

ELM GROVE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

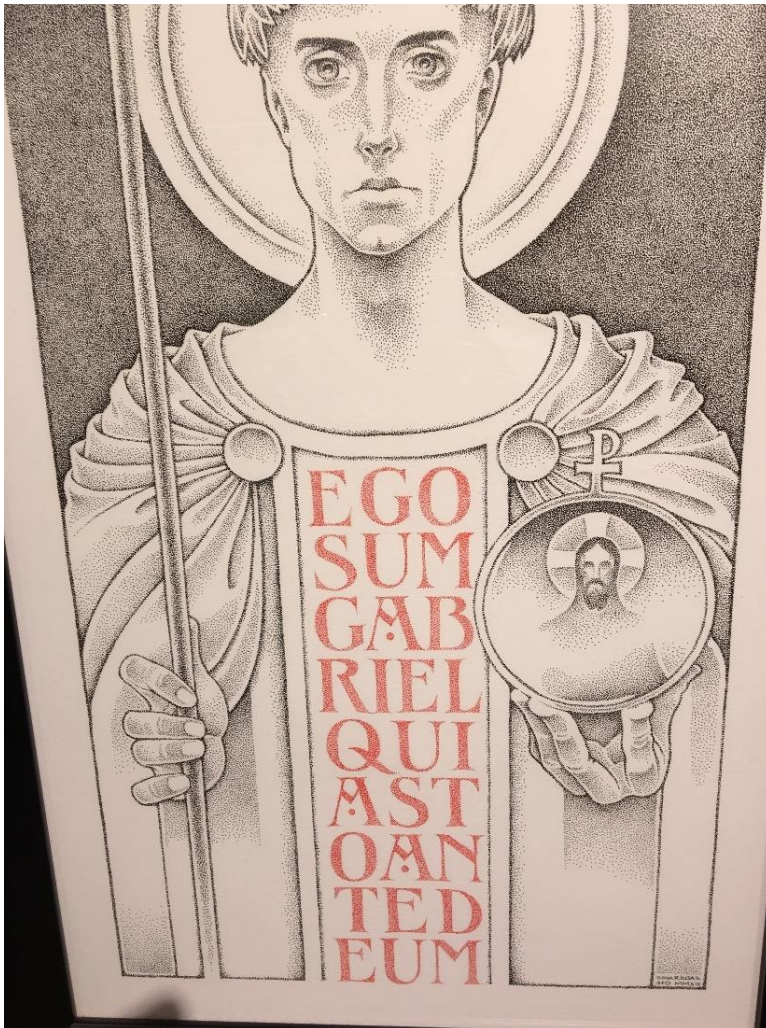
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
945 Terrace Dr., Elm Grove, WI 53122
Phone (262) 797-2970

Rev. Eric C. Skovgaard, Administrative Pastor ♦ Vicar Sam Lee ♦

CHRISTMAS EVE

Sunday, December 24, 2023 - 6:30 p.m.

Lessons and Carols



About Our Service

"A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols was first held at King's [College] on Christmas Eve 1918. It was planned by Eric Milner-White, who had just been appointed Dean of King's Chapel after experience as an army chaplain, which had convinced him that the Church of England needed more imaginative worship. Evensong, topped and tailed with carols, had been the Christmas Eve service until then but the young Dean, only thirty-four at the time, decided that A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols would be a more uplifting occasion...The service was first broadcast in 1928 and, with the exception of 1930, it has been broadcast annually, even during the Second World War, when the ancient glass had been removed from the Chapel – some [claim] you could hear the tar-paper flapping in the background over the radio. In the early 1930s the BBC began broadcasting the service on overseas programs... Wherever the service is heard and however it is adapted, whether the music is provided by choir or congregation, the pattern and strength of the service, as Milner-White pointed out, derive from the lessons. 'The main theme is the development of the loving purposes of God ...' seen 'through the windows and the words of the Bible'. Local interests appear, as they do here, in the Bidding Prayer. Personal circumstances give point to different parts of the service. Many of those who took part in the first service must have recalled those killed in the Great War when it came to the famous passage 'all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore and in a greater light'. Many today will think of a loved one who has died in the course of the last year when they hear those words." – from the Introduction to the 2019 King's College Service Folder. We have adapted the service for our own use here at Elm Grove Ev. Lutheran Church.

