man who was **dying**. The patient asked his doctor what **death** would be **like**? That's a pretty tough question. But as the doctor was pondering what he would say, he heard some **scratching** at the door of the room, and **that** gave him his answer. He said, "Do you hear that **noise**? That's my **dog**. He **walked** here with me, but I left him **downstairs**. He **climbed** the stairs because he knows **I'm** up here. That dog has **no idea** what this room is **like** because he's never **been** here before. All he knows is that **I'm** in here, and that's **good enough** for him. You and I **don't know** what it

will be like to walk through the door of **death**. But we **do** know that our **Savior** is already on the other side - and **that** should be **good enough** for us.

My dear friends, death was **not kind** to our Lord Jesus - and it may attempt to treat **us** in much the same way. But what death did to Jesus is **nothing**, compared to what **Jesus** did to **death**. Jesus **destroyed** death, so that we, through **faith** in Jesus, may now live our lives **Free From The Fear Of Death**. Amen.

Prayers:

O God, our gracious Father, as we stand at the **beginning** of this new year, we are painfully mindful of our **stubborn** and **sinful** natures, which have often led us to **do** the very things which You have **forbidden**, and to **neglect** the things which You have **commanded**. Don't be **angry** with us because of our sins, but rather, freely **pardon** us for the sake of **Jesus** - whose name stands over the **entrance** to the new year.

Father, we are also mindful of the many **blessings** which You have showered on us in the **past**, and of our need for Your **continual** presence in the **future** as well. Years will **come** and years will **go**, but You, O Lord, will always be the **same**. We are **confident** that from year to year, Your tender **kindness** and compassionate **love** will **rest** on us, because You have adopted us as Your **children** through Jesus.

Lord Jesus Christ, long ago You came to **temporarily** live among us, and to bring **light**, **life**, and **hope**, to a world that lies in spiritual **darkness** and under the shadow of eternal **death**. Holy Redeemer, we **thank** You for being the **Word** made **flesh**. Come now and graciously find a **permanent** dwelling place in our **hearts**. **Forgive** our sins, and fill us with the **joy** and **peace** that come through the sure hope of everlasting **life**. Day by day increase our **appreciation** and **trust** for everything You have done to **redeem** us from our sins and **reconcile** us to God.

Lord, give us Your **grace** through the Holy Spirit, to **resist** the devil, the world, and our flesh, with a steadfast **faith** - a faith that is nurtured **daily** by Your Holy Word. Watch over us - ever guarding, guiding, and keeping us. In this new year, grant **health** to our bodies, and in Your **mercy**, may the year 2021 be a time of **healing** for all who need it. 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 #53 - *"To Shepherds as They Watched by Night"*

**To shepherds as they watched by night
Appeared a host of angels bright;
"Behold the tender babe," they said,
"In yonder lowly manger laid,"**

**"At Bethlehem, in David's town,
As Micah did of old make known.
It is the Christ, your Lord and King,
Who will to all salvation bring."**

**Oh, then rejoice that through his Son
God is with sinners now at one;
Made like yourselves of flesh and blood,
Your brother is the eternal God.**

**What harm can sin and death then do?
The true God now abides with you.
Let hell and Satan storm and rave,
Christ is your brother - you are safe.**

**Not one he will or can forsake;
His cov'nant he will never break.
Let ev'ry scheme the tempter try,
You may his utmost pow'rs defy.**

**You shall and must at last prevail.
God's own you are; you cannot fail.
To God forever sing your praise
With joy and patience all your days.**

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 #343 - "*Christ Is the World's Light*"

**Christ is the world's light, Christ and none other;
Born in our darkness, he became our brother.
If we have seen him, we have seen the Father:
Glory to God on high!**

**Christ is the world's peace, Christ and none other;
No one can serve him and despise another.
Who else unites us, one with God the Father?
Glory to God on high!**

**Christ is the world's life, Christ and none other;
Sold once for silver, murdered here, our brother.
He who redeemed us reigns with God the Father:
Glory to God on high!**

**Give God the glory, God and none other;
Give God the glory, Spirit, Son, and Father;
Give God the glory, God with us, my brother:
Glory to God on high!**