



St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church & School

(Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod)

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“Look What God’s Love Has Done!”

Come, Your Hearts and Voices Raising CW 362

1 Come, your hearts and voices raising,
Christ the Lord with gladness praising;
loudly sing his love amazing,
 worthy folk of Christendom.

2 Sin and death may well be groaning,
Satan now may well be moaning;
We, our full salvation owning,
 cast our ev’ry care away.

3 See how God, for us providing,
gave his Son and life abiding;
He our weary steps is guiding
 from earth’s woe to heavenly joy.

4 Christ, from heav’n to us descending
and in love our race befriending,
in our need his help extending,
 saved us from the wily foe.

5 Jacob’s Star in all its splendor
beams with comfort sweet and tender,
forcing Satan to surrender,
 breaking all the pow’rs of hell.

Invocation

P: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you:

C: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.

P: If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness,

C: we lie and do not live by the truth.

P: If we claim to be without sin,

C: we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

P: If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just

C: to forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

P: Therefore, let us draw near with true hearts and confess our sins to God our Father:

Confession of Sins

C: Almighty God, merciful Father, I, a troubled and repentant sinner, confess that I have sinned against you in my thoughts, my words, and my actions. I have not loved you with my whole heart; I have not loved others as I should. I am distressed by the sins that trouble me and am deeply sorry for them.

P: St. John says of our God, "This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live by him." He also says, "This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins." Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord.

**6 From the bondage that oppressed us,
from sin's fetters that possessed us,
from the grief that sore distressed us,
we, the captives, now are free.**

**7 Oh, the joy beyond expressing
when by faith we grasp this blessing,
when, O Christ, we come addressing
thanks to you and highest praise!**

**8 Gracious Child, in mercy hear us,
from your lowly manger cheer us,
gently lead us and be near us
till we join th' angelic choir.**

P: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

C: O Lord, my God, I called to you for help, and you answered me. I thank you for the love you have shown me in Jesus Christ, my Savior. Through him you have rescued me from the guilt of my sin and given me the peace of forgiveness. Help me fight against temptation and correct whatever wrongs I can. Help me serve you and those around me with love and good works. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Old Testament Reading Zephaniah 3:14-18

¹⁴Sing out, daughter of Zion!

Shout aloud, Israel!

Be glad and rejoice with all your heart,
you daughter of Jerusalem.

¹⁵The Lord has removed the judgment against you.

He has turned back your enemy.

Israel's king, the Lord, is in your midst!

You no longer need to fear disaster.

¹⁶In that day Jerusalem will be told,

"Do not be afraid, O Zion. Do not give up.

¹⁷The Lord your God is with you as a hero who will save you.

He takes great delight in you.

He will quiet you with his love.

He will rejoice over you with singing."

¹⁸I will bring back those among you who grieve over the loss of the appointed feasts,

those for whom the loss was a burden and a disgrace.

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

O Jesus Christ, Your Manger Is *CW 342 sts. 1, 3-5*

**1 O Jesus Christ, your manger is
my paradise at which I am reclining.**

**For there, O Lord, we find the Word
made flesh for us—your grace is brightly shining.**

**3 Dear Christian friend, on him depend;
be of good cheer and let no sorrow move you.**

**For God's own Child in mercy mild
joins you to him—how greatly God must love you!**

**4 Ponder again what glory then
the Lord will give you for your earthly sadness.**

**The angel host can never boast
of greater glory, greater bliss or gladness.**

**5 The world may hold her wealth and gold;
but you, my heart, keep Christ as your true treasure.**

**To him hold fast until at last
a crown is yours and honor in full measure.**

Gospel Reading John 3:16-21

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. ¹⁹ This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. ²¹ But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God."

P: This is the Gospel of our Lord.

C: Praise be to you, O Christ.

Love Has Come *CW 364*

1 Love has come, a light in the darkness!

Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.

See, all heaven has come to proclaim it;

hear how their song of joy arises:

Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior!

Love! Love! Glory to God on high!

2 Love is born! Come share in the wonder.

Love is God now asleep in the hay.

See the glow in the eyes of his mother;

what is the name her heart is saying?

Love! Love! Love is the name she whispers.

Love! Love! Jesus, Immanuel.

3 Love has come and never will leave us!

Love is life everlasting and free.

