

## Children of the Heavenly Father

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### 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

Hymn: *Of the Father's Love Begotten* (CW 35:1)

**Responsive Reading:** The Announcement of the Christ Child's Coming (Luke 1:26-35,38)

P: In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David.

**C: The virgin's name was Mary.**

P: The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

**C: Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.**

P: But the angel said to her,

**C: "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God.**

P: You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus.

**C: He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.**

P: The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David,

**C: and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."**

P: "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

**C: The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.**

P: "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

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

### 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:** *Away In a Manger*

**Recitation:**

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

Narration

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

**Responsive reading:** The Shepherds and Angels Rejoice

P: There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night.

**C: An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.**

P: But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

**C: Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.**

P: This will be a sign to you:

**C: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."**

P: Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

Children: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." (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

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.**

**Hymn:** *O Little Town of Bethlehem* (CW 65 vv 1-2)

#### **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.**

**Hymn:** *I Am So Glad When Christmas Comes* CW 51)

**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:** *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

**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)

**Hymn:** *Children of the Heavenly Father* (CW 449)

**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 & 3 – Children Verses 2 & 4 – Youth Group

**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, the Youth Group 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, David Bilitz.

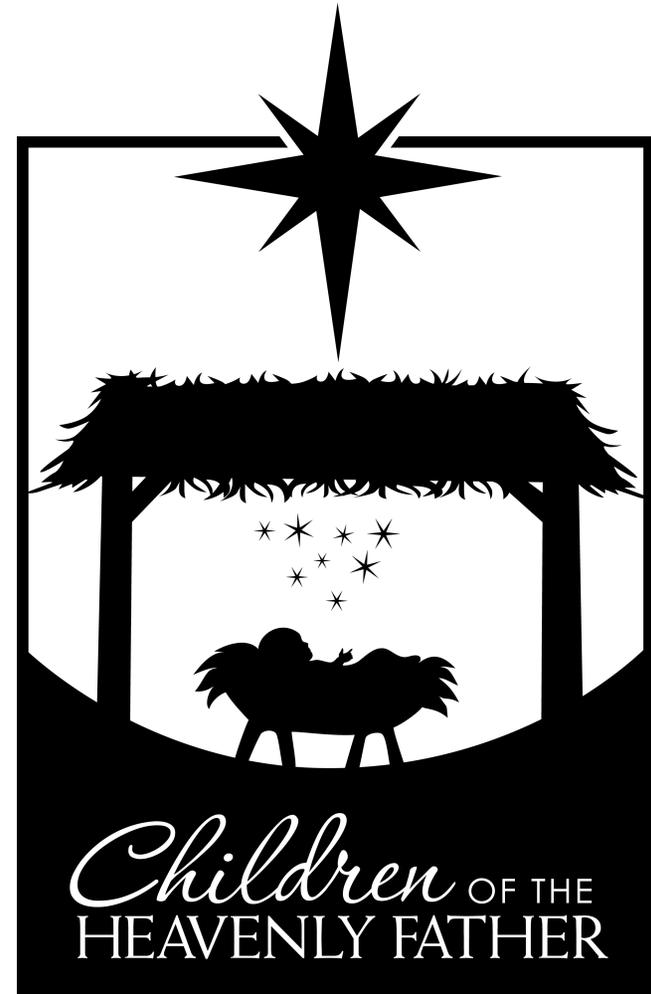
We hope you will join us for our joint Christmas Day service tomorrow. The service will be at St. John's at 10:00 am. It will not be the same as this evening's.

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

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

You are invited to our joint New Year's Eve service here at Trinity at 7:00 pm. 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**  
**Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church, Smiths Mill**