

December 24th, 2020
The Nativity of Our Lord
Christmas Eve Candlelight



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
MISSOURI ~ SYNOD
308 Byrne Street
Smithville, TX 78957
512-237-2108

Pastor Timothy Appel



Welcome to Grace Lutheran Church! We give thanks that our gracious Lord Jesus Christ has gathered us together here for his Divine Service. Today again our Lord comes to serve us and lavish us with his gifts of life, forgiveness, and salvation. Rejoicing in those wonderful gifts, we sing with David in Psalm 84: "How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD of hosts! A day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere."

Thank you for joining us to celebrate **CHRISTMAS**, the birth of the Savior, Jesus Christ. True God has come in our true human flesh to live, die, and rise for us sinners. Tonight's service includes readings and hymns that will help us rejoice and trust in this life-giving news!

Hearing, Ask an usher for one of the wireless hearing assistance units.

A Prayer Before Worship

O Lord, our creator, redeemer, and comforter, as we come together to worship You in spirit and in truth, we humbly pray that You would open our hearts to the preaching of Your Word so that we may repent of our sins, believe in Jesus Christ as our only Savior, and grow in grace and holiness. Hear us for His sake. Amen

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP BELL

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

WELCOME

The congregation gathers in reverent silence.

After the bell has rung the congregation stands and turns to face the processional cross.

Opening Psalmody

Psalm 96

- ¹Oh sing to the LORD a new song;
sing to the LORD, all the earth!
- ²**Sing to the LORD, bless his name;
tell of his salvation from day to day.**
- ³Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous works among all the peoples!
- ⁴**For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised;
he is to be feared above all gods.**
- ⁵For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols,
but the LORD made the heavens.
- ⁶**Splendor and majesty are before him;
strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.**
- ⁷Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength!
- ⁸**Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
bring an offering, and come into his courts!**
- ⁹Worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness;
tremble before him, all the earth!
- ¹⁰**Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns!
Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved;
he will judge the peoples with equity."**
- ¹¹Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;
let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
- ¹²let the field exult, and everything in it!
- Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy
¹³before the LORD, for he comes,
for he comes to judge the earth.**
- He will judge the world in righteousness,
and the peoples in his faithfulness.
- Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Please turn to face the cross as it processes by you during the hymn.

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

1 Hark! The herald angels sing,
 “Glory to the newborn King;
 Peace on earth and mercy mild,
 God and sinners reconciled!”
 Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
 Join the triumph of the skies;
 With the_angelic host proclaim,
 “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”

Refrain Hark! The herald angels sing,
 “Glory to the newborn King!”

2 Christ, by highest heav’n 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_incarinate Deity!
 Pleased as Man with man to dwell,
 Jesus, our Immanuel! *Refrain*

3 Hail, the heav’n-born Prince of Peace!
 Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
 Light and life to all He brings,
 Ris’n with healing in His wings.
 Mild He lays His glory by,
 Born that man no more may die,
 Born to raise the sons of earth,
 Born to give them second birth. *Refrain*

Invocation

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

Opening Versicles

P At evening you shall know that the Lord will come,
C **and in the morning, then you shall see the glory of the Lord.**
P As the bridegroom goes from his chamber,
C **so comes forth the Lord to run His race.**
P The Word was made flesh. Alleluia!
C **He dwelt among us. Alleluia!**
P Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord,
C **God is the Lord; He has showed us His light.**
P Unto us a Child is born. Alleluia!
C **Unto us a Son is given. Alleluia!**
P Unto you is born this day a Savior. Alleluia!
C **He is Christ the Lord. Alleluia!**

Collect of the Day

P The Lord be with you.
C **And also with you.**
P Let us pray.

O God, You make us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Grant that as we joyfully receive Him as our Redeemer, we may with sure confidence behold Him when He comes to be our Judge; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

O Little Town of Bethlehem**LSB 361 sts. 1-2**

1 O little town of Bethlehem,
 How still we see thee lie!
 Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
 The silent stars go by;
 Yet in thy dark streets shineth
 The everlasting light.
 The hopes and fears of all the years
 Are met in thee tonight.

