

THE SIGNS OF CHRISTMAS

The background of the entire page is a dark, starry night sky. A bright, glowing light source, likely representing the Star of Bethlehem, is positioned in the upper right quadrant, casting a long, ethereal beam of light down through the sky and onto a dense forest of evergreen trees below. In the lower right corner, a rustic wooden barn is visible, with a warm, golden light emanating from its interior, suggesting a manger scene.

PRESENTED BY
THE CHILDREN OF
PEACE THRU CHRIST
LUTHERAN CHURCH
DECEMBER 24, 2021

PROCESSIONAL:
“Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful”
HYMN 708

Service Introduction:

NARRATOR 1:

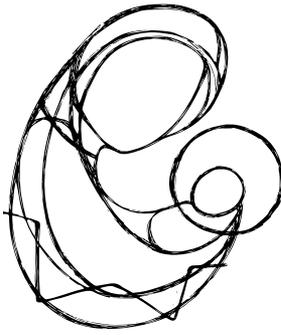
Bells. Christmas trees. Ribbons and bows. Stars. Wreaths. Lights. We see these things all around us, and they all tell us it is Christmastime. You may have many of these items in your homes. Perhaps you have been using an Advent calendar or have a nativity scene set up. There are so many images that remind us of Christmas. But what do they all mean? The church has a rich heritage of symbolism. Look around at our church building and we see many images that surround us. They initially serve as reminders, but upon further inspection they teach us truths about God and His Word.

NARRATOR 2:

Educational psychologists tell us that we learn best if all of our senses are engaged in the learning process. At Christmas we hear the familiar music and the Christmas story, we taste the food, we smell the lit candles, we see the lavish adornments, and greet our family and friends with touching hugs. Our service tonight focuses on how God speaks to us through the many visual symbols that He has given us through the ages to remind us of the history of His people, to instruct us in His plan of salvation, to support our understanding of His truths in His Word, and to beautify our worship.

As we worship tonight, we will take special note of these symbols and signs that we are given, to focus on Christ's birth at Bethlehem.





THE SIGNS OF CHRISTMAS

PART ONE: THE TREE

NARRATOR 1:

The Christmas tree is easily one of the most recognizable symbols of the Christmas season. Some believe that Martin Luther may have been the first to set up an evergreen tree in his home and decorate it with candles. The tree as a symbol for Christmas, however, goes all the way back to the beginning of time when God placed two special trees in the Garden of Eden: the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

NARRATOR 2:

God gave special instructions to Adam and Eve regarding these trees: Don't eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or you will die. One day in the garden, Satan, in the form of a snake, tempted Adam and Eve to eat from this tree. Adam and Eve both ate the fruit from that tree and had to answer to God for their sin. But before God told them of the consequences, He first gave them a promise. This was the first promise of the Savior, who would be born to pay for that sin in the garden as well as the sins of the entire world. This promise was found in God's curse on Satan, who would be defeated by the Savior's death on another tree.

HAILEY ❖ GENESIS 3:15

*“And I will put enmity Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her Seed;
He shall bruise your head,
And you shall bruise His heel.”*

NARRATOR 1:

God’s plan for the Savior is like a red thread woven through the fabric of the Old Testament, reminding believers of the Messiah and His work for them. God used animal sacrifices as special symbols to show that their Savior’s life had to be offered in death for their own in order to rescue them from eternal punishment. He also had them burn incense during their prayers to show them that those prayers did rise to God, like the smoke of the incense, and that He heard their cries for help.

NARRATOR 2:

The Holy Spirit spoke through the prophet Isaiah about another tree. He was speaking of the promised Messiah. But the picture doesn’t stop with a tree. He also speaks of the work the Messiah would do on earth. This Prince of Peace would return His people to the state of perfection that they had in the Garden of Eden.

RESPONSIVE READING

God says in Isaiah 11:1-4, 10

PASTOR: A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;

CONGREGATION: from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.

PASTOR: The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him

CONGREGATION: the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,

PASTOR: the Spirit of counsel and of power,

CONGREGATION: the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord—and He will delight in the fear of the Lord.

PASTOR: He will not judge by what He sees with His eyes,

CONGREGATION: or decide by what He hears with His ears;

PASTOR: but with righteousness He will judge the needy,

CONGREGATION: with justice He will give decisions for the poor of the earth.

PASTOR: He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth;

CONGREGATION: with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked.

PASTOR: In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples;

CONGREGATION: the nations will rally to Him, and His place of rest will be glorious.

NARRATOR I:

The first chapter of the Gospel of Matthew shows how Jesus' family tree grew from the seed of Adam and Eve to its sturdy trunk in Abraham, Jacob, and David, all the way to the branches of Joseph and Mary. In the first chapter of Luke, we hear how Mary, an ordinary young woman, received a visit from an extraordinary messenger.

AYDAN

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David.

RILEY

The virgin's name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!"

CONGREGATION

But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. “And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. “He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. “And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”

EMMALYN ❖ JAYSE ❖ LEVI

*Then Mary said to the angel,
“How can this be, since I do not know a man?”*

CONGREGATION

And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. “Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible.”

HAILEY ❖ LUKE 1:26-38

*Then Mary said, “Behold the maidservant of the Lord!
Let it be to me according to your word.”
And the angel departed from her.*

NARRATOR 2:

Mary rushed to see her cousin Elizabeth and tell her the news. Elizabeth, however, was not the only one to hear this announcement and rejoice.

