

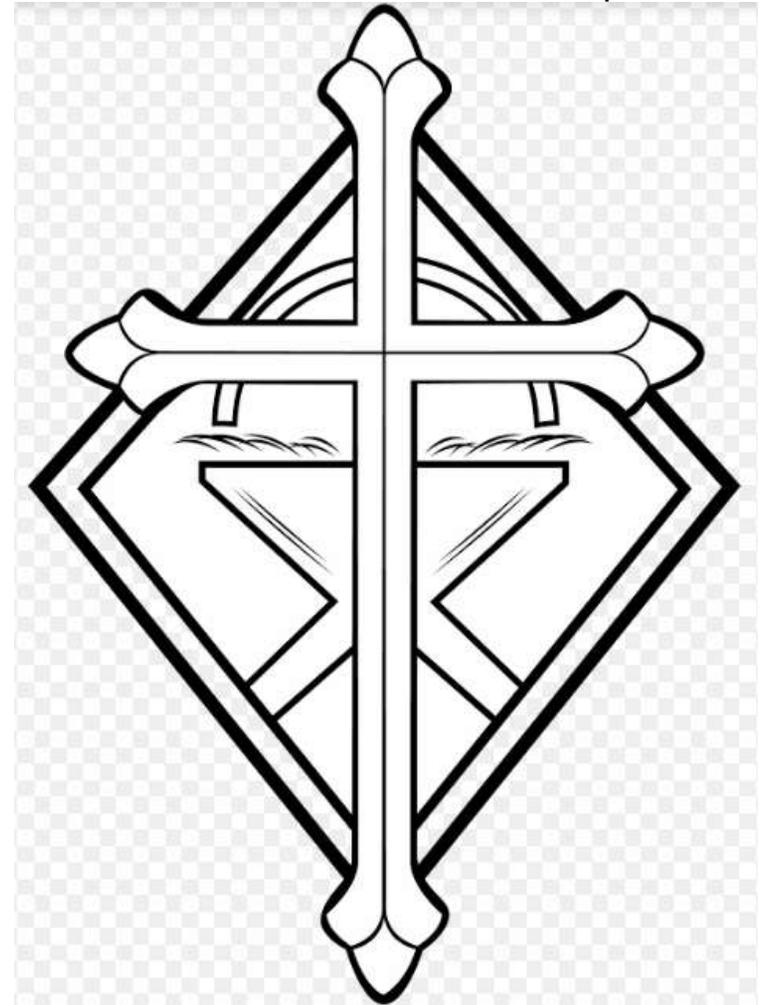
WE THANK ALL THE PEOPLE WHO CONTRIBUTED POINSETTIAS

2017 POINSETTIAS

<u>Contributor/s</u>	<u>In Honor or Loving Memory of</u>
Connie Costenbader	Dolores (mother) & Keith Strohl (brother)
Beverly Foster	Robert (husband) Sue & Barb (daughters)
Elaine Jones	Richard Jones
Mary Lou Knigge	Family
Shirley & DuWayne Marquradt	Dolores & Ruth (sisters)
Don & Carolyn Miner	Kathy Sipple (granddaughter)
Vivian & Tom Temple	Melinda Colp & William Pennock
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Joe Thacker	Kay Thacker (wife)
Steve & Ethel Wendt	Victor Wendt
June Weyenberg	Bob Weyenberg
Don & Bev Wienke	Marcus Wienke
Dave & Pat Wiesenauer	Ed & Betty Bryan, Victor Wiesenauer
Pastor Burmeister	Doris Pankow/Burmeister (mother)



Our Savior Lutheran Church  Lakeland, FL 
The Nativity of Our LORD      Christmas Eve
December 24th, 2018  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
Flowers, Poinsettias
Gift-bags, Handouts

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

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

Christmas Day Festival Service

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

Christmas -1 Sunday Service

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

New Year's Eve Communion Service

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

Our Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church

6920 N Socrum Loop Rd, Lakeland, Florida 33809

www.OSLlakeland.org

Office: (863) 859-3400

Rev. Andrew Burmeister, Pastor

Pastor's Cell (863) 430-5859

(“Organist” Jon Sawyer, Sr.)

- 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.

◇ 3 ◇

SHORT CHRISTMAS EVE MESSAGE Luke 2:1-20 4. "GOD'S FAMILY TREE PRESENTED"

(ADV-1W) **Genesis 3:1-21 1. "GOD'S FAMILY TREE - PLANTED"**

(ADV-2W) **Genesis 12:1-3, 15:1-6 2. "GOD'S FAMILY TREE - PROMISED"**

(ADV-3W) **2Samuel 7:1-17 Isaiah 11:1-10 3. "GOD'S FAMILY TREE - PRUNED"**



(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.

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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:

Luke 2:1-20

SHORT CHRISTMAS EVE MESSAGE Luke 2:1-20 4. "GOD'S FAMILY TREE PRESENTED"

In Galatians 4 St. Paul said: "When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons" (v.4-5). Or, to use our Advent Theme this year of "God's Family Tree," now the Tree comes to full fruition, now God PRESENTS His Family Tree to you. ...