2 For Christ is born of Mary,
 And, gathered all above
 While mortals sleep, the angels keep
 Their watch of wond'ring love.
 O morning stars, together
 Proclaim the holy birth,
 And praises sing to God the king
 And peace to all the earth!

Meditation: "O Little Town of Bethlehem"**Micah 5:2****O Little Town of Bethlehem****LSB 361 sts. 3-4**

3 How silently, how silently
 The wondrous gift is giv'n!
 So God imparts to human hearts
 The blessings of His heav'n.
 No ear may hear His coming;
 But in this world of sin,
 Where meek souls will receive Him, still
 The dear Christ enters in.

4 O holy Child of Bethlehem,
 Descend to us, we pray;
 Cast out our sin, and enter in,
 Be born in us today.
 We hear the Christmas angels
 The great glad tidings tell;
 O come to us, abide with us,
 Our Lord Immanuel!

Readings from God's Word**Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 11:1-10**

The Lord promises a Savior who will crush the devil's head. He will come from the line of Jesse and restore sinful humanity and all creation.

P A reading from Genesis, the third chapter.

¹⁵I will put enmity between you and the woman,
 and between your offspring and her offspring;
 he shall bruise your head,
 and you shall bruise his heel."

A reading from from Isaiah, the eleventh chapter.

¹There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,
 and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

²And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him,
 the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
 the Spirit of counsel and might,
 the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

³And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
 or decide disputes by what his ears hear,

⁴but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
 and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
 and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,

and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
⁵Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist,
and faithfulness the belt of his loins.
⁶The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat,
and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together;
and a little child shall lead them.
⁷The cow and the bear shall graze;
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
⁸The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra,
and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.
⁹They shall not hurt or destroy
in all my holy mountain;
for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.
¹⁰In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall
the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.

P This is the Word of the Lord.
C Thanks be to God.

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

LSB 359

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| <p>1 Lo, how a rose e'er blooming
 From tender stem hath sprung!
 Of Jesse's lineage coming
 As prophets long have sung,
 It came, a flow'ret bright,
 Amid the cold of winter,
 When half-spent was the night.</p> <p>3 This flow'r, whose fragrance tender
 With sweetness fills the air,
 Dispels with glorious splendor
 The darkness ev'rywhere.
 True man, yet very God,
 From sin and death He saves us
 And lightens ev'ry load.</p> | <p>2 Isaiah 'twas foretold it,
 The rose I have in mind;
 With Mary we behold it,
 The virgin mother kind.
 To show God's love aright,
 She bore to us a Savior,
 When half-spent was the night.</p> <p>4 O Savior, child of Mary,
 Who felt our human woe;
 O Savior, King of glory,
 Who dost our weakness know:
 Bring us at length we pray
 To the bright courts of heaven,
 And to the endless day.</p> |
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Readings from God's Word

Isaiah 9:2-7; Micah 5:2

The promised Savior will bring those dwelling in the darkness of sin and death. This Prince of Peace will be born in the humble town of Bethlehem.

P A reading from Isaiah, the ninth chapter.
² 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.
³You have multiplied the nation;
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as they are glad when they divide the spoil.
⁴For the yoke of his burden,
and the staff for his shoulder,
the rod of his oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.
⁵For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult
and every garment rolled in blood
will be burned as fuel for the fire.
⁶For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
⁷Of the increase of his government and of peace
there will be no end,
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,
to establish it and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time forth and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

A reading from Micah, the fifth chapter.

² 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 origin is from of old,
from ancient days.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Gentle Mary Laid Her Child

LSB 374

1 Gentle Mary laid her child
Lowly in a manger;
There He lay, the Undefined,
To the world a stranger.
Such a babe in such a place,
Can He be the Savior?
Ask the saved of all the race
Who have found His favor.

