

The First Midweek Advent Service

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL

P.O. Box 98, Okabena, MN 56161

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Church of the Lutheran Confession

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Organist Mrs. Kathy Lueck

And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. Luke 2:1

Opening Hymn 63 *On Jordan's Bank, the Baptist's Cry*

Invocation ... Psalm 148:1-6

P In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

P Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise Him in the heights!

C **Praise Him, all His angels; praise Him, all His hosts!**

P Praise Him, sun and moon, praise Him, all you shining stars!

C Praise Him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens!

P Let them praise the name of the Lord! For He commanded and they were created.

C And He established them forever and ever; He gave a decree, and it shall not pass away.

P "In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.

C This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria."

P Long before Caesar's decree, God decreed that a great King, an eternal King, would be born in Bethlehem: "But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,

C From you shall come forth for Me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days."

P The first candle lit on our Advent wreath tonight reminds us of God's decree that the King of kings would be born in Bethlehem.

C Our Lord and King, we rejoice in Your birth, in the promise fulfilled!

Confession and Absolution

P Let us confess our sins to God and ask His forgiveness.

C Almighty God, we confess to You that we daily turn from Your will to follow our own sinful desires. Instead of listening to Your Word, we listen to the tempting voices of the world around us. We do not love and serve others as we should. Have mercy on us and forgive us for the sake of Jesus our Savior.

P God has had mercy on us. He sent His Son to be our Savior. Jesus suffered and died so that our sins would be forgiven. He rose up from death to give us eternal life. I announce to you that your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

C Heavenly Father, we praise and thank You for the promises of Your Word and for the gift of Your Son, our Savior!

Prayer of the Day

P Heavenly Father, You fulfill all of Your promises of Your Word. Through the decree of a pagan emperor, you brought Mary and Joseph to

the city of David, to Bethlehem, where the Savior, according to Your decree, was to be born. The Child of Bethlehem, our Lord Jesus Christ, would later issue His decree commanding us to preach the Gospel to all nations. Make us bold witnesses as we follow our Lord's command. We pray that Your Spirit would be at work through our witness so that others will come to know and worship Jesus as Lord. Amen.

Let the earth now praise the Lord. Who hath truly kept His word
And the sinners' Help and Friend Now at last to us doth send.

What the fathers most desired, What the prophets' heart inspired,
What they longed for many a year, Stands fulfilled in glory here.

Abrams promised great Reward, Zion's Helper, Jacob's Lord, --
Him of twofold race behold, -- Truly came, as long foretold.

Old Testament Reading ... Micah 5:2-4

Epistle Reading ... 1 Peter 1:17-21

Gospel Reading ... Matthew 28:16-20

Hymn 62 *Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel*

Sermon Luke 2:1ff. *“And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.”*

A Decree Went Out...

As Thy coming was in peace, Quiet, full of gentleness,
Let the same mind dwell in me That was ever found in Thee.

Bruise for me the Serpent's head, That, set free from doubt and dread,
I may cleave to Thee in faith, Safely kept through life and death,

And when Thou dost come again As a glorious King to reign,
I with joy may see Thy face, Freely ransomed by Thy grace.

Offering

Choir 702 *As Angels Joyed with One Accord*

Prayers

P Jesus, Son of David and Lamb of God, long before the Roman Empire existed and long before the decree of Caesar Augustus was announced, Your birth was foretold. When the time was right, You were born among us as one of us to be our Savior. King of kings and Lord of lords,

C Hear our prayers and accept our praise.

P Jesus, Son of David and Lamb of God, You took onto Yourself the penalty of death that we earned for ourselves through our rebellion against our God and Creator. You, the sinless Son of God, stood in the place of sinners, in our place. Through Your death and resurrection we receive forgiveness and eternal life. King of kings and Lord of lords,

C Hear our prayers and accept our praise.

P Jesus, Son of David and Lamb of God, work through our witness as we follow Your command to make disciples of all nations. Give us opportunities to speak of Your love and sacrifice so that others will come to know and worship You as Lord. King of kings and Lord of lords,

C Hear our prayers and accept our praise.

The Lord's Prayer

Benediction (*Micah 5:2-4; 2 Corinthians 13:14*)

P You, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for Me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days ...

C And He shall stand and shepherd His flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God. And they shall dwell secure, for now He shall be great to the ends of the earth.

P The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C Amen.

Closing Hymn 97 *Let Us All with Gladsome Voice*



CLC NEWS Pastor John Hein, Fridley, has the professorship call to ILC. The Board of Regents is welcoming nominations for ILC President. The candidate must currently be on the faculty.