

Jesus, God's Gift to You

A Children's Christmas Service by Jon Woldt and Judy Lauber

Morrison Zion Lutheran Church

December 24, 2008

Processional Hymn:

"Come, Your Hearts and Voices Raising" CW 42

1. **Come, your hearts and voices raising,
Christ the Lord with gladness praising;
Loudly sing his love amazing,
Worthy folk of Christendom.**
2. **See how God, for us providing,
Gave his Son and life abiding;
He our weary steps is guiding
From earth's woe to heav'nly joy.**
3. **Christ, from heav'n to us descending
And in love our race befriending,
In our need his help extending,
Saved us from the wily foe.**
4. **Jacob's Star in all its splendor
Beams with comfort sweet and tender,
Forcing Satan to surrender,
Breaking all the pow'rs of hell.**
5. **Gracious Child, we pray you, hear us;
From your lowly manger cheer us.
Gently lead us and be near us
Till we join th' angelic choir.**

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M: This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. (Psalm 118:24)

C: **Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!** (2 Corinthians 9:15)

Rebecca Bjorklund: Many people around the world will open gifts as they celebrate Christmas. The gifts will come in many shapes and sizes. Some will be so big they cannot be wrapped. Others will be so small they could get lost in the wrapping paper. Some were purchased with a great deal of money. Others were made by children or adults. Some gifts will be broken before the night is over. Others will eventually fade or tarnish.

Tonight, through word and song, we will present the greatest gift of all. It is a gift that is new and fresh each day. It is a gift that is meant to be treasured. It is a gift for people of all ages. It is a gift for people from all nations and ethnic backgrounds. It is a gift we do not

deserve on our own merits. It is a gift from the loving hand of our gracious God. That gift is Jesus.

Preschool –Kindergarten:	A baby in a manger— He came to set me free So I can go to heaven— Jesus, God’s gift to me.	Now I can go tell others That Jesus loves them too. He came to save all people— Jesus, God’s gift to you.
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Preschool-Kindergarten Song:

“God Loves Me Dearly”

1. God loves me dearly, grants me salvation;
God loves me dearly, loves even me.
Refrain: Therefore I’ll say again: God loves me dearly,
God loves me dearly, loves even me.
2. I was in bondage, sin, death, and darkness;
God’s love was working to make me free.
Refrain
3. He sent forth Jesus, my dear Redeemer;
He sent forth Jesus and set me free.
Refrain
4. Jesus, my Savior, himself did offer;
Jesus, my Savior, paid all I owed.
Refrain
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Part 1: God Promised to Send His Gift

Rebecca Bjorklund: At the dawn of time, already in the Garden of Eden, God promised to send a Savior. Sin had entered the world. The punishment God’s justice demands for sin is death. But the deaths of sinful humans cannot save anyone from eternal death. So God in his grace had a plan to rescue mankind from being eternally separated from his gracious presence. That plan included the gift of his dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus set aside his glory to be born into a world of sin and to pay the price for sin that we could never pay.

Jesus came to live the perfect life we could never live. Jesus was born to die the death we deserved. The apostle Paul in the letter to the Romans reminds us of the consequence of sin and the wonderful gift we have through faith in Christ.

Grades 7-8: The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

Kathy Macco: God's first gospel promise is recorded for us in the book of Genesis. Jesus would be the offspring of the woman who would crush the head of Satan.

Grades 7-8: So 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. And 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." (Genesis 3:14,15)

Kathy Macco: Yes, in the Garden of Eden and throughout the pages of Holy Scripture, God has a wonderful Christmas message for you and me: there is no greater gift to cherish than the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Grades 7-8 Hymn:

"All Mankind Fell in Adam's Fall"

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| 1. All mankind fell in Adam's fall;
One common sin infects us all.
From one to all the curse descends,
And over all God's wrath impends. | 5. As by one man all mankind fell
And, born in sin, was doomed to hell,
So by one Man, who took our place,
We all were justified by grace. |
| 4. But Christ, the second Adam, came
To bear our sin and woe and shame,
To be our life, our light, our way,
Our only hope, our only stay. | 6. We thank you, Christ; new life is ours,
This grace our ev'ry way attend
New light, new hope, new strength, new pow'rs;
Until we reach our journey's end. |

Kathy Macco: Throughout the Old Testament, God's people looked forward to God's gift, the coming of the Messiah. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob passed on God's promise of the Savior from generation to generation. God's people, the Israelites, carried the message from Egypt to the promised land of Canaan. Every offering and sacrifice in the temple in Jerusalem pointed to the coming Savior and the joy that the first Christmas in Bethlehem would bring.

