

Youth Christmas Service
Light of Salvation Born in a Stall
December 24, 2023 at 9:45 am

Opening Prayer **Opening Hymn:** *“Come, Thou Long- Expected Jesus”* 338

Invocation: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **C:** *Amen.*

Litany of Light:

P: We were born in darkness, in the darkness of sin. **C:** *He comes as the Light of our Salvation.*

P: The people living in darkness have seen a great light **C:** *He comes as a beaming Light of hope for all mankind.*

P: The Light of the Star broke through the darkness to guide those chosen. **C:** *He came as a Light to the Gentiles, so all people could be saved.*

P: The Glory of the Angels broke through the darkness to announce His birth. **C:** *He comes as the Light of Grace to bring His goodness into our hearts.*

P: God separated the Light from the darkness and saw that it was good. **C:** *He came as the hope of His people. He was the true Hope of all mankind.*

Baptism of Cecilia Joann Miller

Born: *August 10, 2023*

Parents: *Elijah Nicholas Miller & Kyla Ann Miller*

Sponsors: *Ashlynn Downs and Joshua Miller*

Baptismal Hymn: *tune 374 (Gentle Mary Laid Her Child)*

Cecilia may God bless you With His loving Spirit
Create faith and make you whole With His grace and merit
May His victory ov’r sin, death and hell be given
To you as His gift of grace Which He brought from heaven.

Cecilia may our Lord grant You His gift from heaven.
Cleanse your heart and cleanse your soul Showing you’re forgiven
Making you a citizen Of His heav’nly kingdom
Where you’ll live for ever blessed In His joyous freedom.

Cecilia may our Lord bring Righteousness upon you
Cover you in holiness By His promise bless you.
Make you His own child and heir Valued now and ever
Binding you to His own Son Being His forever.

Confession and Absolution:

C: *Heavenly Father, we confess to You our sins, our short-comings, our defiance, and our many purposeful rejections of Your grace, We know You are merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in love for Your people. For Jesus' sake, forgive us our sins, cleanse us from our unrighteousness, and declare us holy so we can stand before the Father without any fear of condemnation. We know and confess we are not worthy of mercy or grace, but in Your goodness please grant to us the removal of condemnation that we need so desperately.*

P: Our Heavenly Father deeply desires to bring to you His cleansing power. As a called servant of God, it is my privilege and He has commanded that I announce to you the grace of God, and in His place and through His office, I announce to you the forgiveness of sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Christmas Eve Collect: O Lord God, our Heavenly Father, because You once caused this day to shine with the brightness of the true Light; grant that we who have known the mystery of that Light here on earth, to come to the full measure of its joy in heaven; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, the Christ-Child, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. **C:** *Amen.*

Hymn: *"Light of Salvation" tune 379 (O Come All Ye Faithful)*

O Light of salvation, You come from the heavens
You come as the promised One who brings hope to man
You come the humble Infant born of Mary You are the Light of Hope
You are the Light of Grace, You are the Light of Gentiles Gift to Your race.

O Light of salvation Whose born in a stable
You are the true gift of joy to men one and all
Your birth was announced By the star from heaven You are the Light of Hope
You are the Light of Grace You are the Light of Gentiles Gift to Your race.

O Light of salvation Angels sang out loudly
To shepherds in fields as they were watching their sheep
They sang a Sa-*vior's* Song before all heaven He is the Light of hope
He is the Light of Grace He is the Light of Gentiles Gift to Your race.

1. Light of Salvation: *“The people that sat in darkness have seen a great light.”* This passage from Isaiah points us to the dedication of our God; to the fact that the Israelites were the ones who created their own darkness, by ignoring and running away from the grace of our God. The Israelites had for so long given up what was Godly, and turned to the darkness that would bring them destruction. Yet, as they were in the dark, the loving Father sent them a Light. This Light was the hope of the whole world, and would bring to them the loving mercy of the Almighty God. This Light can only come from the Father. It had to be His own Son.

2. Light of Hope: Hope is an assurance in the Scriptures. This is not a wish, but a sure thing. The Light that was to come into the world was a Light of hope, a Light of the assurance that the Father in heaven had not forgotten His people. It was a Light that proclaimed the Israelites were still His people, whom He loved and who He desired to touch with His loving kindness. Our Father in Heaven had a very special Light for His people. It was not dependent on any form of light on earth, it was dependent on the spiritual power of the Mighty God and His desire to bring His people a goodness that would last into all eternity.

3. Light of Grace: Grace is love shared freely by the Father with those who in no way deserve His goodness or kindness. He shares His grace because He knows that without it, we can do absolutely nothing, except go to hell. The Lord does not take actions towards His people according to what they deserve, He takes actions motivated by His grace and mercy. This means we can always be secure in the judgment He makes towards us. He judges our hearts according to faith, not according to our actions. The Lord came into the world, not because His people had behaved so well, but in order to enable them to be forgiven and walk in His grace. They would not be seen in the light of their own actions, but in the light of the actions and work of the Lord.

