

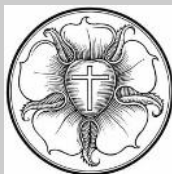
Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk..."

ST. MATTHEW 11: 4 – 5
FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL
FOR GAUDETE-THIRD
SUNDAY IN ADVENT



Inside This Issue

The Light Shines in the Darkness	3
Savior of the Nations, Come	4
Formula of Concord	5
Bible Study	6
Weihnachtsgottesdienst	6
Children's Service	6
Council of Deacons Report	7
Parish Membership	7
Serving at Divine Service	8
Schedule of Divine Liturgies	8



Esprit

Volume 46, Issue 12

December 2019

Word of the Father, Now in Flesh Appearing

by Pastor Sutton

**O come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant!
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold Him, Born the king of angels:
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!**

A blessed and joyful Advent and Christmastide to you all. We have much to celebrate and give thanks for. At the Bethlehem manger is born the Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing! At the Bethlehem manger we "see" with the Shepherds our very salvation, He who is born the Savior, who is Christ, the Lord.

Do you remember that Jesus, in His Sermon on the Mount, teaches that Your Father in heaven feeds the birds of the air, who neither sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns? And that He clothes the lilies of the field, who neither toil nor spin but are arrayed more luxuriously than Solomon in all his glory? If, then, Jesus asks, your Father in heaven feeds the birds and clothes the lilies, how will He not also feed and clothe you when you are worth more than they are?

Advent and Christmas teach you to know that you are worth more than them. You are worth infinitely more. You are worth the price of the eternal Son of God. Did the Son of God come down from heaven and become a lily? Did he descend and take on the form of a bird? No!

He came down from heaven and became a man: flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone. He is one of us: our brother. And what did He do when He became flesh to dwell among us? He gave His holy, precious blood and His innocent suffering and death—that you might be His own and live under Him in His kingdom forever.


**Highest, most holy, Light of Light eternal,
Born of a virgin a mortal He comes;
Son of the Father now in flesh appearing!
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!**


God became man in Christ Jesus. He lived the life we failed to live, and He died the death we deserve because of it. He was raised again on the third day to overcome sin and death—for us. He was crucified for our transgressions and raised for our justification.


Continued on page 2

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Esprit is the informational and educational newsletter of Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Esprit de corps indicates a sense of union and of common interests and responsibilities, as developed among a group. Our community of Immanuel is centered in the Lord Jesus Christ as He comes to us in the Holy Scriptures and the Sacraments.

Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church is an historic and centrally located parish—called, gathered, and strengthened by Christ's Word and Sacraments—confessional in doctrine, evangelical in orientation, orthodox in liturgy, cosmopolitan in membership; serving the Terre Haute community and the students of Indiana State University and Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, and reaching out to the nations since 1858 as a parish of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

(Continued from page 1)

Jesus came to bring us into His kingdom and to give us His righteousness. God's kingdom is His rule among us. His rule among us comes when our Father in heaven gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead godly lives here in time and there in eternity. This is what we ask God to do for us in the prayer Jesus taught us.

We remember as well that Jesus' Father provided for Him an earthly mother and guardian in Mary and Joseph, to care for their Savior and Lord as an infant so tender, so mild. Even as the Heavenly Father gave His Son a house, home, clothing, shoes, etc., so it is good to remember that Your Father in heaven knows what you need too – food and clothing, house and home, etc. – and He promises to give it to you. Our gift giving and extra generosity to our family and friends, and to those in our community who suffer poverty and need, are icons or reflections of the great gift of God's own Son to this fallen world for our salvation.

Sing, then, choirs of angels, choir of Immanuel's saints who gather here: sing in exultation, and sing with all the citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God in the highest! O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord! ✠

DEAR fellow redeemed of Immanuel,

God has blessed us richly with another year of His grace and mercy. Thanks be to God and to you for the Christian call to serve you as the under-shepherd and ambassador for the heaven-born Prince of Peace, the Sun of Righteousness, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a privilege to serve you with His light, life, and healing through Word and Sacrament. On behalf of my family, thank you for your continuing support of the Gospel and your provision for us.

It is my prayer that you will join me and my family this month in faithfully attending all of the many opportunities to hear God's Word and receive the blessed Sacrament, especially as we look ahead to Wednesday Advent Vespers, our annual German Christmas service (December 15), the children's Christmas service (Wednesday, December 18), and Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Divine Services will take place on these days for God to be "with us" – "Immanuel" – for Christ is *light and life to all He brings, risen with healing in His wings*.

