

# Grace Lutheran Church

Lutheran Church – Canada  
24542 Melbourne Road,  
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Rev. James R. Scholz, Senior Pastor  
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## The Nativity of Our Lord Christmas Eve

December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2011

**AS WE GATHER:** “Signs, signs, everywhere signs” once sang a popular song. Our lives are filled with signs---from road signs that direct our travel, to room signs that tell us where to go, to the signs we see in the faces of people that tell us whether they are happy or sad. Sometimes we long for signs from God---hints to guide us on our journey of faith. Once, Philip asked Jesus to show us the Father; Jesus pointed to Himself. The letter to the Hebrews reminds us that God spoke in many ways of old, but now He has spoken through His Son. And we heard the angel say: **“This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.”** Jesus is **THE** sign from God---the sign that speaks forgiveness to our sins, hope to our despair, peace to our upset, and purpose to our aimless lives. In the manger is God's once and for all sign that He loves us enough to become our Saviour.

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### ORDER OF DIVINE SERVICE

#### PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

**CALL TO WORSHIP** Solo - “O Holy Night” (Brenda Ryan)

PROCESSIONAL HYMN “O Come, All Ye Faithful” [LSB #379  
v. 1-3]

O come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant!  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;  
Come and behold Him Born the king of angels;  
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

Highest, most holy, Light of Light eternal,  
Born of a virgin, a mortal He comes;  
Son of the Father Now in flesh appearing!  
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation,  
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God In the highest:  
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

#### INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
**Amen.**

#### CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

When all was still and it was midnight, Your almighty Word, O Lord,  
descended from the royal throne.

**The virgin bears a Son; His name is Jesus, for He has come to save  
His people from their sins.**

Come, let us unburden our hearts at His invitation and confess our sins to God  
our Father.

*(Silence for reflection)*

**Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and  
unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed,  
what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not  
loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as  
ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment.  
For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive  
us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and  
walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.**

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the  
Lord. *Luke 2:11*

Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

His is the name of peace---given not as the world gives but only as He can give---who forgives our sins and reconciles us to the Father and through Him to each other. Peace be with you.

**And also with you.**

**HYMN** “O Come, All Ye Faithful” [LSB #379 v. 4]

**Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, Born this happy morning;  
Jesus, to Thee be glory giv’n!  
Word of the Father Now in flesh appearing!  
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!**

### **SALUTATION and COLLECT OF THE DAY**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray.

O God, You make this holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that as we have known the mysteries of that Light on earth we may also come to the fullness of its joys in heaven; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

**+ WORD +**

**OLD TESTAMENT** Isaiah 9:2-7 *(The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.)*

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.

You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as men rejoice when dividing the plunder.

For as in the day of Midian’s defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor.

Every warrior’s boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it

with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**HYMN** “Now Sing We, Now Rejoice” [LSB #386 v. 1-3]

**Now sing we, now rejoice, Now raise to heaven our voice;  
He from whom joy streameth Poor in a manger lies;  
Not so brightly beameth The son 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!**

**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!**

*Text and Tune: Public Domain*

**EPISTLE** Titus 2:11-14 *(God’s grace has appeared.)*

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God!**

**HOLY GOSPEL** Luke 2:1-20 *(The story of God’s gift of Himself to us.)*

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the second chapter.

**Glory to You, O Lord.**

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when 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

**HYMN**                    **“O Little Town of Bethlehem”**                    [St. 1,2: *LSB* #361]

O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep The silent stars go by;  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth The everlasting light.  
The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary, And, gathered all above  
While mortals sleep, the angels keep Their watch of wond'ring love.  
O morning stars, together Proclaim the holy birth,  
And praises sing to God our king And peace to all the earth!

Text: Philips Brooks, 1835-93, public domain

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.

**HYMN**                    **“Away in a Manger”**                    [St. 1,3: *LSB* #365]

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,  
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.  
The stars in the bright sky looked down where He lay,  
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,  
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.  
I love Thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,  
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

Text: *Little Children's Book*, Philadelphia, 1885; public domain

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 fear. And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a 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.”

**HYMN**    **“From Heav'n Above to Earth I Come”**                    [Sts. 1-3,5: *LSB* #358]

“From heav'n above to earth I come  
To bear good news to ev'ry home;  
Glad tidings of great joy I bring,  
Whereof I now will say and sing:

“To you this night is born a child  
Of Mary, chosen virgin mild;  
This little child of lowly birth  
Shall be the joy of all the earth.

**“This is the Christ, our God Most High,  
Who hears your sad and bitter cry;  
He will Himself your Savior be  
From all your sins to set you free.**

**“These are the signs that you shall mark:  
The swaddling clothes and manger dark.  
There you will find the infant laid  
By whom the heav'ns and earth were made.”**

Text: Martin Luther, 1483--1546; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-78, alt., public domain  
Tune: VON HIMMEL HOCH, *Geistliche lieder*, Leipzig, 1539, ed. Valten Schumann, public domain

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!”

**HYMN**                    **“Angels We Have Heard on High”** [St. 1: *LSB* #368]

Angels we have heard on high,  
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
And the mountains in reply,  
Echoing their joyous strains.

*Refrain*

**Gloria in excelsis Deo.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo.**

Text: French; tr. *The Crown of Jesus, Part 2*, London, 1862, alt., public domain  
Tune: GLORIA, French, public domain

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.

