

WE THANK ALL THE PEOPLE WHO CONTRIBUTED POINSETTIAS

2017 POINSETTIAS

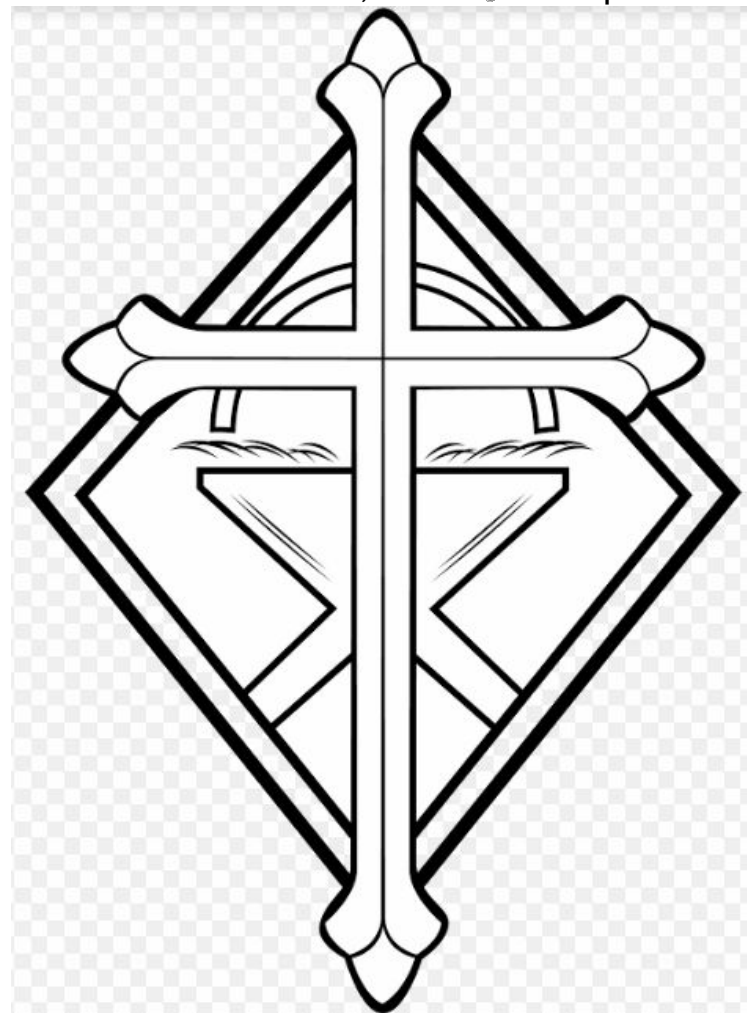
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In Honor or Loving Memory of

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Our Savior Lutheran Church  Lakeland, FL 
The Nativity of Our LORD      Christmas Eve
December 24th, 2017  7:00 pm



Historic Church Year Symbol Set for Christmas Eve or Day: Birth of Jesus

Image courtesy of the Lutheran Synod Publishing <https://lutheransynodpublishing.com>

- 1. As Each Happy Christmas - Dawns on earth again,
Comes the Holy Christ Child - To the hearts of men.**
- 2. Enters with His blessing - Into ev'ry home,
Guides and guards our footsteps - As we go and come.**
- 3. All unknown, beside me - He will ever stand,
And will safely lead me - With His own Right Hand.**

WE WELCOME YOU IN JESUS' NAME! Here at Our Savior we preach and teach Christ crucified, whose suffering and death paid for all our sins and earned for us the gift of everlasting life. If you are visiting with us this morning, please sign the guest book on your way out. We invite you to worship with us again and to make Our Savior Lutheran your church home. – Pastor Burmeister

THE ADVENT WREATH

The Advent wreath is a contribution of the German and Scandinavian traditions. It developed out of the simple use of an evergreen spray of fir, spruce, balsam, or pine placed near the hearth. The wreath is plain, without any ornamentation of ribbon or bow. The evergreen of the wreath represents the life that is found in Christ. The greens have come from the out-of-doors where nature has begun its winter sleep. Midst the drabness of nature the evergreen branch symbolizes the continuation of life. In the home it is placed on a central table. In the church it is usually suspended above the altar or set on a pedestal resting on the floor.

