

Brief Introduction for Christmas Eve, 2020

I am so glad you came this evening. In this year of isolation, each and every one of us is glad that the other is here to celebrate a huge event, a bigger solution than any vaccine against a bigger threat than any virus.

What is this evening's celebration about?

On your bulletin covers it says, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Do you know who said those words? Or better, who sang them? It was angels. Not just an angel, or ten angels, but we are told it was "a great company of the heavenly host." Hundreds? Thousands? Which is pretty cool. Especially when you realize how often this happened. That night in the pastures around the village of Bethlehem was the only time ever that the angel hosts of heaven have ever burst into a heavenly concert for a human audience. Something unique and big must have happened that night!

That's what our Nine Lessons and Carols communicates. Through the nine Scripture readings we see Christmas in the big picture. They takes us back to the first sin, the lethal disease that has infected all humanity. They show us God's plan, his solution: a Savior. We hear God make promises of a Savior, and then, like the present under the tree, the wrapping paper is torn away and we get to see the gift itself.

May this evening's program in word and song, not be a concert, but a worship service. A service where God gives his best in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and where we give our best in attention and praise to our Savior God.

Let us pray.

A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols
Christmas Eve
December 24, 2020
Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church, Radcliff, KY

Prayer Before Worship

Dear Child in the Manger, I stand in humble reverence before Your almighty power that made it possible for You to be the Son of Man and the Son of God at the same time. Help me to treasure You as the greatest Christmas gift I receive, the Gift that will last forever, the Gift that gives me heaven. I thank You for giving Yourself for my sins and bringing about true peace on earth between me and my heavenly Father. Amen.

Parents with little ones:

If your child becomes restless during the service, that's okay... we're glad they're here, and Jesus is pleased when they are brought to hear his Word. If your child becomes distracting to other worshipers, you may take them into the quiet room. You can teach your child that they are still "in church". The glass walls allow you and your child to participate in worship and feel a part of the service.

Children's bulletins are available in the back of the sanctuary—for assistance ask an usher.

Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church

377 E. Lincoln Trail Blvd

Radcliff, KY 40160

(270) 352-4545; www.faithinradcliff.org; pastor@faithinradcliff.org

Sunday Service: 10:30am; Bible Class & Sunday School for all ages, 9:30am.

Pre-Service Music

Opening Carol *While by the Sheep*
vocalists sing stanzas 1-3, congregation joins in stanza 4

1. *While by the sheep we watched at night,
Glad tidings brought an angel bright.*

Refrain:

How great our joy! (echo)

Joy, joy, joy! (echo)

*Praise we the Lord in heav'n on high
(echo)*

2. *There shall be born, so he did say,
In Bethlehem a child today.*

Refrain

3. *There shall the child lie in a stall,
This child who shall redeem us all.*

Refrain

**4. This gift of God we'll cherish well—
Jesus, our Lord Immanuel.**

Women: How great our joy!

Men: Great our joy!

Women: Joy, joy, joy!

Men: Joy, joy, joy!

*Women: Praise we the Lord in heav'n
on high*

*Men: Praise we the Lord in heav'n
on high!*

EXHORTATION AND PRAYER

THE CONGREGATION MAY STAND

Minister: Brief Introduction

Let us pray:

Heavenly Father, we thank you for people over the entire world who delight with us to know the good news of Jesus Christ and who join with us in singing his praises.

And, because this would please our Lord, we remember in his name the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry and the oppressed, the sick and those who are sad, the elderly and the little children. We especially remember all those who do not know the Lord Jesus, those who do not love him, and those who by sin have grieved his heart of love. May they, like us, hear of and be gifted to believe in this Christ-child in these holy days.

Finally, we thank you God for all who rejoice with us in heaven, who live in greater light than we, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, who died in faith, and who live before the throne of God and praise him in his temple. By faith we are united with them. One day, by your grace, grant us to be united with them in body.

