

The Feast of the Nativity of our Lord
St. Luke 2:1-14
December 24th, 2021
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

A Multitude of the Heavenly Host

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Lutheran Church is known as the singing church. We are known as the singing church, not only because our entire liturgy is sung, but because Lutherans are the ones attributed with making hymns a large part of the Divine Service. Singing is what people do when they are celebrating. Just consider the past month. The stores and restaurants, and everywhere one goes there is music being played. Christmas carols were heard everywhere you go. These carols are the way the world celebrates Christmas. The world is filled with singing in preparation for Christmas. The Church is no different. The Church also celebrates by singing. The Church dresses up the Word of God with musical instruments and the voices of the faithful.

Unlike the world, however, our singing and hymns are intended to praise only one thing: our Lord + Jesus Christ. The world in their carols sing about many things, and most times the focus of the carol is not on the truly important One of this holy day. Any song, carol, or hymn that does not praise the Lord + Jesus and His works and merits alone, are not fit for the Church to sing. They properly do not belong to the worship of the Church. For the Church is the Bride of the Christ; the Church is the Bride of her Bridegroom, our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. The Church sings about her Bridegroom, and celebrates her Bridegroom in song.

The Church's Bridegroom, our Lord + Jesus, is worthy of our singing because He has done what only the perfect Lord God can do. He came down from Heaven to be incarnate—born into our flesh—of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This what the Church sings about today in her celebration of the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord. We are celebrating our Lord's incarnation—His taking upon Himself our flesh—so that He can do what we are unable to do. We are trapped in our sinfulness. We are filled with sins, iniquities, and transgressions. We are indeed poor, miserable sinners, and we cannot rescue ourselves from our sinfulness in any way, shape or form. We cannot “good work” our way out of the bondage of sin and death. No amount of good works is going to save us from the penalty of death on account of our sins. Sin inheres in our flesh and we are trapped by it. We cannot save ourselves by our own doing, and striving and good working.

This is why the Lord God came down from Heaven in the Person of the Son of God, the Lord + Jesus. He takes upon Himself our flesh, but without sin, so that He can fulfill what we are unable to fulfill. He takes upon our flesh, so that He can do what we are unable to do. He comes to us to perfectly

obey the Law and will of God, which we break every day and in every way. The Lord + Jesus in our flesh perfectly fulfills the Law of God for us. This is why He humbles Himself to be born of the Virgin Mary in a lowly cattle stall in Bethlehem. This is why He humbles Himself to be wrapped up in linen cloths and laid in a manger. Our Lord + Jesus—our Lord God—comes to us to be with us and fulfill the Law perfectly on our behalf.

Then our Lord + Jesus—our Lord God in the flesh—Who is both fully man and fully God, offers up His innocent, spotless, and sinless life as a ransom for us on the tree of the holy cross. He suffers and dies for us on the cross, so that He might free us from the bonds of sin, death, and the power of the devil. He suffers and dies for the whole world, and wins forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and salvation to all those who cling to His perfect obedience to the Law and His suffering and death on their behalf in faith. He even gifts us with faith by the working of the Holy Ghost through the means of grace. All this our Triune Lord God does for us out of His great love for us.

It is on account of this salvific work of our loving Triune God that the Church sings. How can one hear of all of these good things and *not* sing? Such good news, such a Gospel, deserves to be sung loud and clear from here to the ends of the Earth. The Church cannot stop herself from singing about her loving Bridegroom, our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. For He has come down from Heaven to be one of us to save us.

This singing of the Church does not just happen here on Earth. Singing is not just being done by those of us here in the place; those of us who have gathered around our Lord's holy Word and His Blessed Sacraments. The Church not only sings on Earth, but the Church also sings in Heaven. The whole Christian Church on Earth and in Heaven sings of the wonderful things that our Lord God has done for us. This is why after the birth of our Lord + Jesus in our flesh to the Blessed Virgin Mary in a stable in Bethlehem of Judea, we see shepherds out in their fields keeping watch over their sheep by night.

In the middle of the night, surrounded by deep darkness, an angel of the Lord God showed up to proclaim the good news of the birth of the Messiah to these shepherds guarding their sheep in the night. When the announcement had been made that they would find a Baby wrapped up in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger in the city of David—in Bethlehem—Who was the Savior of the world, what do you think happened? This marvelous, good news prompted the multitude of the heavenly host to praise the Lord God and sing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." The same song which the Church sings at the beginning of the Divine Service praising our Lord God for the gift of a Savior in our very own flesh.

This song has remained silent throughout the penitential season of Advent. Now it is sung among us with loud, clear voices, and with the sound of bells ringing in our ears. We join our voices to the multitudes of the heavenly host to praise the Lord God for His wonderful gift of a Savior born in our flesh. We celebrate by singing the song of Heaven. We celebrate by joining not only the whole Christian Church on Earth in singing the song of Heaven, but we also join the multitude of the heavenly host in singing this song of praise to our Lord God in thanksgiving for giving the world and us a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord.

And this is not the only time in our Divine Service when we join our voices and instruments to the voices of the multitude of the heavenly host. Just before we receive our Lord's Body and Blood in bread and wine, the same Body and Blood that He offered up as a sacrifice for us on the tree of the holy cross for the forgiveness of sins, we also sing with the heavenly host the song of Heaven called, "The Sanctus." "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of Sabaoth. Heaven and Earth are full of Thy glory." Indeed, our whole Divine Liturgy is made up of the Word of God. We sing the Word of God which proclaims the story of our salvation. We give thanks in song for all the good things that our Lord + Jesus

has done for us poor, miserable sinners.

Today, we celebrate that our Lord + Jesus has come down from Heaven and taken upon Himself our flesh. He has humbled Himself to be born of a virgin in a cattle shed in the city of King David—in the House of Bread, Bethlehem—and humbled Himself to be wrapped up in linen cloths, and laid in a manger all so that He might win for us salvation. He gives this salvation freely to all those who cling to Him in faith. Faith is freely given by the Holy Ghost to all those who receive the pure preaching of the Word of God, and participate in the Blessed Sacraments, so that all those who believe can sing in celebration of His great gifts to us.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us lift up our voices in song, and loudly and clearly sing of the wondrous things our Savior has done for us. Let us join our voices this day to the voices of the multitude of the heavenly host and praise God and sing, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill to men.” Let us sing in celebration of our Lord’s incarnation, for our Lord has come to dwell with us, so that He might save us from sin, death and the power of the devil. This is truly a merry reason for celebration and singing. Merry Christmas, my dear friends, merry Christmas! In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory! I will extol Thee, O Lord, and I will praise Thy Name forever and ever. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!