The Advent candles are arranged with the spray. Candles have been used for centuries as the symbol of light. The light reminds us of Christ, the Light of the world, so it is not at all strange that the Christian church has given the candle a prominent place in the observance of Advent.

It is the living light, the living flame that gives the candle its meaning, for the Gospel Light of Christ is itself a living power. This is what makes it more symbolic than artificial lights.

Jesus is the Light that broke forth on the world on that first Christmas when He was born as Prince of Peace. He is the light that gradually penetrated into all the world. The traditional act of lighting one more candle each week of Advent tells of the increasingly brighter light of His Coming, and leads gradually to the blaze of light at the dawning of Christmas.

Here is a listing of prophecies to be read during the **four Sundays of Advent**:

1st Sunday in Advent - Jeremiah 33:14-16; Isaiah 9:1-2

Christ the Branch of Righteousness is promised.

The Prophecy Candle honors those who spoke His promises

2nd Sunday in Advent - Micah 4:1-7, 5:2

Christ will establish His Kingdom of Grace.

The Bethlehem Candle symbolizes the preparations made for Him.

3rd Sunday in Advent - Malachi 3:1-6; Luke 2:20

Christ shall purify His people.

The Shepherds' Candle honors the first to spread the good news.

4th Sunday in Advent - Isaiah 40:1-8; Luke 2:13-14

Christ shall comfort His people.

The Angels' Candle celebrates the joy of God's grace to mankind.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE SERVICE TODAY

Pastor of Our Savior
Accompanist (Organ)
Flowers, Poinsettias
Gift-bags, Handouts

Pastor Andrew Burmeister
Pastor Andrew Burmeister
Our Savior Members
Our Savior Ladies

A LIFE QUOTE FROM LUTHERANS FOR LIFE – “The great joy of Christmas is multiplied when we realize our Savior, at His birth, has already been humbling Himself for nine months because of His unparalleled love for all humanity from the moment of conception.” *Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb, executive director of Lutherans For Life*

Celebrate the Season Joyously!

Step out of the hectic rush and reflect upon our everlasting Hope because a Savior is born to you!

Christmas Eve Family Service

Sunday, December 24, 7:00 p.m.

Christmas Day Festival Service

Monday, December 25, 9:30 a.m.

Christmas -1 Sunday Service

Sunday, December 31, 9:30 a.m.

New Year's Eve Communion Service

Sunday, December 31, 7:00 p.m.

Our Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church

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www.OSLlakeland.org

Office: (863) 859-3400

Rev. Andrew Burmeister, Pastor

Pastor's Cell (863) 430-5859

Organist

- 1) Joy to the world, the LORD is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room
And- Heav'n and nature- sing,
And- Heav'n and nature- sing,
And- Heav'n and nature- sing!
- 2) Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let men their songs employ,
While fields & floods, rocks, hills & plains
Re-peat the sounding- joy... (3 times).
- 3) No more let sins and sorrows grow
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far- as the curse is- found... (3 times).
- 4) HE RULES THE WORLD WITH TRUTH AND GRACE
AND MAKES THE NATIONS PROVE
THE GLORIES OF HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS
AND- WONDERS OF HIS- LOVE
AND- WONDERS OF HIS- LOVE
AND- WONDERS OF HIS- LOVE! A--men



OUR (SAVIOR) WELCOME

Our Savior congregation is so very pleased to have the opportunity to share with you the blessings of its Christ-centered ministry. We welcome you in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ. To the friends who know us, we renew our welcome and to our first time guests we extend it most sincerely.

