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**A Christmas Eve Service of Nine Lessons and Carols**  
December 24, 2023

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**Divine Word**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church**

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1081 Greenbank Rd.,  
Ottawa, ON., K2B 5A8  
613-825-1629  
[www.divinewordottawa.ca](http://www.divinewordottawa.ca)

Service Theme  
**God's Christmas Timing**

Our lessons span human history – revealing how God prepared his people throughout time for the birth of His Son, our Saviour.

Opening Hymn  
“Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful”  
*(Christian Worship 55)*

Oh, come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant,  
Oh, come ye, oh, come ye to Bethlehem;  
Come and behold him, Born the King of angels.  
Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come, let us adore him,  
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

God from true God, and Light from Light eternal,  
Born of a virgin, to earth he comes,  
Only begotten Son of God the Father.  
Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come, let us adore him,  
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation;  
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above.  
Glory to God, all Glory in the highest.  
Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come, let us adore him,  
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, Born this happy morning;  
Jesus, to thee be all glory giv'n,  
Word of the Father, Now in flesh appearing.  
Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come, let us adore him,  
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Invocation

M: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

M: Beloved in Christ: It is our delight this Christmas season to rejoice in the good news of Jesus' birth. Let us hear the story recorded throughout sacred Scripture concerning how our loving God planned to save us from our sins. But first, let us pray:

M: Heavenly Father, we pray for ourselves and all people who worship you and your Son this holy night. By your holy Word, lead us to say with the angels,

**C: Glory to God in the highest!**

M: We pray for your blessing on the people of our city, our province, our nation, and our world.

**C: O Lord, have mercy!**

M: We pray for the poor and helpless, the cold and hungry, the sick and sad, that you would give them the joy of your salvation and the comfort of your presence.

**C: O Christ, have mercy!**

M: We pray for unbelievers and enemies of the Church, that through your Law and Gospel you would lead them to recognize your Son as their only hope for eternal life.

**C: O Lord, Have mercy!**

M: Finally, we remember before you all those who rejoice with us in heaven, who live in greater light and beauty than we, that multitude which no one can number, who died in faith, and now praise you in your heavenly temple. We confess that we are united with them and with one another.

**C: Glory to God in the highest!**

M: We humbly offer up these prayers and praises in the words that Christ himself taught us:

**Our Father in heaven,  
 Hallowed be your name,  
 Your kingdom come,  
 Your will be done on earth as in heaven.  
 Give us today our daily bread.  
 Forgive us our sins,  
 as we forgive those who sin against us.  
 Lead us not into temptation,  
 But deliver us from evil.  
 For the kingdom, the power,  
 and the glory are yours  
 now and forever. Amen.**

**Introductory Devotion**  
 Galatians 4:4–5 (EHV)

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.

## Hymn

“Come, Your Hearts and Voices Raising”  
(*Christian Worship 42:1-2,5*)

Come, your hearts and voices raising,  
Christ the Lord with gladness praising;  
Loudly sing his love amazing,  
Worthy folk of Christendom.

See how God, for us providing,  
Gave his Son and life abiding;  
He our weary steps is guiding  
From earth's woe to heav'nly joy.

Gracious Child, we pray you, hear us;  
From your lowly manger cheer us.  
Gently lead us and be near us  
Till we join th' angelic choir.

## The First Lesson Genesis 3:8-19

*Right after the creation of the world and fall into sin, God promised a Saviour*

<sup>8</sup> They heard the voice of the LORD God, who was walking around in the garden during the cooler part of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. <sup>9</sup> The LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” <sup>10</sup> The man said, “I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid myself.” <sup>11</sup> God said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?” <sup>12</sup> The man said, “The woman you gave to be with me—she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate it.” <sup>13</sup> The LORD God said to the woman, “What have you done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” <sup>14</sup> The LORD God said to the serpent: Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all the livestock, and more than every wild animal. You shall crawl on your belly, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. <sup>15</sup> I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He will crush your head, and you will crush his heel. <sup>16</sup> To the woman he said: I will greatly increase your pain in childbearing. With painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, but he will rule over you. <sup>17</sup> To Adam he said: Because you listened to your wife’s voice and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, “You shall not eat from it,” the soil is cursed on account of you. You will eat from it with painful labor all the days of your life. <sup>18</sup> Thorns and thistles will spring up from the ground for you, but you will eat the crops of the field. <sup>19</sup> By the sweat of your face you will eat bread until you return to the soil, for out of it you were taken. For you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

M: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God

## Hymn

### “Of The Father’s Love Begotten”

*(Christian Worship 35:1-2)*

Of the Father's love begotten  
Ere the worlds began to be,  
He is Alpha and Omega,  
He the source, the ending he,  
Of the things that are, that have been,  
And that future years shall see  
Evermore and evermore.

