

Grace Lutheran Church

A congregation of Lutheran Church – Canada
24542 Melbourne Rd.
Cairngorm, Strathroy-Caradoc

Rev. James R. Scholz, Senior Pastor
Rev. Oscar Castillo, Assistant Pastor
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Mrs. Linda Aitken, Pianist

The Nativity of Our Lord Christmas Eve

December 24th, 2012 - 7:00 pm

AS WE GATHER: At this time of year, gift-giving and gift-receiving present many of us with a mixed blessing of anticipation, wonder, confusion, and disappointment. How is one supposed to react to a Santa Claus tie that lights up and plays "Jingle Bells"? It's a gift you neither wanted nor needed. Yet someone chose it for you. Tonight we rejoice, because in the midst of our confusion about the gift-giving and gift-receiving thing, comes God the Father's gift to the world--the Lord, Jesus Christ. This gift of our Savior, come to die and to be raised for us, may not be the kind of gift many of us are looking for; yet this is the one and only gift we need. This child brings forth the kingdom of God, a kingdom we see in Jesus' teaching, healing, casting out demons, and raising the dead. It's the kingdom revealed in Jesus' death on the cross to forgive sinners, it's the kingdom revealed in His resurrection as a foretaste of the feast to come. "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing! Glory to the newborn King!" **Jesus, God's Gift in a manger**, is the gift that both we and the whole world truly need.

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ORDER OF DIVINE SERVICE

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

CALL TO WORSHIP "Noel, Noel Bells Are Ringing"
by Wilber Chenoweth

PROCESSIONAL HYMN "O Come, All Ye Faithful" [LSB #379 s. 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!

Text: Public Domain

INVOCATION

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

OPENING SENTENCES

Pastor: Come, all who seek the truth.
Choir: **You will find a little Babe lying in a manger.**

Pastor: Come, all who hunger for justice.
Women/Girls: **You will find a little Babe lying in a manger.**

Pastor: Come, all who yearn for abundant life.
Men/Boys: **You will find a little Babe lying in a manger.**

Pastor: Come, all who labor and are heavy laden.
All: **You will find a little Babe lying in a manger.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Pastor: As we prepare to celebrate our Lord's birth, let us also remember the reason this holy Child was born: "He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself." *Hebrews 9:26*

All: **We confess that we have sinned against God and against one another. We are powerless to undo the entangled mess of sin in our lives. We yearn for peace with God and reconciliation with one another, yet we cannot accomplish it ourselves. Forgive us, Lord, and restore our souls,**

that our lives reflect not our sin, but the joy of the birth of Your only Son into the world.

Pastor: Jesus is Immanuel, God-with-us. What we are powerless to do, He has done for us. His name is Jesus. He has come to save us from our sins. Therefore, in the stead and by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the (+) Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

HYMN **“O Come, All Ye Faithful”** **[LSB #379 s. 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!**

Text: Public Domain

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Let us pray: O God, You make us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Grant that as we joyfully receive Him as our Redeemer, we may with sure confidence behold Him when He comes to be our Judge, through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

HYMN **“Angels From the Realms of Glory”** **[LSB #367 s. 1,2]**

**Angels from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o’er all the earth;
Ye who sang creation’s story,
Now proclaims Messiah’s birth.
Come and worship, come and worship;
Worship Christ the new born King.**

**Shepherd’s in the field abiding,
Watching o’er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing,
Yonder shines the Infant Light.
Come and worship, come and worship;
Worship Christ the new born King.**

Text: Public Domain

+ 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 **“Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming”** **[LSB #359 s. 1-3]**

**Lo, how a rose e’er blooming From tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse’s lineage coming As prophets long have sung,
It came, a flow’ret bright,
Amid the cold of winter, When half-spent was the night.**

**Isaiah ‘twas foretold it, The rose I have in mind;
With Mary we behold it, The virgin mother kind.**

**To show God’s love alright,
She bore to us a Saviour, When half-spent was the night.**

**This flow’r, whose fragrance tender With sweetness fills the air,
Dispels with glorious splendor The darkness everywhere.**

**True man, yet very God,
From sin and death He saves us And lightens ev’ry load.**

Text: 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!

SOLO “The Snow Lay on the Ground”

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” [LSB #361 s.1,2]

**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 clothes and laid Him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

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

**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 clothes and lying in a manger.”

HYMN “From Heav’n Above to Earth I Come” [LSB #358 s.1-3,5]

**“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” [LSB #368 s.1]

**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” [LSB #368 s.3]

**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
With power and truth the Church now He does bless. ,**

**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.**

Text: Public Domain

SERMON “God’s Gift in a Manger” (Luke 2:1-14)

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.**

THE OFFERING (“The First Noel/The Christmas Waltz” . . . arranged
by David Lanz)

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLE

(The light is passed from pastor to assisting ushers who pass it to the congregation. Do NOT let small children hold candles unattended. For your safety and to prevent wax from dripping, please do NOT tip the lit candle. Tip only the unlighted candle. Hold the candles straight up and they will not drip. Blow them out gently.)

Pastor: As the light of these candles illumines 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.

People: If we say we have fellowship with Him but still walk in darkness, we lie, and do not live according to the truth.

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

People: And the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all our sins.

Pastor: You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and then cover its light. Instead they set the lamp on its stand, set it 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*

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

Stanza 1-2: Congregation in English
Stanzas 3: Congregation in German or your mother tongue

**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.**

Text: Public Domain

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.**

Text: Public Domain

POSTLUDE

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A special “thank you” to our pianist Linda Aitken, our soloist Brenda Ryan and to all who participated in our service this evening.

Please remember to return the candles and holders to an usher before you leave tonight. If you had donated a poinsettia for our worship this evening, you may wish to leave it for our worship service tomorrow or take it home with you tonight.

**We invite you to join us for Divine Worship on Christmas Day at 10 am.
A very merry and blessed Christmas to all!**

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+ A Christmas Message from Pastor Castillo and his Family +

“Thank you for your kind greetings, gifts and cards of love this Christmas season. Your expressions of love for us give a wonderful testimony to the love of God at work in our church and its people. In the joy of His love, we wish God’s richest blessings to all of you this Christmas and every day of the new year!”

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

+ A Christmas Message from Pastor Scholz and his wife Sandy +

“Once again we welcome into our hearts and homes God’s surprising Christmas gift, God-with-us, sent from heaven itself. As you place the Lord Jesus into the center of your celebrations, may His birth, life, death, and resurrection bring you comfort and peace, until He returns to take you to Himself. Sandy and I thank God for your ongoing love and support of the Gospel here at Faith and at Grace. We wish you and your loved ones a Blessed Christmas and a Joyous New Year!”

Pastor Jim and Sandy Scholz