It is our goal to focus attention on the record of God's gracious accomplishments for our eternal destiny with Him. May the certainty of His mercy help to brighten the week ahead and this whole Holiday Season and to supply you with resolve for living as God's child and heir of eternal life.



THE DIVINE SERVICE

We call our regular Worship the "Divine Service" because it is the service of God to man. This can hardly be more true than in today's service than when we celebrate God's coming into humanity in the person of Jesus Christ. He is true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary to substitute for all men, women, and children and to atone for our sins.

The service follows the pattern of the Lutheran "Chorale" service, in which the main parts of the service take the form of hymns and readings.

THE SERVICE OF PREPARATION

ENTRANCE HYMN *Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful* TLH #102 ADESTE FIDELES

1. Oh, come, all ye faithful, trium-phantly sing;
Come, see in the man-ger our Savior and King
To Bethlehem hasten with joy-ful accord;

*Refrain: O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O COME, LET US ADORE HIM, CHRIST THE LORD!*

2. True Son of the Father, He comes- from the skies;
To-be born of a vir-gin He doth not despise.
To Bethlehem hasten with joy-ful accord;

Refrain: O come, let us adore Him, (3 times), ...CHRIST THE LORD!

3. Hark, hark, to the angels all sing-ing in Heaven,
"To God in the high-est all glory be given!"
To Bethlehem hasten with joy-ful accord;

Refrain: O come, let us adore Him, (3 times), ...CHRIST THE LORD!

4. To Thee, then, O Jesus, this day- of Thy birth
Be glory and hon-or through Heaven and earth,
True Godhead incarnate, omni-potent Word!

*Refrain: O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O COME, LET US ADORE HIM, CHRIST THE LORD!*

The Invocation

P: In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **C: AMEN.**

The **Introit** (*An Intro-duction to what the service is about today.*)

P: The LORD said to Me, You are My Son, this day have I begotten You. The LORD reigns, He is clothed with majesty; the LORD is clothed with strength, with it He has girded Himself.
...from **Psalm 110**

Pastor: **Genesis 3:15 (NIV)**

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 18:18 (NIV)

¹⁸ Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation and all nations on earth will be blessed through him."

Galatians 4:4-5 (NIV)

⁴ But when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.

The **Kyrie** (*Kyrie is Greek for "Lord," eleison is Greek for "have mercy."*)

Pastor: Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison;

Congregation: LORD have mercy, Christ have mercy, LORD have mercy.

KYRIE HYMN Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel TLH #62, verse 1&4

**1. Oh, come, oh, come, Emmanuel, 4. Oh, come, Thou Key of David, come,
And ransom captive Israel, And open wide our heav'nly home,
That mourns in lowly exile here Make safe the way that leads on high
Until the Son of God appear. And close the path to misery.**

**♪ Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel! Shall come to you, O Israel!**

The answer to our cry for mercy: The **Gloria in Excelsis**
(*"Gloria in Excelsis" means "Glory/Honor in the Highest places = Heaven."*)

GLORIA HYMN All Glory Be to God on High TLH #237, verse 1

**1. All glory be to God on high, Who hath our race befriended!
To us no harm shall now come nigh, The strife at last is ended;
God showeth His good Will to men, And Peace shall reign on earth again;
Oh, thank Him for His goodness!**

The **Collect** for the Day (for **Christmas Eve**)
(*The "Collect" is a prayer reflecting the theme of the Day.*)

P: Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come, and help us with Your great
might, that whatever is hindered by our sins may be speedily accomplished
by Your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with
You and the holy Spirit, one true God, now and forever. **C: Amen.**



THE SERVICE OF THE WORD



THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

Isaiah 9:6-7 (NIV)

P: For unto us a Child is Born, unto us a Son is given;
and the government shall be upon His Shoulders,
and He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

SHORT CHRISTMAS EVE MESSAGE Hebrews 1:(1-)-3 "EXPRESS IMAGE: χαρακτηρ"

2 KEY-Words in Hebrews 1:3 that summarize the Christian (Christmas) Gospel.

EVE - Hebrews 1:3 (Greek word) "**Χαρακτηρ**" = Character (English) "**EXPRESS IMAGE**"

(**DAY** - Hebrews 1:3 (Greek word) "**ὑποστάσις**" = Hypostasis (Eng.) "**PERSON, BEING**")



(After MESSAGE)

THE LORD'S PRAYER

(We **All** pray together)

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.

