

THE SHEPHERD'S LOVE

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From the Pastor's Desk

December 2024



"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." 1 John 4:7-16

Christmas time is here again. It's a season that draws our attention to the reality of God's love made known to us. Our text reminds us that this love is not abstract, it's not merely a feeling but something tangible and concrete. God's love has been re-

vealed in the sending of His only begotten Son into the world to die for us so that we would live through Him. This is the heart of **Christmas**, the reason for the songs we sing and the joy we celebrate. It is a love that reaches down to us into our brokenness and sin, forgiving, renewing and transforming us. That we, freed from the bondage of sin and death, may live in this world according to His will and have eternal life in the world to come.

When we hear the familiar words of the **Christmas** account, we see how God chose to make His love known. The eternal Son of God, the Word made flesh, entered into our world not in majesty but in humility. He didn't descend as a mighty angel, fierce warrior, or imposing king but as a baby. He didn't lay claim to a palace, or any place fit for a king. He was born in a stable, wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger. Think on it Dear Ones! The One who upholds the universe by His power chose to take on flesh and dwell among us. This is love: that God is not distant nor detached but is with us, Emmanuel, to save us from our sins. **Christmas** is not just a celebration of His birth! It's everything. The baby in the manger is looking to the cross, where the fullness of God's love is on display. John tells us, *"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."* This is the purpose of **Christmas**: God sent His Son to bear our sins, to take upon Himself the punishment we deserved, so that would live. The baby in the manger is our Savior, the Lamb of God who came to

take away the sin of the world. This is the love we celebrate. Jesus was born to die for you.

This love of is not something we keep for ourselves. It is a love that changes us and moves us to love others. Just as **Christ** came not to be served but to serve, we are also called to serve our neighbor, especially during this season. **Christmas** is a time when the needs of those around us are often more visible, and the opportunities to show kindness and compassion are plentiful. Let us not lose sight of the fact that the love of God, which we have received so freely, is meant to be shared. When we forgive, when we serve, and when we care for those in need, we reflect the love of **Christ** to a world that so desperately needs it.

Because **Christ** has come, we know that God is with us and that He will never leave us. The light of His love shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it. This is the hope and the joy of **Christmas**: God has come to us, and in Him, we have life. As we gather this **Christmas** Eve to sing the familiar songs and hear the account of the baby in the manger, let us be reminded once again of the depth of God's love. Let us rejoice that, in the sending of His Son, He has given us the greatest **Christmas** present—the gift of life through Him. And as we dwell on that message, let us carry that love into the world, shining the light of **Christ** wherever we are.

God's Peace,
Pastor Nicholas Kandoll

Christ the Savior is born

Luther's writings contain a multitude of references to Advent and Christmas. The following excerpt comes from a sermon on the Nativity that he preached in 1530:

If Christ had arrived with trumpets and lain in a cradle of gold, his birth would have been a splendid affair. But it would not be a comfort to me. He was rather to lie in the lap of a poor maiden and be thought of little significance in the eyes of the world. Now I can come to him. Now he reveals himself to the miserable in order not to give any impression that he arrives with great power, splendor, wisdom, and aristocratic manners. But upon his return on that Day, when he will oppose the high and the mighty, it will be different. Now he comes to the poor, who need a Savior, but then he will come as a Judge against those who are persecuting him now.

Among his many roles—theologian, reformer, professor, scholar, exegete, hymnodist, and prolific author—Martin Luther probably considered his role as preacher to be most important. Biographer Roland H. Bainton writes, "Luther is at his best and most characteristic in his sermons on the Nativity," and then excerpts one of them in which Luther unfolds the familiar story of Joseph and Mary traveling to Bethlehem:

The inn was full. No one would release a room to this pregnant woman. She had to go to a cow stall and there bring forth the Maker of all creatures because nobody would give way. Shame on you, wretched Bethlehem! The inn ought to have been burned with brimstone, for even though Mary had been a beggar maid or unwed, anybody at such a time would have been glad to give her a hand. There are many of you in this congregation who think to yourselves: "If only I had been there! How quick I would have been to help the baby! I would have washed his linen! How happy I would have been to go with the shepherds to see the Lord lying in the manger!" Yes you would! You say that because you know how great Christ is, but if you had been there at that time you would have done no better than the people of Bethlehem. Childish and silly thoughts are these! Why don't you do it now? You have Christ in your neighbor. You ought to serve him, for what you do to your neighbor in need you do to the Lord Christ himself.

Martin Luther loved Christmas. The joy he derived from the festival each year not only overflowed in his own composition of such familiar carols as "From Heaven Above to Earth I Come," but also recharged his spirit for the many struggles in his continually challenged life.

