

where the Christ was to be born. ⁵ They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: ⁶ "And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel." ⁷ Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. ⁸ And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." ⁹ After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. ¹¹ And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. ¹² And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

Behold the Child: To Set You Free from All Your Sorrow

C ♪ Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Your presence, and take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me with Your free Spirit. Amen.

✠ THE OFFERING

LUTHER'S EVENING PRAYER

C In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

BENEDICTION

Num. 6:23-27

P The LORD bless you and keep you; The LORD make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you; The LORD lift up His countenance upon you and give you His peace. **C Amen!**

CLOSING HYMN: TLH #74

"Once He Came in Blessing"

Hymn: TLH #127

"As With Gladness Men of Old"

P In the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P O Lord, open my lips.

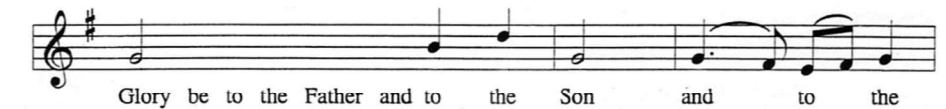


C: And my mouth shall show forth Your praise.

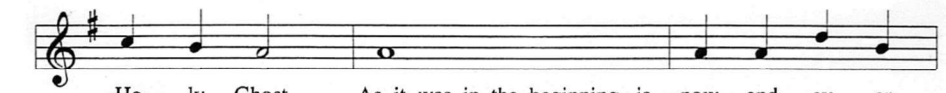
P Make haste, O God, to deliver me.



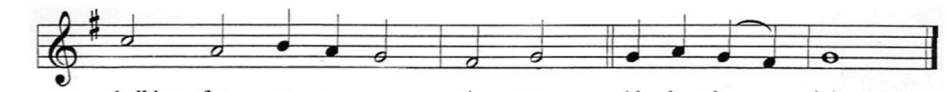
C: Make haste to help me, O Lord.



Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the



Ho - ly Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ev - er



shall be: for - ev - er - more. A - men. Al - le - lu - ia!

CONFESSION OF SINS & ABSOLUTION

P God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but desires that sinners repent, turn from their wicked ways, and live.

C "Teach me, and I will be silent; make me understand how I have gone astray." *Job 6:24*

P "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one." *Rom. 3:10-12*

C "I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight." *Ps. 51:3-4*

P Jesus declared: "I am the resurrection and the Life. He who believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" *John 11:25-26*

C “Yes, we believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.”

John 11: 27

P “The Lord has put away your sin; you shall not die.” “In Jesus we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.”

2 Sam. 12:13; Eph. 1:7

C Thanks be to God!

RESPONSE

Tune of WS #761

C ♪ My soul rejoices, My spirit voices— Sing the greatness of the Lord! For God my Savior Has shown me favor— Sing the greatness of the Lord! With praise and blessing, Join in confessing God, who is solely Mighty and holy— O sing the greatness of God the Lord! His mercy surely Shall rest securely On all who fear Him, Love and revere Him— O sing the greatness of God the Lord!

His arm now baring, His strength declaring— Sing the greatness of the Lord! The proud He scatters, Their rule He shatters— Sing the greatness of the Lord! Oppression halted; The meek exalted. Full are the hungry; Empty, the wealthy— O sing the greatness of God the Lord! Here is the token All that was spoken, To Abr’ham’s offspring God is fulfilling— O sing the greatness of God the Lord!

OLD TESTAMENT READING – Micah 5:2-5 But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days. ³ Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel. ⁴ And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. ⁵ And he shall be their peace.

EPISTLE READING – 1 Peter 1:3-9 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ so that

the tested genuineness of your faith-- more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire-- may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹ obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

CONFESSIO OF FAITH *Luther’s Explanation to the Second Article*

C I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord. He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sin, from death and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy precious blood, and with His innocent suffering and death. He did this that I should be His very own, live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in eternal righteousness, innocence, and joy; just as He is risen from death, lives and reigns in eternity. This is most certainly true.

Hymn: Below

“The Quempas Carol”

C He whom sages, westward faring,
Myrrh and gold and incense bearing,
Humbly worshiped, off’rings sharing,
Judah’s lion reigns this morn!

P “God’s majesty has come to earth
And sent His only Son to you in humankind;
A chosen virgin gave Him birth.
In David’s town the holy infant you will find,
Lying helpless in a manger, poor and bare and lowly,
To set you free from all your sorrow wholly.”

C God’s own Son is born a child, is born a child;
God the Father is reconciled, is reconciled!

SERMON TEXT - Matthew 2:1-12 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, ² saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” ³ When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴ and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them