(After LORD'S PRAYER)

THE OFFERING

CONGREGATION NATIVITY HYMN Silent Night TLH #646 STILLE NACHT

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

The **Christmas Collect** (Closing Prayer)

LORD God, heavenly Father, we give thanks to You that of Your mercy
and compassion You caused Your Son to become Incarnate, and through
Him redeemed us from sin and everlasting death: We beseech You,
enlighten our hearts by Your Holy Spirit, that we may ever be thankful for
such grace, and comfort ourselves thereby in all tribulation and temptation,
and at last obtain eternal salvation; through the same, your beloved Son,
Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who lives - and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit,
one true God, now and forever. Amen.

Benediction:

P: The LORD bless us and keep us;
The LORD make His Face shine upon us and be gracious unto us;
The LORD lift up His Countenance upon us and give us peace.

C: AMEN.

Women:

Luke 2:15-20 (KJV)

¹⁵ And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this Thing which is come to pass, which the LORD hath made known unto us. ¹⁶ And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. ¹⁷ And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this Child. ¹⁸ And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. ¹⁹ But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

CHIEF HYMN *Hark, The Herald Angels Sing* TLH #94 MENDELSSOHN

**1. Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"**

**Joyful, all ye nations, rise, Join the triumph of the skies;
With th'angelic host proclaim. "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
*Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King!"***

**2. Christ, by highest heaven 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 incarnate Deity!
Pleased as Man with man to dwell; Jesus, our Immanuel!
*Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King!"***

3. Hail, the Heav'nly Prince of Peace! Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!

**Light and life to all He brings, Risen with healing in His wings.
Mild He leaves His throne on high, Born that man no more may die;
Born to raise the sons of earth; Born to give them second birth.
*Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King!"***

4. Come, Desire of nations, come, Fix in us Thy humble home;

**Oh, to all Thyself impart, Formed in each believing heart!
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
*HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING, "GLORY TO THE NEW-BORN KING!"***

Pastor's Part:

Hebrews 1:1-3 (NIV)

Hebrews 1:1-3 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ² but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, Whom He appointed Heir of all things, and through Whom He made the universe. ³ The Son is the Radiance of God's glory and the Exact Representation of His Being, sustaining all things by His powerful Word. After He had provided purification for sins, He sat down at the Right Hand of the Majesty in Heaven.

✧ 7 ✧

⁷ Of the increase of His government and peace
there will be no end. He will reign
on David's throne and over His Kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.

The Zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

Micah 5:2 (NIV)

² "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 from of old, from ancient times."

The Gradual

(The "Gradual" is an excerpt from Scripture that serves to "graduate" or "move gradually" from the Old Testament Lesson to the New Testament readings.)

**C: Your people will be willing in the day of Your power, in the
beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning. The LORD
said to my LORD, Sit at My right hand, until I make Your
enemies Your footstool. Alleluia! Alleluia! The LORD said to
Me, Thou art My Son, this day have I Begotten You. Alleluia!**

...from Psalm 110



All Read as Noted:

Luke 1:26-37 (NIV)

Pastor: ²⁶ In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

Men:

²⁸ The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The LORD is with you." ²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰ But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. ³¹ You will be with Child and give birth to a Son, and you are to give Him the Name Jesus. ³² 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, ³³ and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; His Kingdom will never end."

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Women:

³⁴ "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" ³⁵ 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. ³⁶ 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. ³⁷ For nothing is impossible with God."