**HYMN**                    **“Angels We Have Heard on High”** [St. 3: *LSB* #368]

**Come to Bethlehem and see  
Him whose birth the angels sing;  
Come, adore on bended knee  
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.**

*Refrain*

**Gloria in excelsis Deo.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo.**

Text: French; tr. *The Crown of Jesus, Part 2*, London, 1862, alt., public domain  
Tune: GLORIA, French, public domain

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.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to You, O Christ.**

**HYMN**                    “It Came Upon a Midnight Clear”                    [LSB #366]

It came upon the midnight clear, That glorious song of old,  
From angels bending near the earth To touch their harps of gold:  
“Peace on the earth, goodwill to all, From heav’n’s all-gracious king.”  
The world in solemn stillness lay To hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come With peaceful wings unfurled,  
And still their heav’nly music floats O’er all the weary world.  
Above its sad and lowly plains They bend on hov’ring wing,  
And ever o’er its babel sounds The blessed angels sing.

All you, beneath your heavy load, By care and guilt bent low,  
And toil along a dreary way With painful steps and slow:  
Look up, for golden is the hour, Come swiftly on the wing,  
The Prince was born to bring you peace; Of Him the angels sing.

For lo, the days have come to pass By prophets seen of old,  
When down into the circling years Came Christ as was foretold.  
His word of peace shall to the earth God’s ancient promise bring,  
And all who take this gift will hear The song the angels sing.

**SERMON**                    “Mary Pounded Them in Her Heart”                    (Luke 2:1-19)

**THE CREEDAL HYMN** “In God We Believe” [Tune: LSB #364]

In God we believe: the Creator whose pow’r  
In mercy has brought us for worship this hour.  
He graciously grants us our years and our days  
And blesses with kindness our work and our ways.

In Jesus, the Saviour, our hope is secured.  
True God and true man on the cross He endured  
To grant our lives wholeness, forgiveness of sin.  
With hearts freed from guilt, we know true peace within.

God’s Spirit at work in our lives we confess  
With power and truth the Church now He does bless.  
As saints, God’s forgiven, one day we shall then  
Be living in glory forever. Amen

**PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH**

**THE LORD’S PRAYER**

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

**OFFERING**

**SOLO** . . . . . “Lo, How a Rose E’re Blooming” (Brenda Ryan)

**CANDLE LIGHTING**

*[The pastor will give light to the ushers, who will in turn share that light with the worshipper nearest the aisle. Please pass the light on to the others in the pew, remembering to hold the lighted candles upright while dipping unlit candles into the flame.]*

**HYMN**                    “Silent Night, Holy Night”                    [LSB #363]

Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright  
Round yon virgin mother and child. Holy Infant, so tender and mild,  
Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight;  
Glories stream from heaven afar, Heav’nly hosts sing, Alleluia!  
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!

Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love’s pure light  
Radiant beams from Thy holy face With the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

As the light of these candles lights-up our faces, it symbolizes the Light of Christ, a Child in the manger at Bethlehem, a Savior suffering our death on the cross, and soon to come from His throne on high as Judge of all. He is our Light here on earth and the eternal Light who enlightens heaven, where there is no need of candle or sun. Rejoice for the Light of the world has come, who transforms us with the brightness of His glory. This is the message we have heard from Him and proclaimed to you: that God is Light and in Him is no darkness at all. *1 John 1: 5b*

**If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie, and do not practice the truth.** *1 John 1: 6*

But if we walk in the Light, as He is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another,

**and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all our sins.** *1 John 1: 7*

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and then cover its light. Instead they set the lamp on its stand, set up high, and it lights everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before all people, that they may see your good works and give praise to your Father in heaven. *Matthew 5: 14-16, adapted*

## **BENEDICTION**

The LORD bless you and keep you;

The LORD make His face to shine on you and be gracious to you;

The LORD look upon You with favor + and give you peace. *Numbers 6: 24-26*

**Amen! Glory to God in the Highest! And peace to His people on earth!** *Luke 2: 14, adapted*

*[Please extinguish your candle – lights on]*

## **RECESSIONAL HYMN      “Joy to the World”                      [LSB #387]**

**Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King;  
Let ev’ry heart prepare Him room  
And heav’n and nature sing, And heav’n and nature sing,  
And heav’n, and heav’n and nature sing.**

**Joy to the earth, the Saviour reigns! Let men their songs employ,  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat, Repeat, the sounding joy.**

**No more let sin and sorrows grow Nor thorns infest the ground;  
He comes to make His blessings flow Far as the curse is found,  
Far as the curse is found, Far as, far as the curse is found.**

**He rules the world with truth and grace And makes the nations prove  
The glories of His righteousness And wonders of His love,  
And wonders of His love, And wonders, wonders of His love.**

## **POSTLUDE**

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A special “thank you” to our organist, Linda Aitken, and our soloist, Brenda Ryan, and all who participated in our service this evening. Please remember to return the candles and holders to an usher before you leave tonight.

We invite you to join us for worship tomorrow on Christmas Day at 9 am. A blessed Christmas to all!

## **+ A Christmas Message from Pastor Castillo and his Family +**

*“As you celebrate Christmas, may our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ keep you safe and in steadfast love to all those around you. The coming of Jesus Christ is the best gift that we can receive. Merry Christmas to all and a happy and safe New Year.” –*

Pastor Oscar, Mayra, Osmayra, and Oscar Jr. Castillo

## **+ A Christmas Message from Pastor Jim and Sandy Scholz +**

*“We wish to thank each and every one of you for your overwhelming expression of love through the cards and gifts you have given them this Holy Season. In the short time we have been with you, it is abundantly clear to us that your love for God and His gift of a Saviour is at work in our church. May the joy of Christmas fill your hearts and homes now and always!” -*

Pastor Jim and Sandy Scholz