Preservice

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel – arr. By Lloyd Larson
Hark! The Herald Angels Sing – arr. By Valerie A. Floeter
What Child Is This – arr. By Valerie A. Floeter
All Is Well – Michael W. Smith and Wayne Kirkpatrick

Prelude

Once in Royal David's City – John Innes

Welcome and Announcements

Opening Hymn

376, Once in Royal David's City

The Congregation is invited to sing once the organ begins playing.

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| 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. |
|---|--|---|--|

3 For He is our childhood's pattern,
Day by day like us He grew;
He was little, weak, and helpless,
Tears and smiles like us He knew;
And He feels for all our sadness,
And He shares in all our gladness.

4 And our eyes at last shall see Him,
Through His own redeeming love;
For that child so dear and gentle
Is our Lord in heav'n above;
And He leads His children on
To the place where He is gone.

5 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!

Text: Cecil F. Alexander, 1818–95, alt.
Text: Public domain

The Bidding Prayer

P Beloved in Christ, on this Christmas Eve let it be our care and delight to prepare ourselves to hear again the message of the angels and in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass and the Babe lying in a manger. Therefore, let us read and mark in Holy Scripture the history of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our disobedience unto the glorious redemption brought us by this holy Child; let us make this sanctuary glad with our carols of praise. But first, let us pray for the needs of the whole world; for peace on earth and goodwill among all His people; for unity and brotherhood within the church He came to build, in the whole church throughout the world, in our own Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and especially in this, our congregation. And because this rejoices His heart, let us remember in His name the poor and helpless; the cold, the hungry, and the oppressed; the sick and those that mourn; the lonely and the unloved; the aged and the little children; all those who do not know the Lord Jesus, who do not love Him, or who by sin have grieved His heart of love. Lastly, let us remember before God all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore, and in a greater light, that multitude which no man can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh and with whom in the Lord Jesus we are one forevermore. These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the throne of heaven in the words which Christ Himself has taught us:

STAND

Lord's Prayer

**C 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.**

Opening Versicles

P Jesus Christ is the light of the world,

C the light no darkness can overcome.

P Stay with us, Lord, for it is evening,

C and the day is almost over.

P Let your light scatter the darkness

C and illumine Your Church.

P The Spirit and the Church cry out:

C Come, Lord Jesus.

P All those who await His appearance pray:

C Come, Lord Jesus.

P The whole creation pleads:

C Come, Lord, Jesus.

P The Lord be with you.

C And with your spirit.

P Let us pray.

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who led Your people Israel by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Enlighten our darkness by the light of Your Christ; may His Word be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path; for You are merciful, and You love Your whole creation and we, Your creatures, glorify You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

C Amen

SIT

First Lesson (read by Charles Ewert)

Genesis 3:8-19

The LORD tells Adam and Eve that they have lost Paradise but that the seed of the woman will bruise the serpent's head.

⁸And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" ¹⁰And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself."

¹¹He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" ¹²The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." ¹³Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." ¹⁴The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. ¹⁵I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." ¹⁶To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." ¹⁷And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; ¹⁸thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Carol Response

1 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 the_angelic host proclaim,
 "Christ is born in Bethlehem!" *Refrain*

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

380, Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

2 Christ, by highest heav'n adored,
 Christ, the everlasting Lord,
 Late in time behold Him come,
 Offspring of a virgin's womb.
 Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
 Hail the_incarinate Deity!
 Pleased as Man with man to dwell,
 Jesus, our Immanuel! *Refrain*

3 Hail, the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
 Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
 Light and life to all He brings,
 Ris'n with healing in His wings.
 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. *Refrain*

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707–88, alt.
 Text: Public domain

Second Lesson (read by Doug Grelk)

Isaiah 7:10-14

The LORD promises to King Ahaz that a virgin will give birth to a son named Immanuel.