The Old Testament believers looked with eyes of faith to God's eternal plan of salvation. God's plan was laid before the Old Testament believers through the inspired words of prophets like Isaiah and Micah. The prophets told "how" and "where" God's gift would be given.

Grades 7-8: "The Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14)

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are of old, from ancient times." (Micah 5:2)

Congregational Hymn:

“Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel” CW 23

1. Oh, come, oh, come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.
Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!
2. Oh, come, O Root of Jesse, free
Your own from Satan’s tyranny;
From depths of hell your people save,
And bring them vict’ry o’er the grave.
Refrain
3. Oh, come, O Dayspring from on high,
And cheer us by your drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death’s dark shadows put to flight.
Refrain
4. Oh, come, O Key of David, come,
And open wide our heav’nly home.
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.
Refrain

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Part 2: God Prepared His People for His Gift

Summer Schmidt: We see God’s grace at work through the announcement of Jesus’ birth to Mary and Joseph. God in his wisdom chose Mary and Joseph as his special servants. They needed a Savior from sin just as much as you and I. Through faith, Mary and Joseph received the message. Mary recognized God’s grace in choosing her, a humble servant, to be the mother of the Lord.

Let us hear about the events leading to the birth of our Savior as recorded for us in the book of Luke.

Grades 5-6: In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with

God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He 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, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.”

“How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”

The 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. Even 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. For nothing is impossible with God.”

“I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May it be to me as you have said.” Then the angel left her.

At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, where she entered Zechariah’s home and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!” (Luke 1:26-45)

Girls of Grades 1-8 Song:

Magnificat James J. Chepponis



Pro - claim the great-ness of God; re -
joice in God, my Sav - ior! Re -
joice in God my Sav - ior!

Girls: refrain

All: *refrain*

Girls: For he has favored his lowly one, and all shall call me blessed. The almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

All: *refrain*

Girls: He favors those who fear his name, in ev'ry generation. He has shown the might and strength of his arm, and scattered the proud of heart.

All: *refrain*

Girls: He has cast the mighty from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with all good gifts, and sent the rich away.

All: *refrain*

Girls: He has helped his servant Israel, remembering his mercy. He promised his mercy to Abraham and his children forevermore.

All: *refrain*

Girls: Proclaim the greatness of God, rejoice!

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Summer Schmidt: God in his wisdom sent an angel to speak to Joseph regarding the plan for Jesus' birth. The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. God would use Mary, the woman to whom Joseph was engaged, to give birth to Jesus. Joseph was a God-fearing man. He listened to the angel's message and showed his faith in a special way. We hear of God's plan in the book of Matthew:

Grades 5-6: This 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. Because 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.

But 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. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"—which means, "God with us."

When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus. (Matthew 1:18-25)

Grades 5-6 Hymn:

"O Jesus So Sweet, O Jesus So Mild" CW 366

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| 1. O Jesus so sweet, O Jesus so mild!
For sinners you became a child.
You came from heaven to fulfill
Your Father's just and holy will.
O Jesus so sweet, O Jesus so mild! | 2. O Jesus so sweet, O Jesus so mild!
With God we now are reconciled.
You have for all the ransom paid,
Your Father's righteous anger stayed
O Jesus so sweet, O Jesus so mild! |
|--|---|

3. O Jesus so sweet, O Jesus so mild!
Joy fills the world which sin defiled.
Whate'er we have belongs to you;
Oh, keep us faithful, strong, and true.
O Jesus so sweet, O Jesus so mild!

