



Sunday, December 24, 2023

"In response to God's love, St. Matthew's is a faith community welcoming all to grow in faith, to worship Christ and to reach out to everyone."

Welcome!

Thank you for worshipping with us on this Holy Night and we hope our worship will be a blessing to you. Our Lord's Supper is being celebrated today. Everyone is welcome to receive this Holy Sacrament.

Flowers

The Christmas flowers are placed to the Glory of God and in memory of loved ones by:

Inge Poetzinger in loving memory of her husband, **Gerhard Poetzinger**
The Speck, Lane and Giampaolo families in memory of **Leila Stortz**

We wish you all a joyous Christmas. May the Lord bless you throughout the twelve days of Christmas and the coming New Year!

If you missed last week's sermon, it is available on our website.

St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church



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Evangelical Lutheran Worship

GATHERING

Lighting of the Advent Wreath prayer
Advent Candle Hymn 240, v 4
A Christmas Verse, written by Richard Wilbur
Hymn 283 O Come, All Ye Faithful, v1
Greeting Page 203
Hymn of Praise..... 275 Angels, from the
Realms of Glory

Prayer of the Day

WORD

Hymn 272 Lo, How a Rose... , vv 1-2
First Reading Isaiah 9:2-7
Hymn 272 Lo, How a Rose... , v 3
Psalm 96..... printed in bulletin
Second Reading Titus 2:11-14
Hymn 270 Hark! The Herald Angles Sing
Gospel Luke 2:1-20
"O Holy Night" sung by Sylvia Tollar
Sermon
Hymn..... 271 I Am So Glad Each
Christmas Eve
Nicene Creed Page 104
Prayers of Intercession
Prayer Response "Your mercy is great."
Peace (non-contact gestures)

MEAL

Offering Prayer
Great Thanksgiving Page 206
Hymn 274 On Christmas Night, vv 1 & 4
Eucharistic Prayer
The Lord's Prayer Page 208
Communion 277, 279, 276
Prayer after Communion
Sanctuary candles are lit

SENDING

Sending Song ... 281 Silent Night, Holy Night!
Blessing

Dismissal: Christ the Savior is born!
Go in peace. Proclaim this good news.
Thanks be to God.

December 24, 2023

(B)

Christmas Eve

FIRST READING. Isaiah 9:2-7

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.
You have multiplied the nation,
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.
For the yoke of their burden,
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.
For all the boots of the tramping warriors

and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.
For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is
named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onwards and for evermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

SECOND READING. Titus 2:11-24

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

GOSPEL. Luke 2:1-20

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!'

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.' So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Lighting the Advent Wreath

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Praise to you, O God, who lives with us, sharing our flesh and bones. As Mary waited and Joseph dreamed, so we wait and dream for you. Bless us and let your face shine upon us, more radiant than these candles, and more dear than all else we seek. Restore us when we fail to refuse the evil and choose the good, and banish all our fears. We pray in the name of Emmanuel, your promised child and our Savior. Amen.

Sing Hymn 240, verse 4

Psalm 96 – Tune 257 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (Veni Emmanuel)

The lines of the Psalm printed in bold font are sung in unison to the tune of a familiar hymn. The lines in plain font are read by the leader.

Leader: Sing to the Lord a new song.

**Unto the Lord a new song sing,
For he has done a wondrous thing.**

Tell of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples.

**Let all on earth their songs employ
And praise our God with shouts of joy.**

For the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised; he is to be honored more than all the gods. The gods of all other nations are only idols, but the Lord created the heavens. Glory and majesty surround him; power and beauty fill his sanctuary.

**Oh, come, behold, God's glory now:
And at the manger lowly bow.**

Praise the Lord, all people on earth; praise his glory and might. Praise the Lord's glorious name; bring an offering and come into his courts. Bow down before the Holy One when he appears; tremble before him, all the earth!

**Unto the Lord a new song sing,
For he has done a wondrous thing.**

Say among the nations, "The Lord is king! The earth is set firmly in place and cannot be moved; he will judge the people with justice."

**Let all on earth their songs employ
And praise our God with shouts of joy.**

For the Lord is coming to judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with his truth.

**Oh, come, behold, God's glory now:
And at the manger lowly bow.**

Offering Prayer

Good and loving God, we rejoice in the birth of Jesus, who came among the poor to bring the riches of your grace. As you have blessed us with your gifts, let them be a blessing for others. With the trees of the field, and with all earth and heaven, we shout for joy at the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Dates to Remember

Dec 25	11:00 a.m. – Christmas Day Gathering with light lunch
Dec 31	11:00 a.m. – Lessons and Carols
Jan 7	10:00 a.m. – Coffee Hour before the worship service at 11:00 a.m.
Jan 14	Church Council Meeting after the service
Jan 21	“Beat the Winter Blahs” Soup Lunch following the worship service.
Feb 4	Annual Meeting, please have all reports submitted by Jan 14.

December 25, 11:00 a.m. – Christmas Day Gathering

Please join us for a relaxed informal gathering on Christmas Day, featuring a “no-rehearsal paper bag pageant”, Christmas carols and a light lunch!

Year End Financial Appeal

As we approach Christmas, we are asking for your support in reducing our deficit of approximately \$15,000. Recognizing that prices have increased, we hope that you can help as you are able. Donations can be made by December 31st in person, mailed to the Church at 57 Griffith St. Welland, ON L3B 4G6 or e-transferred to stmatts@cogeco.net. If you have any questions, please contact us at stmatts@cogeco.net.

A donation of any size would truly be appreciated.

To all of our kind and caring St. Matthews family,

Your kindness and generosity knows no bounds. We thank you humbly from the bottom of our hearts. It certainly lifts a heavy burden and will go a long way to make a Merry Christmas and help to pay some heating bills this winter.

Whether you contributed monetarily... or keep us in your prayers... or offer a kind word...or a smile while at worship...all of these are cherished gifts!

We wish you all a very blessed Christmas and a very happy healthy New Year!!! May the lord bless you all!

— Sheila and Richard Kiess

