

**St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church**  
**Christmas Eve December 24, 2016**  
**Trinity St. Luke Lutheran Grade School Service**  
**Pastor Anthony E. Schultz Luke 2:8-11 KJV**



<sup>8</sup> *And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.* <sup>9</sup> *And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.* <sup>10</sup> *And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.* <sup>11</sup> *For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*

Children of our Heavenly Father, precious in His sight for Jesus' sake:

For a long time now – you could tell Christmas was coming. You could tell if you listen to the radio – for weeks and weeks they have been playing Christmas music. I love Christmas music! But not every song you hear around Christmas time is about the birth of the Christ-child. Again and again you hear John Lennon singing, “Imagine!” “*Imagine there's no Heaven – it's easy if you try – no hell below us – above us only sky.*” Imagine no Heaven – and what happens when you die? The proverbial pushing up daisies? A long and dreamless sleep from which no one ever wakes up? There is the love song that says, “*I just prayed to a god that I don't believe in...*” What does that *mean*? The proverbial I'm spiritual – aware and concern about good and evil – just not a believer in Father, Son and Holy Spirit? There is song about the guy who meets his old girlfriend in the grocery store. They drink beer in her car and then he says goodbye – and the *snow turns into rain*. That's depressing! Don't misunderstand! I love listening to *Snoopy and the Red Baron* and *Merry Christmas mein Fruend!* I love the Muppets singing The Twelve Days of Christmas – Kermit and Miss Piggy and the debate if the *5 golden rings* are the 5 books of Moses. But Christmas is about the birth of the Christ-child! The Hallelujah Chorus got it right – when it says, “*King of kings and Lord of lords...*” We are here – because the little baby boy born in a stable – wrapped in strips of cloth like any other newborn baby 2,000 years ago – is in fact the Son of God – made flesh to save us from all our sins! That changes everything!

God's Word says, <sup>8</sup> **And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.** <sup>9</sup> **And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.** *Sore afraid...*

Whenever people meet angels – messengers from our Heavenly Father – the first response it seems – is always one of fear! Why is that? Because angels are holy – flawless – completely and utterly set apart – to give glory to their Creator. Angels are in an instant a reminder of how far from holy I am! In an instant I am reminded what the Apostle Paul told the Romans, “**The wages of sin is death!**” Sins earn and deserve death – physical death, spiritual death and eternal destruction! I was at Hallmark the other day – looking at cards – when I saw a notebook – with a heavy cover – with pockets and all sorts of compartments – what with Velcro and zippers and such – all completely labeled and organized. On the cover it said in big letters, “I'm dead...now what” with the proverbial ? mark followed immediately by an ! point! Now what?! And I immediately thought to myself – if you don't know by now – it's painfully and utterly too late! It is only because of the grace and mercy of God that even the smallest person up here tonight knows the answer. When we die – we go to Heaven to be with Jesus forever. Even the littlest person up here tonight knows Jesus died on the  $\dagger$  to wash away our sins. On Easter morning Jesus rose from the dead – and because Jesus lives – we too will live with Him in Heaven by grace through faith from Scripture!

<sup>10</sup> **And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.** <sup>11</sup> **For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. A Saviour – which is Christ the Lord –** means a Saviour from sin and guilt! About this time every year we get a postcard from our Northwestern Publishing House – about the upcoming Mid-week Lenten Vespers Series. This year the title is **Repent: Turn to Jesus!** There are 9 practice sermons – Ash Wednesday – which will be March 1<sup>st</sup> – 6 midweek Lenten Vespers – then Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. **Repent: Turn To Jesus and Not to Yourself.** We don't get to Heaven by being good. It is almost hardwired into our sin ruined mind to think – if I try really hard – if I do the right thing more often than not! If when I die – the good things outweigh the mean and selfish and hurtful things I did – by the smallest fraction – God will say, "Good job!" – and we get to come into a place of eternal joy and wonder! Makes perfect sense. It just isn't true! This coming year – 2017 we will hear about Martin Luther and the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Reformation. We will talk about the Augsburg Confession – the *Unaltered* Augsburg Confession – rightly discerned Law and Gospel. How important it is – when we come to Church – to be convicted of our sins – to confess our sins – and then to hear the sweet Christmas, Good Friday and Easter Gospel. Church is not – is not simply "It's nice to be nice to the nice!" God's Word is about, "**Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the worst!**" God's Word is about, "**What a wretched man I am – who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God – through Jesus Christ our Lord.**"

March 8<sup>th</sup> with Jesus' permission will be **Repent: Turn to Jesus; Do not Turn Away!** Don't turn away! That means when little people here are singing Away in a Manger – don't be thinking, "I wonder if my parents bought the right Smart-phone? I bet they got the wrong one! They don't know how to take a selfie with a stick or video anything!" When you go to college – far from old fashioned Watertown – don't look for a spouse in a bar drinking. Look for someone to date – at Church – where they have a common faith in Jesus as their Lord and their God! One of the most precious aspects of going to Church here – is our Trinity Saint Luke's Lutheran Grade School. Before you sit people who have been taught every single subject in the light of God's Word. When I was in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade we moved from near Peoria – to West Chicago – my father picked West Chicago over literally 6 other towns – so we could go to the best Day School. We learned memory work. They didn't call it "memory treasures" back then. The first piece of memory work we had was the 1<sup>st</sup> Psalm – assigned by Mrs. Neumeister. "**1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. <sup>2</sup> But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. <sup>3</sup> And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. <sup>4</sup> The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. <sup>5</sup> Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. <sup>6</sup> For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.**" In our Day School we have faithful instruction in God's Word. Still – 1/4 to 1/3 of 8<sup>th</sup> graders will not be attending Church anywhere – by Labor Day! By the time our children are 18 to 21 years old – literally 1/2 of them will not go to Church anywhere! How then can they hear the Gospel and come to Lord's Supper and grow in faith and share their faith?

Just the other day – we were at the German Market in Chicago. By the grace of God – no one drove a huge truck through the crowds – running us over. But if they did – we would have been home to Heaven for Christmas. We would have been safe by Jesus! We would hear angels

singing, "**Glory to God in the Highest and on earth Peace**"-- for the sake of sins forgiven for Jesus' sake. *That's what Christmas is all about, Charlie Brown!* Amen!