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Part 3: God's Gift Arrived

Bethany Soderlund: No event in history has been celebrated in word and song as much as the birth of Jesus Christ. Jesus' virgin birth, his being born into the family of King David, and his birth in Bethlehem were all part of God's eternal plan. Our almighty God even used the Roman government to carry out his plan. Caesar Augustus was the Roman ruler of the day. As ruler of the Roman Empire, he ordered a census that took Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem, the hometown of David.

Let us hear the account from Luke chapter 2.

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

So 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. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and 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. (Luke 2:1-7)

Grades 1-2 Hymn:

"Away in a Manger" CW 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.

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Congregational Hymn:

“*Silent Night*” CW 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. 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!
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, Tune, Setting: public domain.

Part 4: God's Gift Was Given for You and Me

Bethany Soderlund: Jesus came to this earth with a purpose. Jesus—true God and true man—came as the servant of all. He came to live the perfect life we could never live because of sin. Jesus came to die the death that you and I deserved. Jesus came to rise on that first Easter morning to show his victory over death. Jesus lives and rules today as our King.

Because of Jesus, we never need to fear death. Because of Jesus, heaven is the home of all who believe in him. The true message of Christmas is found in God's gift to all people. Jesus is God's gift to you and me.

Grades 3-4: “God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

Brittany Van Rossum: God announced the birth of his Son in a wonderful way. God used angels to proclaim the good news of Jesus' birth. Angels lit up the dark sky that first Christmas night as they brought the news of peace and joy to the shepherds. The shepherds went to Bethlehem to see if the words of the angel were true. The shepherds saw firsthand God's greatest gift of all—Jesus, the Savior of the world. Joy filled the hearts of the shepherds when they saw the baby Jesus.

Grade 4: There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

Grades 3-4: Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”

Grade 3: When 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.”

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. (Luke 2:8-16)

Grades 3-4 Hymn:

“Angels We Have Heard on High” CW 63

1. Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o’er the plains,
And the mountains in reply,
Echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo;
Gloria in excelsis Deo.
2. Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heav’nly song?
Gloria in excelsis Deo;
Gloria in excelsis Deo.
3. Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria in excelsis Deo;
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

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Part 5: We Share This Gift with Others

Brittany Van Rossum: The shepherds were given the privilege of being the first ones to spread the news of Jesus’ birth. They were the first missionaries. They did not travel into faraway lands, but they told the wonderful message of salvation to those living nearby. The shepherds were filled with joy and shared the news of God’s gift with others.

Grades 7-8: When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The

shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told. (Luke 2:17-20)

Brittany Van Rossum: You and I can learn from the shepherds. They heard the good news of Jesus' birth and shared it with others. We have the same message to share today. It's a message filled with peace and joy. That message is the simple fact that God sent to the world the most precious gift of all—his Son and our Savior.

All Children Theme Song:

“Jesus, God’s Gift to You”

1. We've come to celebrate today a special gift from heav'n.
It's from a Father filled with love that this gift was giv'n.
The perfect world God made was gone. Sin made all people sad.
The gift God promised to the earth would make people glad.

Refrain: There's a gift, what is it? A gift the Father gave;
Jesus, God's gift to you, now all the world is saved!
Jesus, God's gift to you, now you and I are saved!

2. It came to pass, the time was right to send the gift to earth.
Joseph, Mary, angels too rejoiced at Jesus' birth.
A little baby was the gift of love the Father gave.
The Savior lived and died for us that we might be saved.

Refrain

This gift sent from above fulfilled for us God's promise true.
Christ Jesus is my gift of love and God's gift to you.

Refrain

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Offering

Responsive Prayer

M: O Lord, you created the world to be perfect in every way and without sin. But when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, sin entered the world and destroyed your perfect creation. Since the fall, all people are sinners and deserve death and eternal separation from you in hell. In love you chose to save mankind from the fires of hell by sending Jesus into the world as the Savior, who gave his life on the cross for the sins of all people.

C: **We praise and thank you, O Lord, for your great love.**

M: We rejoice to hear again the announcement of God's great gift to the world. We praise and thank you, O Lord, for your plan of salvation. You know our sin. You know that we are powerless to remove that sin by ourselves. You know that there is only one way for sinners to be forgiven. You know that Jesus is the greatest gift you could ever give to us.