Finally, plan ahead to attend on **Monday, January 6**, Epiphany Day Divine Service, at 7pm.

A blessed Advent and Christmastide!

Pastor Sutton ✠

The Light Shines in the Darkness

by Vicar Keller

AS Christmas approaches, you will see many houses decorated with lights, some more elaborately than others. In each home, Christmas trees are being put up, decorated with lights and ornaments. On Christmas Day, as I was growing up, we would wake up early to open presents, with no lighting except that which came from the tree. It was a reminder to us of the Light of the world, who was born on Christmas.

The Gospel reading for Christmas Day is from St. John 1: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The Prologue turns the reader's mind to Genesis 1, the creation narrative. On that first day, God said: "Let there be light." In darkness, nothing is clear. The very definition of darkness is the absence of light. Apart from God, there is no light. Therefore, God illumined the world, and set the sun, moon and the stars to bring light to us.

Isaiah 9.2 reads, "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." Apart from God, there is no light. These people dwelling in darkness were blind in sin. With no light, they could only stumble on the path. Yet, they have seen a great light. This light is Jesus, as we read in St. John 1.4-5: "In Him was life, and the life was

the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." The Word has illumined our way. His light is light that cannot be overcome by darkness.

Yet, some reject Him. John 1.9-11 states, "The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him." This is not a case of the light failing. This is a case of the blind refusing to see. They were comfortable in the ways of darkness. They hated the light, as John 3.20 states, "For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed." The light exposes sin. Those in darkness reject Him.

However, Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (St. John 8.12). In Him, we do not walk in the valley of the shadow of death, but our way is illumined. He is the ultimate fulfillment of Psalm 119.105: "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." He is the light that shone in the darkness, which cannot be overcome.

When you see the lights at Christmas this year, remember that Jesus is the light of the world, in whom there is life. ✕



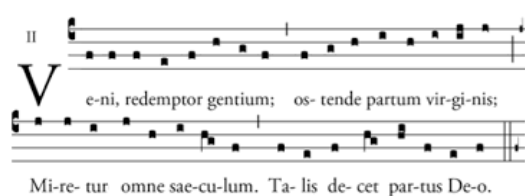
Saint John the Apostle gazes at the cross, as He writes his gospel with His attribute, an eagle, sitting beside Him.

Savior of the Nations, Come

by Kantor Schultz

BY the Spirit of our God, Was the Word of God made flesh!

“Savior of the Nations, Come” (332) is one of the most significant hymns of the ancient church. It is fitting for Advent because of its emphasis on the miracle Christ’s coming in the flesh in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary.



V e-ni, redemptor gentium; os- tende partum vir-gi-nis;
Mi-re- tur omne sae-cu-lum. Ta- lis de- cet par-tus De-o.

Written by St. Ambrose (340-397), in Latin the hymn is *Veni redemptor gentium*. Ambrose was the bishop of Milan. He is known for his opposition to the heresy by Arius that taught that the Son was not equal to and eternal with the Father. In addition to being one of the first four doctors of the church, Ambrose is known as the Father of Western hymnody.



Martin Luther used existing Latin hymns as one of the sources of his own poetry to express the faith through hymns. Luther (1483-1546) translated *Veni, Redemptor Gentium* into German as *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland*. Luther prepared this hymn

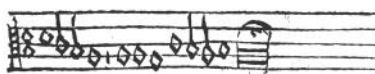
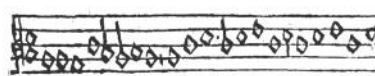
for Advent 1523, and it was included in two of the earliest Lutheran hymnals *Eyn Enchiridion* (Erfurt) and *Geystliche Gesangk Büchleyn* (Wittenberg). The tune was modified by Luther and his kantor, Johann Walter (1496-1570), based on the original plainsong chant tune.

This hymn is so significant to the study of Church history that my professor of early church history, Dr. William Weinrich, began each class of “Church History I” with the singing of this hymn (from *The Lutheran Hymnal* #95), and required us to memorize it for the final examination.

In addition to singing “Savior of the Nations” as the Hymn of the Day for Ad Te Levavi—the First Sunday in Advent, and throughout the season, we will hear several organ settings (BWV 659, 651) of it by J.S. Bach (1685-1750) as the Prelude during the Sundays in Advent.

Bach also set *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland* in two cantatas for Ad Te Levavi (BWV 61, 62) I would encourage you to search for recordings of them on YouTube to listen to as part of your Advent meditation. You can find an interlinear translation of the German and English texts at www.bach-cantatas.com. There are also countless other settings of “Savior of the Nations” by composers both old and new that you will find enjoyable during this season. One I recently discovered is a cantata by George Philipp Telemann (1681-1767). ✕

☪ Hymnus. Veni redemptor gentium.