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: ²⁶In 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:

²⁸The 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."

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

**1. Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply,
Echoing their joyous strains.**

MEN sing verse 2

**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

**3. Come to Bethlehem and see,
Him Whose birth the angels sing,
Come, adore on bended knee,
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.**

ALL sing verse 4

**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/C Luke 2:1-20 "GOD'S FAMILY TREE - PRESENTED" 12.24.18

INTRODUCTION

In **Galatians 4 St. Paul** said: "*When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons*" (v.4-5). Or, to use our Advent Theme of "**God's Family Tree**," now the tree comes to full fruition, now God PRESENTS His Family Tree to you. The Seed promised to Eve is **delivered through the blessed Virgin Mary. Abraham** could only trust the Promise of this Seed, but tonight we see that **Promise fulfilled and the world blessed**. And in this little Baby, lying in a manger, God restores the peace and prosperity that King David and his kingdom of Israel merely tasted. Tonight, dear friends and fellow saints, you see that Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, is your tree of life.

The PLANTED Tree PRESENTED:

SEPARATION

Adam and Eve separated themselves and all of humanity from the Tree of Life with God. That's why you and I have heartaches and frustrations, the broken lives and frantic pace of life. We are separated from God, and we try to play gods ourselves. We think that if we just try harder, we can attain the perfect peace that knows no end. But, as we see in all of our Christmas planning and partying, trying harder and harder only leads to more headaches and worries.

IT'S HERE

But tonight God's Family PLANTED Tree becomes His Family Tree **PRESENTED for all to see**. Tonight we see how God answers our frantic, frenzied, frazzled attempts to live without Him. He sends His own Son into the flesh. This little Child, wrapped in swaddling cloths, crushes the head of the satanic serpent and once again unites heaven and earth. As the angels sang to the shepherds, "*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men*" (Luke 2:14). This little Infant comes to graft you back into life with God, and in the Blood that runs through His tiny arteries and veins God gives you His Heavenly peace and goodwill here on earth.

The PROMISED Tree PRESENTED:

WE DOUBT TOO

When **Abraham doubted God's Promise to bless the world** through his family line, he shows us what's in our hearts and minds as well. We see the mess of our lives and the broken pieces of our shattered dreams, and we doubt that God is good or that He loves us and takes care of us. Like Abraham, we try to fabricate our own fulfillments to God's promises. "God wants me to be happy," we say, "so He must want me to healthy, wealthy, and wise."

AWAY WITH (ALL) DOUBTS

But tonight God's Family Tree PROMISED becomes His Family Tree **presented for all to see**. Tonight we see God's answer to our empty promises and our hollow fulfillments.

God promised Abraham that he would be a Blessing to all nations. In the "Little Town of Bethlehem" God's promised Blessing came true. As the angel comforted the frightened shepherds, God also comforts you: "*Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.*" (Luke 2:10-11). This tiny Baby gives new confidence in God's Promises by **forgiving** all doubts.

The PRUNED Tree PRESENTED:

TRUE PEACE

When David rested in the peaceful kingdom that God gave him, he had merely a **foretaste of the peace that Christ would bring**. And Israel found out that earthly peace does not last when they went astray from God and He sent them into exile. Do not look for peace and prosperity on earth. At the very least, earthly peace and prosperity pass away all too quickly, but most of the time they lure you away from trusting your God and Savior. Rather, look for peace and prosperity in the Christ Child, the Child who would grow up, go to a **Cross, suffer and die, and then Rise again** to give you **true peace** with God and His eternal riches of forgiveness and life.

SPROUT OF JESSE

Tonight God's Family Tree PRUNED becomes His Family Tree **presented for all to see**. We see the Root of Jesse sprout forth for all to behold. This little Christ Child is no mere child. He is God in the flesh, "*For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily*" (Colossians 2:9), and He is the One "*In Whom we have Redemption through His Blood, the forgiveness of sins.*" (Colossians 1:14). All of God's peace and heavenly prosperity for you are wrapped up and presented to you this day in this little package, this little Christmas present of divine Flesh and Blood. "*We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" (Romans 5:1).

CONCLUSION

When you look at God's Family Tree, (The "Jesse Tree") you see God's age-old Promises fulfilled. You see God's Seed of a Savior coming to full fruition in Jesus Christ. You see yourself grafted back into life with God. The **hymn stanzas (ELH 302,3-4)** say it well:

**What mercy God showed to our race, - A plan of Rescue by His grace:
In sending One from woman's seed, - The One to fill our greatest need-
For on a tree uplifted high - His only Son for sin would die,
Would drink the cup of scorn and dread - To crush the ancient serpent's head!**

**Now from that tree of Jesus' shame - Flows life eternal in His Name;
For all who trust and will believe, - Salvation's living Fruit receive.
And of this Fruit so pure and sweet - The Lord invites the world to eat,
To find within this Cross of wood - The Tree of Life with ev'ry good.**

IJ'N, Amen. SDG