2 Angels sang about His birth,
Wise Men sought and found Him;
Heaven's star shone brightly forth
Glory all around Him.
Shepherds saw the wondrous sight,
Heard the angels singing;
All the plains were lit that night,
All the hills were ringing.

3 Gentle Mary laid her child
Lowly in a manger;
He is still the Undefined
But no more a stranger.
Son of God of humble birth,
Beautiful the story;
Praise His name in all the earth;
Hail the King of glory!

Reading from God's Word

Matthew 1:18-25

The angel announces to Joseph that his betrothed, Mary, is carrying the Savior in her virgin womb by the power of the Holy Spirit. This Son is Jesus and Immanuel: He is God with us to save us from our sins.

P A reading from Matthew, the first chapter.

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²²All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

^{23a}"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall call his name Immanuel"

(which means, God with us). ²⁴When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ²⁵but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

God Loves Me Dearly

LSB 392

1 God loves me dearly,
Grants me salvation,
God loves me dearly,
Loves even me. *Refrain*

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*

4 Jesus, my Savior,
Himself did offer;
Jesus, my Savior,
Paid all I owed. *Refrain*

3 He sent forth Jesus,
My dear Redeemer,
He sent forth Jesus
And set me free. *Refrain*

5 Now I will praise You,
O Love Eternal;
Now I will praise You
All my life long. *Refrain*

Reading from God's Word

Luke 2:1-7

Caesar's census brings Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem. There she gives birth to her firstborn son, the promised Savior, who is humbly wrapped in swaddling cloths and laid in a manger.

P A reading from Luke, the second chapter.

¹In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. ⁶And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

What Child Is This

LSB 370

1 What child is this, who, laid to rest,
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
While shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the king,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,
The babe, the son of Mary!

3 So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh;
Come, peasant, king, to own Him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.
Raise, raise the song on high,
The virgin sings her lullaby;
Joy, joy, for Christ is born,
The babe, the son of Mary!

2 Why lies He in such mean estate
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here
The silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce Him through,
The cross be borne for me, for you;
Hail, hail the Word made flesh,
The babe, the son of Mary!

The angel brings the good news to shepherds that the Christ, the Savior, has been born for them today. The heavenly host joins to praise the newborn Savior.

⁸And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. ¹⁰And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

From Heaven Above to Earth I Come

LSB 358, sts. 1-3

1 "From heav'n above to earth I come
To bear good news to ev'ry home;
Glad tidings of great joy I bring,
Whereof I now will say and sing:

2 "To you this night is born a child
Of Mary, chosen virgin mild;
This little child of lowly birth
Shall be the joy of all the earth.

3 "This is the Christ, our God Most High,
Who hears your sad and bitter cry;
He will Himself your Savior be
From all your sins to set you free.

Reading from God's Word

Luke 2:15-20

The shepherds run and rejoice to see their Savior. Mary treasures all these things in her heart as the shepherds glorify and praise God by sharing the good news.

¹⁵When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

From Heaven Above to Earth I Come**LSB 358, sts. 6-8**

- 6 How glad we'll be to find it so!
Then with the shepherds let us go
To see what God for us has done
In sending us His own dear Son.
- 7 Come here, my friends, lift up your eyes,
And see what in the manger lies.
Who is this child, so young and fair?
It is the Christ Child lying there.
- 8 Welcome to earth, O noble Guest,
Through whom the sinful world is blest!
You came to share my misery
That You might share Your joy with me.

Reading from God's Word**Galatians 4:4-7**

The birth of Jesus at Christmas came about exactly as God has planned. The coming of the Son of God in our humanity makes us sons of God by faith in Him.

P A reading from Galatians, the fourth chapter.