¹⁰Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, ¹¹"Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." ¹²But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test." ¹³And he

said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? ¹⁴Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Carol Response

1 See amid the winter's snow,
Born for us on earth below,
See, the gentle Lamb appears,
Promised from eternal years. *Refrain*

ref Hail, O ever-blessèd morn!
Hail, redemption's happy dawn!
Sing through all Jerusalem:
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

4 Teach, O teach us, holy Child,
By Thy face so meek and mild,
Teach us to resemble Thee
In Thy sweet humility. *Refrain*

373, See amid the Winter's Snow

2 Lo, within a stable lies
He who built the starry skies,
He who, throned in height sublime,
Sits amid the cherubim. *Refrain*

3 Sacred Infant, all divine,
What a tender love was Thine,
Thus to come from highest bliss
Down to such a world as this! *Refrain*

Text: Edward Caswall, 1814-78, alt.
Text: Public domain

Third Lesson (read by Vicar Lee)

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

The prophet foretells the coming of the Savior, who as the God-man will reign forever.

² The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined. ⁶For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Carol Response (Soloist)

Mary, Did You Know – Buddy Greene and Mark Lowry

Fourth Lesson (read by John Wolck)

Micah 5:1-5a

Though Bethlehem is small in the eyes of the world, from this town shall come a ruler who is ancient of days.

¹ Now muster your troops, O daughter of troops; siege is laid against us; with a rod they strike the judge of Israel on the cheek. ² But 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 origin is from of old, from ancient days. ³ Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel. ⁴ 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. ⁵ And he shall be their peace.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Carol Response

356, The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came

- 1 The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
With wings as drifted snow, with eyes as flame:
"All hail to thee, O lowly maiden Mary,
Most highly favored lady."
Gloria!
- 2 "For know a blessed mother thou shalt be,
All generations laud and honor thee;
Thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,
Most highly favored lady."
Gloria!
- 3 Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head;
"To me be as it pleaseth God," she said.
"My soul shall laud and magnify God's holy name."
Most highly favored lady,
Gloria!
- 4 Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born
In Bethlehem all on a Christmas morn,
And Christian folk throughout the world will ever say:
"Most highly favored lady."
Gloria!

Text: para. Sabine Baring-Gould, 1834–1924; Basque, c. 18th cent.
Text: Public domain

Gabriel announces to Mary that she will be Theotokos.

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" ²⁹But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, ³³and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

³⁴And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. ³⁶And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Carol Response

365, Away in a Manger

- 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 Thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.
- 3 Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
And take us to heaven to live with Thee there.

Text (sts. 1–2): Little Children's Book, 1885, Philadelphia; (st. 3): Vineyard Songs, 1892, Louisville, alt.
Text: Public domain

Sixth Lesson (read by Rev. Hipenbecker)

Luke 2:1-7

Mary lays her firstborn Son in the manger.

¹In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.

²This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴And 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 lineage of David, ⁵to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. ⁶And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Carol Response

369, Where Shepherds Lately Knelt

- 1 Where shepherds lately knelt and kept the angel's word,
I come in half-belief, a pilgrim strangely stirred;
But there is room and welcome there for me,
But there is room and welcome there for me.
- 2 In that unlikely place I find Him as they said:
Sweet newborn babe, how frail! And in a manger bed:
A still, small voice to cry one day for me,
A still, small voice to cry one day for me.
- 3 How should I not have known Isaiah would be there,
His prophecies fulfilled? With pounding heart I stare:
A child, a son, the Prince of Peace for me,
A child, a son, the Prince of Peace for me.
- 4 Can I, will I forget how Love was born, and burned
Its way into my heart—unasked, unforced, unearned,
To die, to live, and not alone for me,
To die, to live, and not alone for me?