☪ Nu komm der Heyden heyland-der jungfrawen kynd erkannnd. Das sich wunnder alle welt- Gott solch gepurt yhm befelt.

A Reading from the Epitome of the Formula of Concord for Christmas, on the Two Natures of Christ

VIII. "The Person of Christ;" selections from the "Affirmative Statements:"

1. The divine and human natures in Christ are personally united. So there are not two Christs, one the Son of God and the other the Son of Man. But one and the same person is the Son of God and Son of Man (St. Luke 1.35; Romans 9.5).

2. We believe, teach, and confess that the divine and human natures are not mingled into one substance, nor is one changed into the other. Each keeps its own essential properties, which can never become the properties of the other nature...

5. The two natures are united personally (i.e., in one person). Therefore, we believe, teach, and confess that this union is not the kind of joining together and connection that prevents either nature from having anything in common with the other personally (i.e., because of the personal union). It is not like when two boards are glued together, where neither gives anything to the other or takes anything from the other. But here is described the highest communion that God truly has with the man. From this personal union, the highest and indescribable communion results. There flows everything human that is said and believed about God, and everything divine that is said and believed about the man Christ. The ancient teachers of the Church explained this union and communion of the natures by the illustration of iron glowing with fire, and also by the union of body and soul in man.

6. We believe, teach, and confess that God is man and man is God. This could not be true if the divine and human natures had (in deed and truth) absolutely no communion with each other.

For how could the man, the Son of Mary, in truth be called or be God, or the Son of God the Most High, if His humanity were not personally united with the Son of God? How could He have no real communion (that is, in deed and truth) with the Most High, but only share God's name?

7. So we believe, teach, and confess that Mary conceived and bore not merely a man and no more, but God's true Son. Therefore, she also is rightly called and truly is "the mother of God."

8. We also believe, teach, and confess that it was not a mere man who suffered, died, was buried, descended to hell, rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and was raised to God's majesty and almighty power for us. But it was a man whose human nature has such a profound <close>, indescribable union and communion with God's Son that it is one person with Him.

9. God's Son truly suffered for us. However, He did so according to the attributes of the human nature, which He received into the unity of His divine person and made His own. He did this so that He might be able to suffer and be our High Priest for our reconciliation with God, as it is written in 1 Corinthians 2.8, They "crucified the Lord of glory." And Acts 20.28 says, with God's blood we have been redeemed. ✠

Concordia : The Lutheran Confessions. 2005 (Edited by Paul Timothy McCain) (492-493). St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.

Sunday Adult Bible Study

JOIN us each Sunday at 9am for Adult Bible Study. We begin with the opening in the Nave, and continue with study in the Parish Center. ✘

Coffee Break Bible Study

EACH Wednesday, we pray Matins in the church at 8:30am, followed by Bible study in the Parish Center. ✘

Weihnachtsgottesdienst

IT'S time for our annual Weihnachts-gottesdienst, that is, German Christmas Service, on Sunday, December 15, at 4pm. It has become such an annual event that many people from some distance look forward to this special service conducted in German, the language of our parish's founders. It is a day when we invite the community to join us in a service unique to Terre Haute. We need our members to be hosts and participants. We need donations of deserts for the fellowship time after the service. Of course, if you can make German pastries or cookies, that is better, but we will gladly accept other donations of sweets. Please find ways of helping by hosting, singing in the choir, or simply by attending. As always, we provide an English translation of the service. It is an opportunity to make Immanuel known to those who might not otherwise set foot inside our doors. ✘



Children's Christmas Service Rehearsals

THE Children's Christmas Service is Wednesday, December 18 at 7pm.

Practices for the Christmas program have begun. All children in the catechesis class and younger participate. Speaking parts are being assigned. Please let us know if your child is planning to participate so that parts can be assigned. Youth who are older and would like to participate, please let Karie Sutton know.

The practice schedule is as follows:

December 1: 9-9:15 and 10-10:15am

December 4: 6:15-6:45pm, following the midweek dinner

December 8 Full Rehearsal, Noon-2pm, with lunch served

December 11: 6:15-6:45pm, following the mid-week dinner

December 15: Dress Rehearsal, Noon-2pm with lunch served

Our volunteer leader is Karie Sutton. She can use volunteers to help. Please let her know of your willingness. Any help is appreciated. If you have any questions, please contact her at Karie_Sutton@yahoo.com or 972-922-7276. ✘

Council of Deacons Report

THE November 9 meeting opened with meditation on the Word of God, in which Pastor led a prayer for the parish, and study continued in the Book of Concord.