Scripture Lesson: *The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness, on them a light has dawned. **Isaiah 9: 2***

Hymn: *“Hark the Herald, Angels Sing” 380*

Hark the heralds angels sing
Glory to the newborn King
Peace on earth and mercy mild
God and sinners reconciled.
Joyful all ye nations rise
Join the triumph of the skies
With angelic hosts proclaim
Christ is born in Bethlehem
Hark the Herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King!

Hark the herald angels sing
Of the Light that the Son brings!
Light of hope and light of grace
Light of which we now embrace
Light that brings to us His love
Light that comes from heav’n above
Light that flows to all on earth
Light that comes from His own birth
Hark the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King!

Hark the herald angels sing Of the Light that came to bring
The One gift from God's own throne That brought light to all His own.
The light brought new life to man Brought His grace – fulfilled His plan.
Lighten every heart and mind With the love - the Godly kind.
Hark the herald angels sing Glory to the newborn King!

4. Light of the Gentiles: Outside the Israelites, the chosen people of God, there was no spiritual promise given. All those outside the faith were considered Gentiles: people clearly not in the family of God. They were not under the Covenant of Abraham; they were not in the family of David; and they were not ones covered in God's grace through the Covenant of Circumcision. This Light would break through the darkness and grant to them the Light of salvation. They would be adopted into His family and made true children of God. He would do this in grace. Though His own people would reject Him, He would still reach out to we who were not His own, so He could make us His own.

5. The Light of our Lord revealed in His Work, His life. Jesus was willing to carry out the Plan of salvation on our behalf. He gave us the gift of Himself as “man”, so He could do all that was required to pay the price for sin. He gave us the gift of being the Savior, the one and only Savior, who brought salvation into all the world. He gave us the gift of His humility, which showed us He was more than willing to do whatever it took in order for Him to bring salvation to us. Jesus came as the Light to the world, even if being that Light meant coming into the world as a helpless child.

6. Light that removes the darkness: The Light of God is the only Light that can remove the darkness. Only the spiritual light of God can cleanse the soul. Only His light can change the heart of a sinner and grant to them the gift of faith in the true God. Only His Light can remove the blindness of our natural spiritual state and grant us eyes to see Jesus as the Savior. His light in the darkness is the only light for sinners. It is a glimpse of the true grace of God.

Scripture Lesson: *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 the lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. 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 room for them in the inn. **Luke 2: 1-7***

Hymn: *O Little Town of Bethlehem* 361

O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see the lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep The silent stars go by,
Yet in the dark streets shineth The everlasting light
The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee tonight.

This holy light, This holy light Came down to earth to stay
To enlighten the hearts of men With love and grace each day
He came from God His Father God's Son born in a stall
His light still brightly shines on earth To bring His hope to all.

7. Light of the Angels: The glory of the Angels could not be contained. They appeared in the sky and their light overwhelmed the shepherds who were taking care of their flocks. The Light of the Angels was not their own light, but the light of Holiness that extended from the throne of God Himself. This holiness demonstrated the Child that had come into the world, was the Child of God. He was not a product of man, or the desire of man, but a product of the Almighty God; Who sent His Son into the world to bring salvation to a people lost in sin. When the angels sang, they loudly proclaimed what their light was all about: "Behold this day in the city of David is born to you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord".

8. Light of the Star: The Lord Almighty clearly showed how all of nature is used by Him in order to serve His people and to accomplish His purpose on this earth. A star was used as a Light to announce the birth of His Son. This Star moved across the sky to lead the wisemen to the exact place of His birth. It led them from Babylon to the city of Bethlehem, to the place where He lay. This Star, by its light, guided the "Gentiles" to the long - promised One of the Lord. This "Light of the Star" is so very precious to us, because this Star was placed into the sky for our everlasting blessing. It proclaimed, from the moment of His birth, that Jesus came into the world: the long promised Messiah.

9. Light of the Heavenly Throne: God's Glory shone upon the earth. The Heavens opened and God's almighty Glory was revealed on earth. It brought light in the darkness. It brought light that removed the darkness and literally made the shepherds shake in fear, because it was so bright and overwhelming. They knew this was "Holy" light and they were in the presence of Heavenly beings who shined with His glory. The Light of the Throne was the light of everlasting blessing being given to man in the birth of the Lord. He one day would take His place on the Throne and His glory will shine in heaven forever.

Scripture Lesson: *And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over flocks 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 great fear. And the angel said to them, “fear not. For behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all 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 to you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel of 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!”* **Luke 2: 8-14**

Hymn: *“It Came upon a Midnight Clear”* 366

It came upon the mid-night clear, That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth, To touch their harps of gold:
“Peace on the earth, goodwill to men, 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;
And still their heav’nly music floats O’er all the weary world:
Their light shown brightly on the plain Their light announced His birth
The light of heaven brightly shone Showing His heav’nly worth.

And you, beneath your heavy load, By care and guilt bent low,
Who toil along the 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.

10. Light of Christ: there is a light that stems from heaven. It is divine light, generated by the holiness that comes from God’s throne. It is not of earth, or from anything in creation. It is a source that is spiritual, and it cannot be dimmed by anything. Its light will shine brightly forever, because the source is the Almighty Lord: His holiness and His holiness alone. The Light of Christ shines into the hearts of His own. It is a light that transforms the heart and enables our eyes to see the truth of His Word. His Light breaks through the darkness of sin and brings to us faith and salvation. His Light never dims, but enlightens the hearts of all who believe. That Light came into the world at His birth and will remain with us forever.