Text: Jaroslav J. Vajda, 1919–2008

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The Seventh Lesson (read by Pastor Skovgaard)

Luke 2:8-16

Both heaven and earth respond to the news of Christ's birth, as angels and shepherds rejoice.

⁸And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. ¹⁰And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹For unto you is born this day in the

city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" ¹⁵When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Carol Response

1 "From heav'n above to earth I come
To bear good news to ev'ry home;
Glad tidings of great joy I bring,
Whereof I now will say and sing:

2 "To you this night is born a child
Of Mary, chosen virgin mild;
This little child of lowly birth
Shall be the joy of all the earth.

3 "This is the Christ, our God Most High,
Who hears your sad and bitter cry;
He will Himself your Savior be
From all your sins to set you free.

6 How glad we'll be to find it so!
Then with the shepherds let us go
To see what God for us has done
In sending us His own dear Son.

15 Glory to God in highest heav'n,
Who unto us His Son has giv'n!
While angels sing with pious mirth
A glad new year to all the earth.

358, From Heaven Above to Earth I Come

7 Come here, my friends, lift up your
eyes,
And see what in the manger lies.
Who is this child, so young and fair?
It is the Christ Child lying there.

8 Welcome to earth, O noble Guest,
Through whom the sinful world is blest!
You came to share my misery
That You might share Your joy with me.

13 Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child,
Prepare a bed, soft, undefiled,
A quiet chamber set apart
For You to dwell within my heart.

14 My heart for very joy must leap;
My lips no more can silence keep.
I, too, must sing with joyful tongue
That sweetest ancient cradlesong:

Text: Martin Luther, 1483–1546; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–78, alt.
Text: Public domain

Homily

"From Heaven Above" (Luke 1:32-33)

Offering

O Holy Night – Adolphe Adam

*[Please Note: Ushers will come to the end of each pew with their candles lit.
Tip only unlighted candle toward lighted one to avoid wax dripping.
The congregation will begin singing when all candles have been lit.
Candles are to be extinguished after the blessing.]*

Closing Carol

363, Silent Night, Holy Night

1g 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.

2 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!

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.

3 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.

Text: Public domain

STAND

Collect of the Day

P O God, You make us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Grant that as we joyfully receive Him as our Redeemer, we may with sure confidence behold Him when He comes to be our Judge; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Blessing

P The Almighty God bless us with his grace. Christ give us the joys of everlasting life. And unto the fellowship of the citizens above may the King of Angels bring us.

C Amen.

Postlude

O Holy Night – Kenneth D. Varner

Participants

Preacher	Pastor Eric Skovgaard
Organist	Richard C. Ewert
Clarinet	Lynn Crowell
Guitar	Tom Crowell
Flute	Emily Ewert
Voice	Mark Ewert
Elder	John Wolck
Chancel Assistant	Steve Hipenbecker
Usher Team on duty	Andrew Alles, Ella Donath, Pam Ganswindt, Andrea Kysely, Steve Nelson, Shelly Skovgaard, Cathy Tuttrup, Matt Zientek, Mikayla Zientek

THANKS! Your EGL community requires the diligent efforts of many volunteers, offering up their time, talents, and treasures. From those on the Altar Guild who set the table for the LORD each week, to those who serve on the various elected boards bearing the weight of the church's legal and fiduciary responsibilities, to those who take care of the property, to those who lend their efforts to enriching the musical life of our worship, to those who assist as ushers and chancel assistants and live-streamers, making sure that you have the best worship experience possible, to those who prepare the coffee and treats for us to enjoy after worship, to those who have prepared and led various studies, to those who quietly give and pray for the expansion of God's kingdom of grace -- a grateful church remembers you in thanksgiving!