THE EPISTLE LESSON

Pastor: **Philippians 2:5-11 (NIV)**

⁵ Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷ but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a Servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a Man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death - even death on a Cross! ⁹ Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the Name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father.

THE GOSPEL LESSON

Pastor: **Luke 2:1-7 (KJV)**

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. ² (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) ³ And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. ⁴ And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) ⁵ To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with Child. ⁶ And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. ⁷ And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

Men: **Luke 2:8-12 (KJV)**

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

LIGHTING of the CHRIST CANDLE ☆ on the ADVENT WREATH

CRADLE HYMN *Away in a Manger* (NOT in TLH) **ELH #119** *ANONYMOUS*

1. *Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little LORD Jesus laid down His sweet Head.
The stars in the 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 'til 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.*

Pastor: **Luke 2:13 (KJV)**

¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the Heavenly Host praising God, and saying,

All Congregation: **Luke 2:14 (KJV)**

¹⁴ **Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace,
Good will toward men.**



CAROL *Angels We Have Heard on High* (NOT in TLH) *FRENCH CAROL*

Verse singing: **v. 1 All; v. 2 Men; v. 3 Women; v. 4 All (All sing Refrain)**

ALL sing verse 1

MEN sing verse 2

1. *Angels we have heard on high, Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply, Echoing their joyous strains.*
2. *Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be Which inspire your Heav'nly song?*

Refrain ALL: Glo- - -ria, in excelsis Deo; Glo- - -ria, in excelsis Deo.

WOMEN sing verse 3

ALL sing verse 4

3. *Come to Bethlehem and see, Him Whose birth the angels sing,
Come, adore on bended knee, Christ the Lord, the newborn King.*
4. *See, within a manger laid, Jesus, LORD of Heav'n and earth,
Lend your voices, lend your aid To proclaim the Savior's birth!*

Refrain ALL: Glo- - -ria, in excelsis Deo; Glo- - -ria, in excelsis Deo.

CHRISTMAS EVE/DAY Hebrews 1:1-3 "GOD'S IMAGE & PERSON " 12.24/25.17

INTRODUCTION Dear Christian friends, there is probably no other verse in all of Scripture that summarizes the Christian Gospel better than what you just heard, "...being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person and upholding all, things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." (Hebrews. 1:3). **CHRISTMAS EVE – WORD 1: "XCHARACTER"**

It has everything, from the **Incarnation** of Jesus Christ, through His **suffering and death**, and then to His **Resurrection** and **Ascension**.

Today we meditate on the Incarnation part of it, where it says that Jesus is the "**express image of person**." That phrase "*express image of His person*" is actually **two words in Greek**.

The first word, which is translated as "**express image**," is the Greek word that Our English word "**character**" comes directly from this Greek word. For us, a character is a person in a movie or book. **Shakespeare**, as the author of many plays, was brilliant at developing characters. You might say that these characters were the express images of these personalities he had in his mind. **Macbeth** reflected one type of personality. **Hamlet** another, and **Othello** another, as well as the evil characters like **Richard**. These characters are manifestations of a person that Shakespeare's mind is trying to convey.

The same is true in movies. A screenwriter, director, and actor will all work together to bring a character to life, and so we have the Godfather, or **Indiana Jones**, or **Elsa** from "*Frozen*." As an actor brings the 'writer's character to life, so is Jesus, you might say, the realization, the actor, the manifestation of the Father's heart and mind, come in human flesh and blood.

Originally the Greek word "**charaktér**" referred to an **image**, like the **image of a king on a coin**, or the **emperor on a Roman coin**. It was an exact replication of the person it represented. Think about how, in Jesus' day, the image on a coin was the only way most people would actually ever see the emperor. The king or emperor himself was some distant, hidden mystery.

Sort of like God, **God the Father**. Outside of Christ, that's exactly what God is. He's a distant, hidden mystery. But in the Person of Christ, in His Flesh and Blood, you see God, God the Father. As Christ said to Philip, "*He who has seen Me has seen the Father*." (**John 14:9**).