Pastor Sutton reported membership changes since the last meeting: Ed Browne was to be received by adult confirmation; Jarod and Heather Gibbens, Parker, and Piper will also be received soon by adult/youth confirmation. Pastor also updated the board on other potential new members.

The Council proceeded to discuss the current budgetary situation, and what steps will need to be taken to deal with increasing costs and our offerings. The letter to inform the congregation was approved by the Council and will be sent out shortly. Chairman of the Congregational Assembly Kris Bilyeu reminded the Deacons to write their reports for the annual Congregational Assembly meeting on December 8.

Board Reports:

Education: No report.

Finance: Presented the latest financial summary. Discussed setting up Vanco "Give Plus" app and account for flexible giving to the congregation electronically. Council approved to move forward. This will be shown to the Congregational meeting.

Property and Grounds: Received and showed the Council an appraisal for fixing the striking mechanism for Immanuel's steeple bells. Motion to proceed was tabled. Discussed the HVAC situation in the vicarage, and potentially investigating for the future geothermal and solar panels.

Outreach/Fellowship: Brad Cress reported on the Brat Trot results.

Worship: The Council approved the idea of asking high school young men to serve as ushers.

The next regular meeting of the Council of Deacons is Saturday, December 7, at 7am in the Parish Center. Other communicant members who wish to meet with the Council of Deacons to discuss special concerns, needs, or requests should make arrangements with the Chairman of the Council of Deacons prior to a scheduled meeting. ✕

Immanuel Parish Membership

Profession of Faith:

Ed Browne

Jarod & Heather Gibbens; Parker, Piper

GivePlus Mobile App

GivePlus Mobile from Vanco is a secure way to give generously and cheerfully, anytime, anywhere, to Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church electronically. More info will be shared at the annual Congregational Assembly meeting on December 8, or you may call or email Stacy Gibbens at the Church Office. The app is downloadable to your mobile device via Apple Store or Google Play. Download the app, search for our congregation and all is set up.

GIVE+



DIVINE SERVICE is celebrated every Sunday at 10:30am and on Feast Days as announced.

DIVINE OFFICE: LAUDS (MORNING PRAYER) and **VESPERS** (EVENING PRAYER) are prayed as announced in the weekly *Parish News*.

PRIVATE CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION is offered the third Thursday of the month (December 19) from 5-6pm, or anytime by appointment. Vespers is prayed at 4:30pm prior to Confession.

SUNDAY SCHOOL AND ADULT BIBLE STUDY are at 9am. The Bible Study is studying the book of Hebrews.

UNIVERSITY STUDENT BIBLE STUDY with dinner is Sunday at 5:30pm.

ADULT CHOIR rehearsals are Thursdays from 7-8:30pm, and Sundays from 9:45-10:20am.

"WORSHIP ANEW," produced by Lutheran Media Ministries of Fort Wayne and supported by Immanuel's special gift collection, airs every Sunday morning on WTWO at 8am.

WESTMINSTER BIBLE STUDY meets on the last Friday of the month at 1:30pm except when there is a holiday at the end of the month. All members are invited to attend.

ESPRIT DEADLINE for January/February is Sunday, December 15. Volunteers are needed to help with the mailing on Friday, December 20.

Serving in December at Divine Service

Altar Guild – Faith Fenner; Janet Crucitti

Tellers – Kathy Taylor; Jamie Thomas; Barb Seliger

Ushers – Marvin Gradert; Scot Mullins; Terry Cummings

Acolytes – To be determined

Schedule of Divine Liturgies for December

December 1	Ad Te Levavi – First Sunday in Advent, 10:30am	Divine Service
December 4	Wednesday of Advent I, 7pm	Vespers
December 8	Populus Zion – Second Sunday in Advent, 10:30am	Divine Service
December 11	Wednesday of Advent II, 7pm	Vespers
December 15	Gaudete – Third Sunday in Advent, 10:30am	Divine Service
	German Vespers, 4pm	Weihnachtsgottesdienst
December 18	Wednesday of Advent III, 7pm	Children's Service
December 22	Rorate Coeli – Fourth Sunday in Advent, 10:30am	Divine Service
December 24	(Tues) Nativity of Our Lord – Christmas Eve, 7pm	Divine Service
	Nativity of Our Lord – Christmas Midnight, 11pm	Divine Service
December 25	(Weds) Nativity of Our Lord – Christmas Day, 10:30am	Divine Service
December 29	First Sunday after Christmas, 10:30am	Divine Service