

Children of the Heavenly Father

Processional Hymn: *Oh, Come, Little Children*

1. Oh, come, little children, oh, come, one and all,
To Bethlehem haste, to the manger so small.
God's Son for a gift has been sent you this night
To be your Redeemer, your joy and delight.
2. He's born in a stable for you and for me;
Draw near by the bright gleaming starlight to see,
In swaddling clothes lying, so meek and so mild,
And purer than angels, the heavenly child!
3. See Mary and Joseph with love-beaming eyes
Are gazing upon the rude bed where he lies.
The shepherds are kneeling, with hearts full of love
While angels sing loud hallelujahs above.
4. Children

Invocation and Sermonette – Pastor Bilitz

Hymn: *See in Yonder Manger Low* (CW 58 vv 1-2)

Part 1: Children of the Heavenly Father Trust His Word

Narration

Choir: *Of the Father's Love Begotten*

Recitations

Hymn: *Behold, a Branch Is Growing* (CW 47 vv 1-3)

Recitation

Song: *Away In a Manger*

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Part 2: Jesus Became a Child to Make Us Children of the Heavenly Father

Narration

Hymn: *Of the Father's Love Begotten* (CW 35:2)

Recitation: The Birth of the Christ Child (Luke 2:1-7)

Song: *As Each Happy Christmas*

Part 3: Children of the Heavenly Father Rejoice in God's Grace

Narration

Hymn: *Of the Father's Love Begotten* (CW 35:3)

Recitation: The Shepherds and Angels Rejoice (Luke 2:8-14)

Hymn: *Silent Night! Holy Night* (CW 60)

Verse 1 – Children Verses 2-3 - Congregation

Part 4: Children of the Heavenly Father Proclaim God's Word

Narration

Hymn: *Of the Father's Love Begotten* (CW 35:4)

Responsive Reading: The Shepherds Go to Bethlehem (Luke 2:15-20)

P: When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another,

C: "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

P: So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

C: When they had seen him, they spread the word

concerning what had been told them about this child,

P: and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

C: But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

P: The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen,

C: which were just as they had been told.

Congregation Hymn: *O Little Town of Bethlehem*
(CW 65 vv1-2)

Part 5: By Faith, We Are Children of the Heavenly Father
Narration

Hymn: *Of the Father's Love Begotten* (CW 35:5)

Responsive Reading: We See Jesus With a Childlike Faith

P: At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked,

C: "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

P: He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said:

C: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

P: Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

C: And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. See that you do not look down on one of these little ones."

P: Those who are led by the Spirit of God

C: are sons of God.

P: For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship.

C: And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."

P: The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit

C: that we are God's children.

P: Now if we are children, then we are heirs—

C: heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Congregation Hymn: *On Christmas Night All Christians Sing* (CW 52)

Responsive reading

The following passages speak of the tender Father-child relationship we have with God through faith in Jesus.

P: Since the children have flesh and blood,

C: he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil.

P: To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—

C: children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

P: I write to you, dear children,

C: because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name.

P: The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

C: Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children.

P: How great is the love the Father has lavished on us,

C: that we should be called children of God!

Choir: *That First Noel*

Reading

In his Small Catechism, Martin Luther expressed this affectionate relationship between God and the believer in The Address of the Lord's Prayer:

Our Father in heaven.

What does this mean?

With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that he

is our true Father and that we are His true children, so that we may pray to him as boldly and confidently as dear children ask their dear father. (Luther's Catechism)

Song: *Children of the Heavenly Father*

Confession of Faith (The Second Article and Explanation)

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.

What does this mean?

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord.

He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death.

All this he did that I should be his own, and live under him in his kingdom and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as he has risen from death and lives and rules eternally.

This is most certainly true.

Offering

Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Hymn: *Your Little Ones, Dear Lord, Are We* (CW 46)

Verse 1 – children Verses 2-4 - congregation

Blessing

Recessional Hymn: *Joy to the World* (CW 62)

Verse 1 – Children Verses 2-4 – Congregation

Announcements:

We thank the teachers and students of our Sunday School and also the choir for bringing us the glorious news of our newborn Savior in word and song during tonight's Christmas service. We also thank our organist, LeAnn Marzinske.

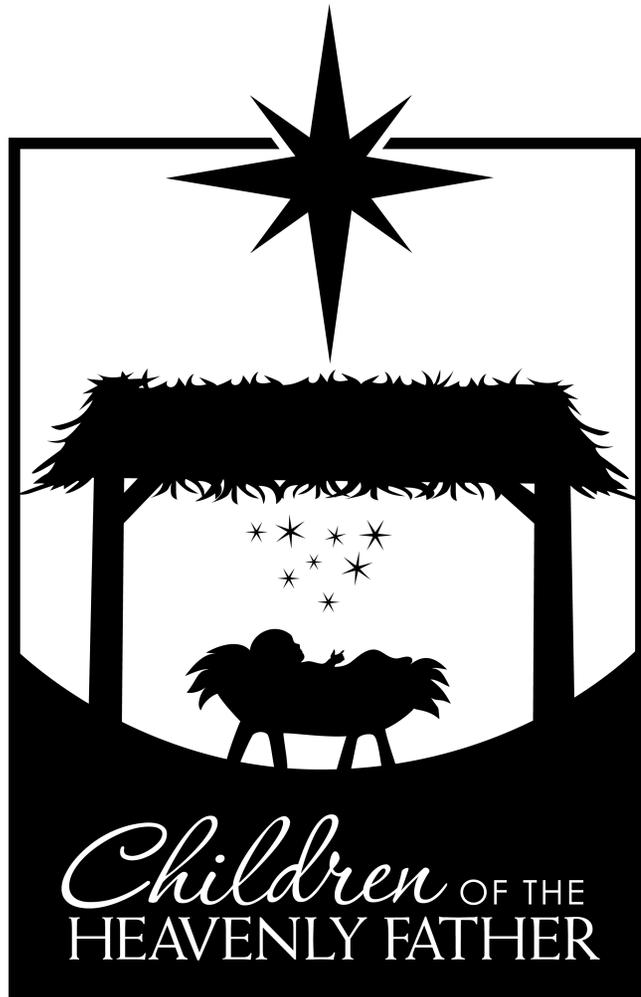
We hope that you will join us for our joint Christmas Day service tomorrow. The service will be here at St. John's at 10:00 am. It will not be the same as this evening's service.

There will be no Sunday School classes or Bible Study on Sunday.

Your 2015 offering envelopes are available in the basement of church.

You are invited to our joint New Year's Eve service at 7:00 pm. It will be held at Trinity. Holy Communion will be offered in this service.

Pastor, Carol and their family would like to wish all of you a joyous Christmas and a Christ-filled New Year!



Christmas Eve Service
December 24, 2014
St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church, Alma City