11. Sharing of the Light of Christ: The loving Lord did not just have His light shine on us, but He placed it in our heart. He did not simply place it into our heart, but made that light shine through us, so we could be a light to this world. His light, His heavenly glory, was given to us and that is what we reflect to the world. The Light is the Gospel, and the Gospel is the only Hope for this world. His light is shared by all who believe and we pass that light to one another through His Word, through His grace, through His goodness, and by His acts of love.

Today we illustrate this by sharing the light of one candle, which will be the source of light for all candles lit amongst us today! The light of the first candle does not diminish, it just spreads and multiplies!

Scripture Lesson: *And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told to them concerning this Child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all things, pondering them in her heart.*” **Luke 2: 16-19**

Hymn: “*What Child is This*” 370

What Child is this, who, laid to rest On Mary’s lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet While shepherds watch are keeping?
He is the Light of Grace Our Savior born in humble state
He is the Light of Hope, The Babe, the son of Mary!

What Child is this who heav’n declares By breaking forth into the skies
This is the Son the Holy One The Child whose light is Holy!
He, He is Christ the Lord The Father’s Child all heav’n adored
Jesus the Light of life, The Babe, the son of Mary!

What Child is this whose light is bright Whose light grants life to all mankind
Whose star shines brightly in the sky To guide the gentiles to Him
His light gives light to all The promise given at the fall.
Light, Light of all mankind The Babe, the Son of Mary!

Sermon- illustration

Offering brought to the Altar

Prayers: The families of Parsons, Katy and Zappa; Patterson, Julie, Matt, Garrett, Wyatt and Lydia; and Paul, Doris, Mike and Samantha.

Lord’s Prayer

Blessing of the Elements / Distribution

Distribution Hymns: 358, 362

Closing Litany:

L: May God's loving blessing fall upon you! **C:** *May the richness of His grace enlighten all.*

L: May God's mercy enrich and touch your heart **C:** *May He lead you into His peace and blessing.*

L: May God's presence always be with you. **C:** *May you enlighten the hearts of others.*

L: May God's message of salvation **C:** *Be heard and shone to others through your words and actions.*

L: May His light of grace shine brightly **C:** *Into your hearts and the faith of which He has gifted you!*

Closing Hymn: "Joy to the World" 387 vs. 1-3

Closing Prayer: Heavenly Father, One who created Light and granted to the universe a freedom from darkness, we give You our heartfelt thanks for granting to us the Spiritual Light that enables us to believe in the only Savior, grasp the truths of Your Word, and know this day the joy of celebration over the birth of Your Son; through Your Son, the Christ-Child, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Benediction

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Kirk Horstmeyer, Pastor
Karen Whitehead, Organist

WHAT THE SCRIPTURES TEACH CONCERNING THE LORD'S SUPPER

In I Corinthians 11 the Holy Spirit led Paul to write, "This is my body" and "This cup is the new covenant in my blood" to explain the spiritual truth of the Supper: Christ is truly present in His body and blood in the bread and wine. This is a mystery, a Heavenly gift; one we can only understand in faith. Paul further says, "Therefore whoever eats the bread and drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord" and, "let a man examine himself...for he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly." There is no doubt from our Lord's Word, we are receiving His body and blood. The Father offers us forgiveness, unity of faith, strengthening of faith, etc.; it is never our right, we approach His altar only by His invitation. If you are visiting we ask that you please speak with the Pastor before receiving the Lord's Supper. We strive to lovingly carry out our responsibility to ensure the supper remains a blessing for all, never a curse. May His richest blessing be upon you all.

THIS WEEK

TODAY: **Worship 9:45 am** w/*Confirmation & High School Youth*, **Worship w/HC 6:00 pm** with **Choir Participation and Worship w/HC 10:00 pm**
Candle-Light Service

THURSDAY: Bible Study 9:30 am and 6 pm

Next SATURDAY: Worship w/HC 5:30 pm

Next SUNDAY: Worship 8 am, Worship 10:15 am

WEEKLY ATTENDANCE: Sat, Dec 16: 453 LS: 37; Sun, Dec 17: 8 am: 74 LS: 58; 10:15 am: 43 LS: 30; Mid-Week Advent 2: 61

Member Prayer List: Next Saturday and Sunday we will be praying for the families of Puertzer, Jim; Racine, Jeremy, Jill, Lauren and Corinne; and Racine, Jerry and Beverly.

DECEMBER CALENDAR EVENTS

Sunday, December 24 there will **ONE Service at 9:45 am** in the morning which will involve *Confirmation & High School Youth* participation; and **two services** in the evening at

6:00 pm with **Choir Participation w/HC** and **10:00 pm** **Candle- Light Service w/HC**

Monday, December 25 at **9:30 am** **Christmas Day Service with Holy Communion**

Sunday, December 31 **New Year's Eve Services at 8 am and 10:15 am services**

NO EVENING SERVICE