This single truth of the Incarnation marks the **Christian confession as unique among all religions**. You see, most people today and through history have believed in God. But in many ways they're like the people living in Jesus' day, hearing that there was **this Roman emperor out yonder**. They saw the emperor's effects. They saw the Roman roads and the Roman armies. They saw Roman architectural wonders. They knew he was powerful and that his power extended to the furthest reaches of the then known world. But as far as the emperor himself went, **they had no idea who he was or what he was like**. He himself was clouded in a fog of mystery.

So also with how people view God. Because God remains distant, hidden, and shrouded in a cloud of mystery, they are left to their own resources regarding God. They see God's effects, the awesomeness of nature, and **conclude God must be powerful**. They have a sense of right and wrong. Based on such things, most people can come up with some idea of God. They develop a theology.

The **problem is the world is fallen**, so we only know God, as it were, through a fog, a fog tainted by the effects of the Fall. Yes, we see God's effects. But what about the tornadoes and hurricanes, the wars and famines, children dying and poor people starving? So, naturally people will wonder, "**What kind of God is that?**" That's what happens when you try to understand God through a fallen creation and our fallen reason.

Only in Jesus Christ do we receive the exact replica of God, the **Character** of God, the **true image** of Him. So now we're not left to our devices - to a fallen creation or our fallen reason. No, everything we get to know about God is revealed fully - **fully!** - in Him **Who is the express image of God**.

Think about that. **A little baby lying in a manger**, that's your God, the **express image of your God**. He is the one who entered our world by a simple peasant girl. He is the One who humbles Himself and takes the form of a bondservant. He is the One who avails Himself to the sick and sinful, the dead and dying. He is the One Who always placed Himself in the midst of those who prayed, "Lord, have mercy." He is **the One Who submitted to death on the Cross for your sins**. Yes, the Crucified One, that is, the **character**, the **express image**, of your God.

Very often when **people get mad at God, or begin to doubt**, it's because they are grasping at God, as He is shrouded in a fog of mystery, and they're grasping at Him **on their own terms**, with their reason or emotions. They're trying to make sense of God in the context of a fallen world. But when you understand Jesus as the express image of God, **God never fails**. Because, What does it say about God? It says that God in Christ immersed **Himself in our fallen world and even in our own fallen condition, and bore it all the way to the end, so that He could save us from it**.

(CONCLUSION. PART 1) And finally remember that in all the places in this world, or in your own soul, where you might hunt around for an understanding of God's will for you, the one place where you get the dearest picture of God is in that moment when God, through Christ, through His last will and testament, says to you, "This, is My Body broken for you ... This is My Blood shed for your forgiveness;" **That God never fails**. (Dear friends,)

If ever you wonder **Who God is**, or what His Will for you is, or what **He's really thinking about you**, don't go looking at nature, or in your heart; or in your imagination. That god will always come up empty. Look, rather, to the One Who is the Express Image of God's inner being, **Jesus Christ**. That is the **Glory of Christmas**, that in Christ we know exactly what God's thoughts are toward you. And in Christ, we know **those are good thoughts**. **IJ'N, Amen**.

====Christmas DAY=== **CHRISTMAS DAY – WORD 2: “HYPOSTASIS”**

Now let us go to that second word in our epistle.

The second word in the phrase “express image of His person” is the word “person.” The word “person” in the Greek is **hypóstasis**. This is actually a hugely important, and theologically powerful word in the history of doctrine.

It’s from this word that we get the word “**person**,” as when we talk of the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity, or talk about how **Jesus is One Person with two natures, divine and human**. When we talk about Jesus as a personal Savior, it’s from this word. But be careful here. The idea isn’t that Jesus is like my. personal trainer, tailor-made just for me — that’s how the word has been abused — but the idea is that Jesus is truly a person, with will, intellect, mind, and all. the things we think of when we think of personhood.