To this end, we also pray as Christ himself taught us:

Congregation: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

THE CONGREGATION MAY BE SEATED

NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS

First Lesson Genesis 3:8-15 The First Promise of a Savior

⁸Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

¹⁰He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." ¹¹and he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" ¹²The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." ¹³Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

¹⁴So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. ¹⁵And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

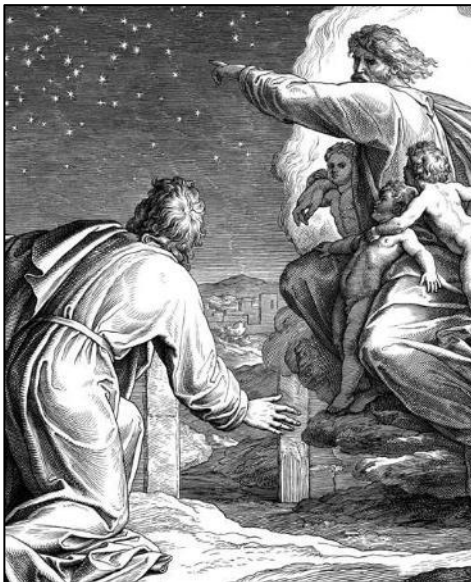
*First Carol Comfort, Comfort, All My People
Hymn 11, stanzas 1,2,4*

1 "Comfort, comfort all my people; Speak of peace," so says our God.
"Comfort those who sit in darkness, Groaning from their sorrows' load.
Speak to all Jerusalem Of the peace that waits for them;
Tell them that their sins I cover, That their warfare now is over."

2 All their sins our God will pardon, Blotting out each dark misdeed;
All that well deserve his anger He no more will see or heed.
They have suffered many a day; Now their griefs have passed away.
God will change their aching sadness Into ever-springing gladness.

4 Straighten out the crooked highway; Make the rougher places plain.
 Let your hearts be true and humble, Ready for his holy reign.
 For the glory of the Lord Now o'er earth is spread abroad,
 And all flesh shall see the token That his word is never broken.

Second Lesson Genesis 22:15-18
God's Promises to Abraham



¹⁵The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time ¹⁶and said, "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, ¹⁸and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."

Second Carol We Walk by Faith
Hymn 756, stanzas 1-3, on bulletin p.13

Third Lesson Isaiah 9:2,6-7
The People Walking in Darkness Have Seen a Great Light

²The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned...

⁶For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

Third Carol Peace Came to Earth
Hymn 707, on bulletin p.14

Fourth Lesson Luke 1:26-35,38
The Angel Gabriel Visits Mary

²⁶In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

²⁹Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. ³¹You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

³⁴"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" ³⁵The 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. ³⁶Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. ³⁷For nothing is impossible with God." ³⁸"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.



Fourth Carol Mary Did You Know?
sung by vocalists

*Mary, did you know that your baby boy
Would one day walk on water?
Mary, did you know that your baby boy
Would save our sons and daughters?
Did you know that your baby boy
Has come to make you new?*

*This child that you delivered, will soon
deliver you
Mary, did you know that your baby boy
Would give sight to a blind man?
Mary, did you know that your baby boy
Would calm the storm with his hand?*

*Did you know that your baby boy
Has walked where angels trod?
When you kiss your little baby
You kiss the face of God
Mary, did you know?*

*The blind will see, the deaf will hear
The dead will live again
The lame will leap, the dumb will speak
The praises of the Lamb
Mary, did you know that your baby boy*

*Is Lord of all creation?
Mary, did you know that your baby boy
Would one day rule the nations?
Did you know that your baby boy
Is heaven's perfect Lamb?*

*That sleeping child you're
Holding is the great, I Am
Mary, did you know?*

**Fifth Lesson Matthew 1:18-24
The Angel Visits Joseph**

¹⁸This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

²⁰But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." ²²All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³"The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"—which means, "God with us."

²⁴When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵But he

*Fifth Carol Away in the Manger
Hymn 68*

1 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.

2 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.

3 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.

Sixth Lesson **Luke 2:1-7**
The Birth of Jesus

¹In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ²(This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³And everyone went to his own town to register.

⁴So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. ⁵He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.



Sixth Carol *Once in Royal David's City*
Hymn 50, stanzas 1,2,4

1 Once in royal David's city
Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby
In a manger for his bed;
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.