Love is Jesus within and among us.

Love is the peace our hearts are seeking.

Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas.

Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

Sermon Text: I John 3:1-3

See the kind of love the Father has given us that we should be called children of God, and that is what we are! The world does not know us, because it did not know him. ²Dear friends, we are children of God now, but what we will be has not yet been revealed. We know that when he is revealed we will be like him, and we will see him as he really is. ³Everyone who has this hope purifies himself, just as Jesus is pure.

Look What God's Love Has Done!

I. It's made us children of God

How Deep the Father's Love for Us CW 523

**1 How deep the Father's love for us, How vast beyond all measure,
That He should give His only Son To make a wretch His treasure.
How great the pain of searing loss, The Father turns His face away
As wounds which mar the Chosen One Bring many sons to glory.**

**2 Behold the Man upon a cross, My sin upon His shoulders.
Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice Call out among the scoffers.
It was my sin that held Him there Until it was accomplished;
His dying breath has brought me life, I know that it is finished.**

**3 I will not boast in anything: No gifts, no power, no wisdom.
But I will boast in Jesus Christ: His death and resurrection.
Why should I gain from His reward? I cannot give an answer.
But this I know with all my heart: His wounds have paid my ransom.**

II. It's made us heirs of God

Joy Has Dawned CW 352

**1 Joy has dawned upon the world, promised from creation—
God's salvation now unfurled, hope for ev'ry nation.
Not with fanfares from above, not with scenes of glory,
but a humble gift of love—Jesus born of Mary.**

2 Sounds of wonder fill the sky with the songs of angels
as the mighty Prince of life shelters in a stable.
Hands that set each star in place, shaped the earth in darkness,
cling now to a mother's breast, vuln'erable and helpless.

3 Shepherds bow before the Lamb, gazing at the glory.
Gifts of men from distant lands prophesy the story:
gold—a king is born today; incense—God is with us;
myrrh—his death will make a way, and by his blood he'll win us.

4 Son of Adam, Son of heav'n, given as a ransom;
reconciling God and man, Christ, our mighty champion!
What a Savior! What a friend! What a glorious myst'ry!
Once a babe in Bethlehem, now the Lord of hist'ry.

III. It's made us imitators of God

God Loves Me Dearly CW 583

1 God loves me dearly, grants me salvation,
God loves me dearly, loves even me.

Refrain: Therefore I'll say again: God loves me dearly,
God loves me dearly, loves even me.

2 I was in slav'ry, sin, death, and darkness;
God's love was working to make me free. [Refrain]

3 He sent forth Jesus, my dear Redeemer,
He sent forth Jesus and set me free. [Refrain]

4 Jesus, my Savior, himself did offer;
Jesus, my Savior, paid all I owed. [Refrain]

5 Now I will praise you, O Love eternal;
Now I will praise you all my life long. [Refrain]

Offering

Prayer

P: Almighty and Merciful God, we thank you for permitting us to hear once again the proclamation of your saving love for sinners which you revealed when you sent your Son, Jesus Christ, to be the Savior of the world.

C: Sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things. His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.

P: Heavenly Father, we thank you for extending to us through your angels the invitation to worship the Christ-child. Move us to invite others we know to worship the Savior with us.

C: I will extol the LORD at all times; his praise will always be on my lips. Glorify the LORD with me, let us exalt his name together.

P: Lord Jesus, we thank you for assuming our humanity and for humbling yourself to serve as our Savior by your life, death, and resurrection. Accept the adoration we bring you today in our hymns, and prayers, and offerings.

C: Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness.

P: Holy Spirit, purify our hearts so that our Savior may dwell in us by faith so that we have the joy of Christmas throughout the year.

C: Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me. Amen.

Blessing

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

C: Amen.

Let Us All with Gladsome Voice CW 332

- 1 Let us all with gladsome voice praise the God of heaven,
who, to bid our hearts rejoice, his own Son has given.**
- 2 To this vale of tears he comes, here to serve in sadness,
that with him in heav'n's fair homes we may reign in gladness.**
- 3 We are rich, for he was poor; is not this a wonder?
Therefore praise God evermore here on earth and yonder.**
- 4 Christ, our Lord and Savior dear, bless us and be near us.
Grant us now a glad new year. Amen, Jesus, hear us.**