The original Greek meaning of this word is fascinating.

The basic meaning of hypostasis is “anything that **settles at the bottom**” or “**sediment**.” Another meaning of the word is, “the subject matter of a speech or poem.”

Put together, hypostasis is like the bedrock foundation of something. Think, for example, of what the hypostasis of the **Gettysburg Address** is, or the “**I Have a Dream**” speech. There was something driving these speeches, whether that was the march of freedom or the equal rights of whites and blacks. **Every Christian sermon also has a hypostasis**. The thing driving it is (or *better be*): **Christ and Him Crucified**. It’s the essence of it. It’s the fundamental reality that drives every sermon.

Well, if **God is a speech, or a Word**, What is the thing driving God? What is the underlying state or driving fundamental reality that drives God? What is His essence, or His nature? What is His heart? What is at His bedrock? What is God all about?

Whatever it is, Jesus is the express image of it.

Put it this way: There’s **probably something you each do** that is the perfect replication of who you essentially are. It’s when **you are in your element**. You might do a lot of things that aren’t “really you,” so to speak — maybe you don’t really like driving, or go put in public, or sitting around, or whatever — while then there’s that **one thing** where you are **just in your element**, maybe cooking for others, or building a deck, or crunching numbers, or reading.

Well, **consider God. Whatever it is when He is most** - “in His element” or being most true to His Nature, Jesus is the exact replication of what that is. **Jesus is the fundamental heart of God**. If God is a speech, a Word, then Jesus life, death, Resurrection, ascension, and coming judgment — is the **driving force of that speech**. Jesus is the revelation of God’s inmost being. *“No one has seen God at any time. the only Begotten Son, Who is in the Father, He has declared Him.” (John 1:18 NKJV).*

In The **Wizard of Oz** when the man behind the curtain comes out and is a goof. You see the **true “essence** of the wizard.” **He’s a pipsqueak**.

Not so in the Gospel. When God reveals Himself through His Son, Jesus Christ, we are led to awe when we realize what the true essence of the Lord God Almighty is.

He’s Someone Who, out of a loving desire to restore the fallen creation, assumed our humanity to all eternity, so that He could lift us up, through communion with Christ, to His own Right Hand, restoring us to Paradise. He is **someone Who scoured the depths of the earth** to find these lost sinners, even into the deepest reaches of our sin and abandonment, connecting with us in our cries for mercy. He is someone Who bore our curse and death so that we might live. You can’t know this about God unless you **view Him only through Him crucified**.

CONCLUSION Dear-Christian friends, if ever you wonder Who God is, or what His Will for you is, or what He’s really thinking about you, don’t go looking at nature, or in your heart; or in your imagination. That God will always come up empty. Look, rather, to the One Who is the Express Image of God’s inner being, **Jesus Christ**. That is the glory of Christmas, that in Christ we know exactly what God’s thoughts are toward you. And in Christ, we know **those are good thoughts**. ***IJ’N, Amen. SDG***

SHORT CHRISTMAS EVE/DAY MESSAGE Hebrews 1:3 “**χαρακτηρ & Ὑποστάσις**”

2 KEY-Words in Hebrews 1:3 that summarize the Christian (Christmas) Gospel.

EVE - Hebrews 1:3 (Greek word) “**Χαρακτηρ**” = Character (English) “**EXPRESS IMAGE**”

DAY - Hebrews 1:3 (Greek word) “**Ὑποστάσις**” = Hypostasis (Eng.) “**PERSON, BEING**”



Pastor’s Part:

Hebrews 1:1-3 (NIV)

Hebrews 1:1-3 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2 but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, Whom He appointed Heir of all things, and through Whom He made the universe. 3 **The Son is the Radiance of God's glory and the Exact Representation of His Being, sustaining all things by His powerful Word. After He had provided purification for sins, He sat down at the Right Hand of the Majesty in Heaven.**