⁴But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁵to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. ⁶And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" ⁷So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

From Heaven Above to Earth I Come**LSB 358, sts. 13-15**

- 13 Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child,
Prepare a bed, soft, undefiled,
A quiet chamber set apart
For You to dwell within my heart.
- 14 My heart for very joy must leap;
My lips no more can silence keep.
I, too, must sing with joyful tongue
That sweetest ancient cradlesong:
- 15 Glory to God in highest heav'n,
Who unto us His Son has giv'n!
While angels sing with pious mirth
A glad new year to all the earth.

The Apostles' Creed

C **I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven**

and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
 From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.
 I believe in the Holy Spirit,
 the holy Christian Church,
 the communion of saints,
 the forgiveness of sins,
 the resurrection of the body,
 and the life † everlasting. Amen.

Litany of Prayer

- P** In peace let us pray to the Lord;
C **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord:
C **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord:
C **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord:
C **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For Matthew, our Synodical President, for Michael, our District President, for all pastors in Christ, for all servants of the Church, and for all the people, let us pray to the Lord:
C **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For Donald our President, for Greg our governor, for Scott our mayor, for all our leaders, for all public servants, for the government and those who protect us, that they may be upheld and strengthened in every good deed, let us pray to the Lord:
C **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For those who work to bring peace, justice, health, and protection in this and every place, let us pray to the Lord:
C **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For those who bring offerings, those who do good works in this congregation, those who toil, those who sing, and all the people here present who await from the Lord great and abundant mercy, let us pray to the Lord:
C **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For favorable weather, for an abundance of the fruits of the earth, and for peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord:
C **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For our deliverance from all affliction, wrath, danger, and need, let us pray to the Lord:
C **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For the faithful who have gone before us and are with Christ, let us give thanks to the Lord:
C **Alleluia!**
- P** Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

Silence for personal prayer.

P Rejoicing in the fellowship of the saints, let us commend ourselves, one another, and our whole lives to Christ, our Lord.

C **To You, O Lord.**

Collect for Peace

P O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works, give to us, Your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey Your commandments and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

P Taught by our Lord and trusting His promises, we are bold to pray:

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.

Our Candlelight Service tonight reminds us that Jesus Christ is the light of the world who has come into the world as our Savior at Christmas. He is the light that no darkness can overcome.

*Following the Lord's Prayer, the lights in the sanctuary will be dimmed. The pastor and acolytes will light their candles from the Christ candle and then pass it into the congregation from the center aisle. **As you pass the light from one person to the next, please keep the lit candle upright and tilt only the unlit candle in order to spill as little wax as possible.***

Litany of Light

P In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. And God said, "Let there be light."

C **And there was light. And God saw that the light was good. (Genesis 1:1, 3)**

P The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;

C **those who dwelt in a land of darkness, on them has light shined. (Isaiah 9:2)**

P The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?

C **The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? (Psalm 27:1)**

P Because of the tender mercy of our God, the sunrise shall visit us from on high

C **to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. (Luke 1:78-79)**

P For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone into our hearts

C to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Cor 4:6)

P The light shines in the darkness,

C and the darkness has not overcome it. (John 1:5)

P Arise, shine, for your light has come,

C and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. (Isaiah 60:1)

P Let us pray.

O God, You make this most holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that as we have known the mysteries of that Light on earth we may also come to the fullness of His joys in heaven; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Sit

Hymn: Silent Night, Holy Night

LSB 363

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|---|--|
| 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 Benediction

P Let us bless the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

P The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the + Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless and preserve you.

C Amen.

(As the service concludes, you are encouraged to pray silently, meditating upon God's love shown to you when Christ came into the world to save you from your sins. As the lights come back on in the sanctuary, please extinguish your candle and leave it in the box in the narthex as you leave tonight.)

The Postlude



LOWLY MANGER & BABE ASLEEP
promise in his hand

OUR CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION CONTINUES! JOIN US
TOMORROW MORNING AT 9:00 AM TO WORSHIP THE
CHRIST CHILD AND RECEIVE GIFTS FROM HIM IN WORD
AND SACRAMENT.

“O COME, LET US ADORE HIM!”