C: O Lord, we praise you for loving us with such a great love.

M: As we come to know your great love for us in Jesus, move our hearts to share his love with as many people as we can. We praise and thank you, O Lord, and ask that you use us to share the good news of forgiveness in Jesus. Strengthened by the Spirit, may we always remember that Jesus is God's gift, for us and for all. In Jesus' name we pray.

C: Amen.

The Benediction

Congregational Hymn:

“Go, Tell It on the Mountain” CW 57

**Refrain: Go, tell it on the mountain, Over the hills, and ev'rywhere;
Go, tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born.**

1. **While shepherds kept their watching O'er silent flocks by night,
Behold, throughout the heavens There shone a holy light.**

Refrain

2. **The shepherds feared and trembled When lo, above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus That hailed our Savior's birth.**

Refrain

3. **Down in a lowly manger The humble Christ was born;
And God sent us salvation That blessed Christmas morn.**

Refrain

Text: public domain.

A Blessed Christmas to everyone. May Jesus' birth, life, death, and resurrection be a blessing to you now and always! Thank you for joining us in worshipping our Savior!

Candlelight Worship

Tonight at 11:00 p.m.

New Year's Eve Worship

Monday, December 31 at 7:30 p.m.

Christmas Festival Worship

Tomorrow at 9:00 a.m.

New Years' Day Worship

Tuesday, January 1 at 9:00 a.m.

Morrison Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Pastor Randy Ott

864-2348

www.mzluth.org

Grades 7-8 (left to right)

Back Row: Dakota Schmidt, Matthew Hockers

Row 2: Aaron Van Iten, Jordan Laabs, Olivia Blauert, Claire Ott, Bethany Soderlund, Kathy Macco,

Front Row: Kyle Laabs, Luke Zeamer, Dara Schultz, Cassandra Wagner, Brittany Van Rossum, Summer Schmidt, Rebecca Bjorklund

Grades 5-6 (left to right)

Back Row: Zachary Laabs, Kasey Doyen, Alex Pischke

Row 2: Hannah Ihlenfeldt, Brianna Leick, Dezarae Wiedow, Trisha Compton, Olivia Tasch, Kaitlyn Kuchenbecker, Eli Herzog, Justin Lemke

Front Row: Bryce Blauert, Nicholas Griepentrog, Luke Witt, Madeline Sabel, Heidi Schultz, Lucas Soderlund, Ryan Malcore

Grades 3-4 (left to right)

Back Row: Jesse Doyen, Bryanna Cappelle, Jonathan Otto, Marissa Leick, Colin Salm, Victoria Wagner, Emily Malcore, Matthew Wendt, Noah Witt, Brandon Van Iten, Joshua Ihlenfeldt, Brandon Leiterman, Megan Schultz, Nathan Beining

Front Row: Gloria Blauert, Rachel Ihlenfeldt, Matthew Sabel, Megan Laabs, Cody Kittell, Erin Krueger, Brandon Zittlow, Ashley Leiterman, Brianna Laabs, Michael Macco, Emily Vaughn, Anna Nushart, Shane Nushart, Jenna Lemke, Blake Pahl, Wes Ott

Grades 1-2 (left to right)

Back Row: Anthony Feldkamp, Lindsey Doyen, Natalie Zirbel, Jacob Beining, Lauren Griepentrog, Claudia Macco, Matthew Krueger

Row 2: Zachary Diny, Leah, Ihlenfeldt, Alexander Laabs, Leah Voster, Jerod Wiedow, Evan Vaughn, Elaine Blauert, Thomas Schultz

Front Row: Emily Cappelle, Hayden Meulemans, Leah Kuchenbecker, Jerod Voster, Leah Nushart, Andrew Gajeske, Alyssa Laabs, Hailey Witt

Preschool and Kindergarten (left to right)

Back Row: Sydney Salm, Samantha Zittlow, Thomas Voster, Erin Magley, Aaron Schultz, Harmony Baril, Matthew Gajewske, Trisha Feldkamp

Front Row: Anna Voster, Mitchell Leick, Georgia Blauert, Wyatt Verbeten, Jordyn Ossmann, Justin Laabs, Paige Zirbel