Mary Had The Little Lamb

Mary had the little Lamb, who lived before His birth; Self-existent Son of God, from Heaven He came to Earth. (Micah 5:2)

Mary had the little Lamb; see Him in yonder stall; Virgin-born Son of God, to save man from the Fall. (Isaiah 7:14)

Mary had the little Lamb, obedient Son of God; Everywhere the Father led, His feet were sure to trod. (John 6:38)

Mary had the little Lamb, crucified on the tree. The rejected Son of God, He died to set men free. (1 Peter 1:18)

Mary had the little Lamb; men placed Him in the grave, Thinking they were done with Him; to death He was no slave! (Matthew 28:6)

Mary had the little Lamb, ascended now is He; All work on Earth is ended, our Advocate to be. (Hebrews 4:14-16)

Mary had the little Lamb; mystery to behold! From the Lamb of Calvary, a Lion will unfold. (Revelation 5: 5, 6)

When the Day Star comes again, of this be very sure: It won't be Lamb-like silence, but with the Lion's roar. (Psalm 2:12; Revelation 19:11-16)

Marv & Marbeth Rosenthal

Charles Wesley wrote over six thousand hymn texts, but this may have been his best. In singing this hymn, we not only join the shepherds under a canopy of singing angels, we also learn about the Jesus they proclaimed. We discover who he is and what his coming means. Wesley's carol is filled with powerful scriptural ideas; a month could be spent exploring these stanzas. But let's focus now on the last four lines: "*Mild He lays His glory by, born that man no more may die, born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth.*" These are the reasons why Jesus came: so we would not have to face eternal death; so he could raise us with him; and so he could regenerate us into children of God. For these and so much more, He deserves our praise. "*Glory to the new born King!*"

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

*Hark! The herald 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 th' angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"*

*Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"*

2.

*Veiled in flesh the God-head see, Hail the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as Man with men to dwell, Jesus, our Immanuel.
Hail, the heavenly Prince of Peace, Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings, risen with healing in His wings.
Hark! The herald angels sing, Glory to the newborn King!*

3.

*Mild He lays His glory by, born that man no more may die;
Born to raise the sons of earth; born to give them second birth.
Come, Desire of nations, come, fix in us Thy humble home;
O to all Thyself impart, formed in each believing heart!
Hark! The herald angels sing, Glory to the newborn King!*

(song no. 16 in Hymns & Songs of Zion)



"On **Christmas**, we celebrate the birth of **Christ** with prayer, feasting, and great merriment. But, most of all, we experience it in our hearts. For, more than just a day, **Christmas** is a state of mind. It is found throughout the year whenever faith overcomes doubt, hope conquers despair, and love triumphs over hate. It is present when men of any creed bring love and understanding to the hearts of their fellow man. The feeling is seen in the wondrous faces of children and in the hopeful eyes of the aged. It overflows the hearts of cheerful givers and the souls."

— Ronald Reagan Christmas Message 1981

"In this blessed season, let not blind passion darken our counsels. We shall not solve a moral question by dodging it. We can scarcely hope to have a full **Christmas** if we turn a deaf ear to the suffering of even the least of Christ's little ones."

—Harry Truman Christmas Message 1949

Let no pleasure tempt thee, no profit allure thee, no persuasion move thee, to do anything which thou knowest to be evil; so shalt thou always live jollity; for a good conscience is a continual **Christmas**. —Benjamin Franklin

The Joy Of Giving

*Somehow, not only for Christmas,
But all the long year through,
The joy that you give to others
Is the joy that comes back to you;
And the more you spend in blessing
The poor and lonely and sad,
The more of your heart's possessing
Returns to make you glad.*

Isaiah 9:6-7 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

Church Information

Apostolic Lutheran Church
315 Main Ave South
New York Mills, MN 56567
218-385-2166

Pastor Nicholas Kandoll
218-316-1365

Office Hours
Monday-Thursday
9 a.m.-noon

Church Website
www.nymalc.org
View live or archived services

Federation Website
www.apostoliclutheran.org

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If you want to be added or removed from our mailing list please contact me. All newsletter items to be considered can be emailed to me at the above address by the 20th of each month.

**Echoes of Mercy
Radio Broadcast
920 AM KWAD**

Sunday mornings
English at 8:05 am

*Sponsored by
New York Mills, Spruce Grove
and Menahga Apostolic
Lutheran Churches*

Sunday Schedule

Sunday School
Bible Study 9:30
Worship @ 10:30
Holy Communion 1st Sunday of month

If you choose to watch the services online and would like to donate to the church please send checks to:

Louise Amberg-Jokela
206 South Broadway #107
New York Mills, MN 56567

Thank you to everyone that has taken the time to send contributions. It is greatly appreciated!

Meals/potluck
will be served on the
first Sunday
Group 9 for Dec
Group 10 for Jan

The serving group will make the main dishes for **potlucks** (unless announced otherwise) and others are asked to bring salads or desserts.

There is a sign up sheet for Sunday



coffee in the dining room.

**Looking for volunteers
to help with cleanup
after coffee.**

NYM Emergency Food Shelf

FOR EMERGENCY HELP
CALL NYM CULTURAL CENTER
218-385-3339

CONNIE WARNER
218-385-2853 (work Mon–Thurs)
218-385-3669 (home)

TERESA MUCKALA
763-843-3269

KAY TOUGAS
218-298-0272

**ALL INFORMATION
IS CONFIDENTIAL**

LOCATION
400 S WALKER AVE
NEW YORK MILLS, MN

FOOD SHELF HOURS

9:00-NOON and 4:30-6:30

***Dec 23, 2024**

Jan 27, 2025

Feb 24, 2025

Mar 31, 2025

Usage limit 1 time per month

CHURCH BOARD MEMBERS

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ROSS KESKITALO - TREASURER
MARC TUMBERG
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