Oh, that birth forever blessed  
When the virgin, full of grace,  
By the Holy Ghost conceiving,  
Bore the Saviour of our race,  
And the babe, the world's Redeemer,  
First revealed his sacred face  
Evermore and evermore.

## The Second Lesson

Genesis 22:15-18

*Some 2000 years before Jesus’ birth, the LORD promises Abraham a special offspring, through whom all nations will be blessed.*

<sup>15</sup> The Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven <sup>16</sup> and said, “I have sworn by myself, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, <sup>17</sup> I will bless you greatly, and I will multiply your descendants greatly, like the stars of the sky and like the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the city gates of their enemies. <sup>18</sup> In your seed all the nations of the earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.”

M: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God

## Hymn

### “Go, Tell It On The Mountain”

*(Christian Worship 57)*

*Refrain: Go, tell it on the mountain, Over the hills, and ev'rywhere;  
Go, tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born.*

While shepherds kept their watching  
O'er silent flocks by night,  
Behold, throughout the heavens  
There shone a holy light.

*Refrain*

The shepherds feared and trembled  
When lo, above the earth  
Rang out the angel chorus  
That hailed our Savior's birth.

*Refrain*

Down in a lowly manger  
The humble Christ was born;  
And God sent us salvation  
That blessed Christmas morn. *Refrain*

## The Third Lesson Isaiah 11:1-9

*The LORD gives Isaiah insight as to who the coming Saviour would be and what he would accomplish. This prophecy was given some 700 years before Jesus birth.*

<sup>1</sup> A shoot will spring up from the stump of Jesse, and a Branch from his roots will bear fruit. <sup>2</sup> The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him: the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. <sup>3</sup> He will be delighted with the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, nor will he render decisions based on what he hears with his ears, <sup>4</sup> but with righteousness he will judge the poor, and he will render fair decisions in favor of the oppressed on the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath from his lips he will put the wicked to death. <sup>5</sup> Righteousness will be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his hips. <sup>6</sup> The wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the young goat, the calf, the young lion, and the fattened calf together, and a little child will lead them. <sup>7</sup> The cow and the bear will graze together, and their young ones will lie down together. The lion will eat straw like the cattle. <sup>8</sup> The nursing child will play near a cobra's hole, and the weaned child will put his hand into a viper's den. <sup>9</sup> They will not hurt or destroy anywhere on my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

M: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God

### Hymn

"Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel"

*(Christian Worship 23:1-2)*

Oh, come, oh, come, Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to you, O Israel!

Oh, come, O Root of Jesse, free  
Your own from Satan's tyranny;  
From depths of hell your people save,  
And bring them vict'ry o'er the grave.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to you, O Israel!

## **The Fourth Lesson**

Micah 5:2-4

*Some 700 years before His birth, Micah prophesies that the Messiah will come from Bethlehem.*

<sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> 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.

M: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God

### **Hymn**

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

*(Christian Worship 65:1,4)*

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.

O holy Child of Bethlehem,  
Descend to us, we pray;  
Cast out our sin And enter in;  
Be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels  
The great glad tidings tell;  
Oh, come to us, Abide with us,  
Our Lord Immanuel!

## The Fifth Lesson Matthew 1:18-25

*Only months before Jesus' birth, the LORD tells Joseph who Mary's child is.*

<sup>18</sup> This is how the birth of Jesus Christ took place. His mother, Mary, was pledged in marriage to Joseph. Before they came together, she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Joseph, her husband, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her. So he decided to divorce her privately. <sup>20</sup> But as he was considering these things, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." <sup>22</sup> All this happened to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: <sup>23</sup> "Look, the virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son. And they will name him Immanuel," which means, "God with us." <sup>24</sup> When Joseph woke up from his sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him. He took Mary home as his wife, <sup>25</sup> but he was not intimate with her until she gave birth to her firstborn son. And he named him Jesus.