2 He came down to earth from heaven
Who is God and Lord of all,
And his shelter was a stable,
And his cradle was a stall;
With the poor and mean and lowly
Lived on earth our Savior holy.

4 Not in that poor, lowly stable
With the oxen standing by
Shall we see him, but in heaven,
Set at God's right hand on high.
Then like stars his children crowned,
All in white, his praise will sound.

Seventh Lesson Luke 2:8-20
The Shepherds Visit the Manger

⁸And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." ¹⁶So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Seventh Carol Where Shepherds Lately Knelt
Hymn 54, bulletin p.15

Eighth Lesson Matthew 2:1-12
The Visit of the Magi

¹After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem ²and asked, “Where is the one who has been



born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.” ³When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵“In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written: ⁶“But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for

out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.” ⁷Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

⁹After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

*Eighth Carol “O Jesus Christ, Thy Manger Is”
sung by vocalists*

*O Jesus Christ, thy manger is
My Paradise at which my soul reclineth.
For there, O Lord, doth lie the Word
Made flesh for us;
Herein Thy grace forth shineth.*

*The world may hold her wealth and gold
But thou, my heart keep Christ as thy
true treasure.
To Him hold fast until at last
a crown be thine
and honor in full measure*

Ninth Lesson 1 John 1:1-9
The Word Became Flesh

¹That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. ²The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. ³We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. ⁴We write this to make our joy complete.

⁵This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. ⁷But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

Ninth Carol "What Child Is This"

5:30pm service: Congregation sings all stanzas

8:00pm service: Vocalists sing stanzas 1-2, Congregation sings stanza 3

1 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? This, this is Christ the King, Whom shepherds guard and angels sing. Haste, haste to bring him laud, The babe, the Son of Mary!	2 Why lies he in such mean estate Where oxen now are feeding? Good Christians, fear; For sinners here The silent Word is pleading. Nails, spear shall pierce him through; The cross he'll bear for me, for you. Hail, hail the Word made flesh, The babe, the Son of Mary!
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3 So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;
Come, peasant, king, to own him.
The King of kings Salvation brings;
Let loving hearts enthrone him.
Raise, raise the song on high;
The virgin sings her lullaby.
Joy, joy, for Christ is born,
The babe, the Son of Mary!

THANKSGIVING

OFFERING — *Christmas is first and foremost about God's gift of a Savior to us. In thanks, we offer our best to him to support the ministry of his church. Guests are not obligated to give, but are free to do so if they wish.*

AFTER THE OFFERING, THE CONGREGATION MAY STAND

PRAYER

M: O God, who makes us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of your only Son, Jesus the Christ, grant that as we joyfully receive him as our Redeemer, so we may behold him with confidence when he shall come to be our judge, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

BLESSING

M: May he who by his incarnation gathered things earthly and heavenly into one, fill us with such joy that comes with the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins and the hope of eternal life. And the blessing of God Almighty—the Father, the Son, † and the Holy Spirit—be upon you and remain with you always.

C: Amen.

THE CONGREGATION MAY BE SEATED

*Closing Silent Night
Hymn 60*

1 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.

2 (*German*) Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht!
Alles schläft, einsam wacht
Nur das traute hochheilige Paar.
Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar;
Schlaf' in himmlischer Ruh!
Schlaf' in himmlischer Ruh!

3 Silent night! Holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar;
Heav'nly hosts sing, Alleluia;
Christ, the Savior, is born!
Christ, the Savior, is born!

4 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.

Service participants:

Lectors: Dann Reynolds, Brien Grace, Earl Enevold, Peter Gurney, Bill Kiefer, Steve Amling

Vocalists: Wilma Maus, Peter Gurney, Kay Reynolds, Hannah Skinner, Molly Skinner, Abby Skinner, Natalie Skinner, Lisa Martin, Peter Martin, Noah Martin, Anna Martin, Angy Stover, Joshua Stover.

Presiding Minister: Pastor Peter Martin

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**IT IS OUR MISSION TO SEEK THE
UNCHURCHED, STRIVE FOR SPIRITUAL
GROWTH, AND TO STRENGTHEN ONE
ANOTHER THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD
AND HIS SACRAMENTS.**