M: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God

### Hymn

"Away In A Manger"  
(*Christian Worship 68*)

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 you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,  
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay  
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,  
And take us to heaven to live with you there.



## The Sixth Lesson

Luke 2:1-7

### *The birth of our Saviour*

<sup>1</sup> In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup> This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governing Syria. <sup>3</sup> And everyone went to register, each to his own town. <sup>4</sup> And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the town of Nazareth, into Judea, to the town of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was from the house and family line of David. <sup>5</sup> He went to be registered with Mary, his wife, who was pledged to him in marriage and was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup> And so it was that while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. <sup>7</sup> And she gave birth to her firstborn son, wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

M: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God

*(Please Note: The next hymn will be sung by candlelight.)*

### Hymn

“Silent Night, Holy Night”

*(Christian Worship 60)*

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 Saviour, is born!  
Christ, the Saviour, 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.

## The Seventh Lesson

Luke 2:8-20

### *The angelic annunciation of Jesus' birth to the shepherds*

<sup>8</sup> There were in the same country shepherds staying out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock at night. <sup>9</sup> An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified! <sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. For behold, I bring you good news of great joy, which will be for all people: <sup>11</sup> Today in the town of David, a Saviour was born for you. He is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup> And this will be a sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup> Suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude from the heavenly army, praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward mankind." <sup>15</sup> When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Now let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." <sup>16</sup> So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup> When they had seen him, they told others the message they had been told about this child. <sup>18</sup> And all who heard it were amazed by what the shepherds said to them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

M: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God

### Hymn

Angels We Have Heard on High  
*(Christian Worship 63)*

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

2 Shepherds, why this jubilee?  
Why your joyous strains prolong?  
What the gladsome tidings be  
Which inspire your heav'nly song?  
Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.

3 Come to Bethlehem and see  
Him whose birth the angels sing;  
Come, adore on bended knee  
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.

## The Eighth Lesson Matthew 2:1-12

*The Magi worship Jesus, revealing him as the Saviour of the world.*

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, when Herod was king, Wise Men from the east came to Jerusalem. They asked, <sup>2</sup>"Where is he who has been born King of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." <sup>3</sup>When King Herod heard this, he was alarmed, and all Jerusalem with him. <sup>4</sup>He gathered together all the people's chief priests and experts in the law. He asked them where the Christ was to be born. <sup>5</sup>They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, because this was written through the prophet: <sup>6</sup>You, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are certainly not least among the rulers of Judah: because out of you will come a ruler, who will shepherd my people, Israel." <sup>7</sup>Then Herod secretly summoned the Wise Men and found out from them exactly when the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup>He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. When you find him, report to me, so that I may also go and worship him." <sup>9</sup>After listening to the king, they went on their way. Then the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them, until it stood still over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup>When they saw the star, they rejoiced with overwhelming joy. <sup>11</sup>After they went into the house and saw the child with Mary, his mother, they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. <sup>12</sup>Since they had been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back to their own country by another route.

M: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God

### Hymn

"Joy Has Dawned"

(New Hymnal 352)

1 "Joy has dawned upon the world,  
Promised from creation—  
God's salvation now unfurled,  
Hope for ev'ry nation.  
Not with fanfares from above,  
Not with scenes of glory,  
But a humble gift of love—  
Jesus born of Mary.

2 Sounds of wonder fill the sky  
With the songs of angels  
As the mighty Prince of Life  
Shelters in a stable.  
Hands that set each star in place,  
Shaped the earth in darkness,  
Cling now to a mother's breast,  
Vuln'erable and helpless.

3 Shepherds bow before the Lamb,  
Gazing at the glory;  
Gifts of men from distant lands  
Prophecy the story.  
Gold—a King is born today,  
Incense—God is with us,  
Myrrh—His death will make a way,  
And by His blood He'll win us.

4 Son of Adam, Son of heaven,  
Given as a ransom;  
Reconciling God and man,  
Christ, our mighty champion!  
What a Savior! What a Friend!  
What a glorious myst'ry!  
Once a babe in Bethlehem,  
Now the Lord of hist'ry.

### The Ninth Lesson

1 John 4:9-14

*How do you know, for certain, that God loves you? He sent this child, his only Son, to be the sacrifice for your sins.*

<sup>9</sup>This is how God's love for us was revealed: God has sent his only-begotten Son into the world so that we may live through him. <sup>10</sup>This is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. <sup>11</sup>Dear friends, if God loved us so much, we also should love one another. <sup>12</sup>No one has ever seen God. If we love one another, God remains in us and his love has been brought to its goal in us. <sup>13</sup>This is how we know that we remain in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup>We have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.

M: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God

### Hymn

"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

*(Christian Worship 61)*

1 Hark! The herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn King;  
Peace on earth and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled!"  
Joyful, all you nations rise,  
Join the triumph of the skies;  
With th' angelic host proclaim,  
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"  
Hark! The herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn King!"

2 Christ, by highest heav'n adored,  
Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
Late in time behold him come,  
Offspring of a virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,  
Hail th' incarnate Deity!  
Pleased as man with us to dwell,  
Jesus, our Immanuel!  
Hark! The herald angels sing, "  
Glory to the newborn King!"

3 Hail, the heav'nly Prince of Peace!  
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all he brings,  
Ris'n with healing in his wings.  
Mild he lays his glory by,  
Born that we no more may die,  
Born to raise us from the earth,  
Born to give us second birth.  
Hark! The herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn King!"

### **Prayer**

- M: Oh gracious and almighty Father, we praise you that you kept your ancient promises by sending your everlasting Son in human flesh.
- C: **On this holy night, receive our thanks and devotion, our songs and prayers.**
- M: You sent Jesus as a lowly child to demonstrate your concern for all, the weak and lonely, the troubled and frightened, the timid and helpless. No one is overlooked by your ever-seeking eyes. No one is excluded from your upholding arms. No one is denied the comfort and help of your outstretched hand.
- C: **Bless us with a childlike faith in the divine assurance that you love and care for us always.**
- M: You sent Jesus as the Saviour of the world to deliver all from the curse of sin, the power of death, and the torment of hell. He took our place. He was born under the law to set us free. He became the innocent lamb of sacrifice. He came to die and rise again in order that we might live eternally. Firmly implant this good news in our hearts, and fill us with an eager desire to spread the Word concerning what we have heard tonight.
- C: **May all who hear the message, in every nation under heaven, be amazed and believe what is told them about the child.**
- M: You sent Jesus as the Light of the world to drive out all darkness that would rob us of the full life that you intend for us. May the "joy that will be for all people" be our joy. May the "peace on earth to all on whom his favor rests" be our peace. May the treasure that Mary pondered in her heart be our treasure.
- C: **For today in the town of David, a Saviour has been born to us. He is Christ, the Lord. Amen.**

## Blessing

(Revelation 22:20-21)

M: Jesus says: ""Yes, I am coming soon."

C: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

M: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with all the saints.

C: Amen.

## Hymn

"Joy To The World"

(Christian Worship 62:1,4)

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.

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.

### DIVINE WORD'S TWO-WEEK CALENDAR

<b>Su (24)</b>	<b>9:00 am</b> <b>10:30 am</b> 11:30 am 3:00 pm <b>7:00 pm</b>	<b>Sunday School</b> <b>Layled-Worship</b> Coffee Hour <i>Poltimore's</i> Christmas Eve Service <b>Christmas Eve Service</b>
<b>Mo (25)</b>	<b>11:00 am</b>	<b>Christmas Day Service</b>
<b>Su (31)</b>	<b>10:30 am</b>	<b>Worship</b>
We (3)	6:30 pm	"Test the Spirits" Bible Information Class.
Th (4)	10:30 am 6:30 pm	Devotion at Longfield Manor Youth Confirmation (W)
<b>Su (7)</b>	9:00 am <b>10:30 am</b> 11:30 am 3:00 pm	Sunday School & Confirmation <b>Worship &amp; Communion</b> First Fellowship Worship & Communion in Poltimore