WOMEN ✪ LUKE 1:41, 42

And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!

NARRATOR 1:

On hearing Mary’s news, Elizabeth was overjoyed. Her unborn son, whom we know as John the Baptist, leaped with delight. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth prophesied. And Mary, whom we have come to think of as quiet and introspective, burst forth in a song of her own.

“Behold, a Tiny Baby!” CHOIR

PART TWO: THE MANGER

NARRATOR 2:

A nativity scene makes a lovely Christmas decoration and reminds us of the true meaning of Christmas. At the center of any nativity scene is a manger, a feedbox. That bed for the Creator of the universe was not the ideal place for a newborn. But it was the perfect start in life for our Savior. It was a picture of the humility that He took on Himself all through His life—a picture of His submission to God’s law and the laws of men.

NARRATOR 1:

The account of Jesus’ birth begins in Luke chapter 2, with Mary and Joseph obeying the law of the Roman emperor that the population of the entire empire should be counted.

CONGREGATION ✠ LUKE 2:1-7

“And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. 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.”



“Away in a Manger”

CHILDREN

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.

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.

NARRATOR 2:

The King of kings and Lord of lords humbled Himself by taking on the form of a human. God be praised that this “riches to rags” story turns into a “rags to riches” story for us sinners. The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, wrote:

MEN ✠ GALATIANS 4:4-7

But 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. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

“Were You There?” CHOIR



PART THREE: THE ANGEL

NARRATOR I:

Scripture speaks of angels throughout its pages. They are God’s messengers. God sent angels to people to announce important news. Angels visited Abraham to tell him that he and his wife, Sarah, would have a baby boy in their old age. The angel Gabriel announced the birth of John to Zecharias and Elizabeth. Later he proclaimed to Mary that she was to be the mother of the Savior. After the birth in the manger, angels made an announcement to shepherds at work in the fields.

CONGREGATION ✠ LUKE 2:8-14

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 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. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

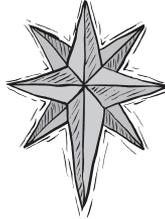
“Joy to the World”

HYMN 87

CONGREGATION ✠ LUKE 2:15-20

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. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”
HYMN 94 (1, 3)



PART FOUR: THE STAR

NARRATOR 2:

Stars seem to appear everywhere at Christmas. You can find them on the tops of Christmas trees, on wrapping paper, cut out as cookies, even in the eyes of children when they hear and recite the Christmas story. Certainly the Christmas lights on houses and the candles in the Advent wreath can remind us of stars too. The Bible’s many references to stars often point to Jesus. God led Abraham outside one night and had him gaze upon the stars.

AYDAN ✠ GENESIS 15:5

*Then He brought him outside and said, “Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.”
And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.”*

NARRATOR 1:

Part of that covenant with Abraham was that the promised Savior would be one of those descendants that God promised him. In the book of Numbers, Moses wrote:

RILEY ❖ NUMBERS 24:17

*“I see Him, but not now;
I behold Him, but not near;
A Star shall come out of Jacob;
A Scepter shall rise out of Israel,*

NARRATOR 2:

We know from the book of Revelation that the star spoken of is Jesus, as Jesus Himself says in the last chapter of Scripture:

MEN ❖ REVELATION 22:16

I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.”

NARRATOR 1:

God put a special star in the sky for Magi from the East to lead them to the newborn Savior. Matthew wrote in his gospel:

CONGREGATION ❖ MATTHEW 2:9-11

When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.



**“God Loves Me Dearly”
CHILDREN/CONGREGATION**

CHILDREN VS. 1:

**God loves me dearly, grants me salvation; God loves me dearly,
loves even me. Therefore I’ll say again: God loves me dearly,
God leaves me dearly, loves even me.**

CONGREGATION VS. 2:

God loves me dearly, grants me salvation; God loves me dearly,
loves even me. Therefore I’ll say again: God loves me dearly, God
leaves me dearly, loves even me.

CHILDREN VS. 3:

**He sent forth Jesus, my dear Redeemer; He sent forth Jesus and
set me free. Therefore I’ll say again: God loves me dearly, God
loves me dearly, loves even me.**

CONGREGATION VS. 4:

Jesus, my Savior, Himself did offer; Jesus, my Savior, paid all I
owed. Therefore I’ll say again: God loves me dearly, God leaves me
dearly, loves even me.

NARRATOR 2:

The apostle Peter wrote in his second letter that we have the word of the prophets, which is certain. The star that the Magi followed is for us too. It directs us to the Scriptures.

WOMEN ✿ 2 PETER 1:19

And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;

NARRATOR 1:

Until that day dawns, when the Morning Star rises for us and all believers and our eyes at last shall see Him, may we, His children, who will be crowned like the stars, sound His praises, not only in this festive season but every day throughout our lives.

**“Once in Royal David’s City”
HYMN 710**

CHRISTMAS PRAYER

THE LORD’S PRAYER

BLESSING:

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

CONGREGATION:

Amen.



RECESSIONAL:
“Silent Night! Holy Night”
HYMN 646

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

Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight!
Glories stream from heaven afar;
Heavenly hosts sing Al-le-lu-ia!
Christ the Savior is born!
Christ the Savior is born!

Silent night, holy night
Son of God, oh, 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



A BLESSED CHRISTMAS TO ALL

who are present this evening. May the joy of the Good News of our Savior's birth remain in your hearts and lives throughout the coming New Year.

THANK YOU

to our two narrators this evening for telling us the Good News of God the Father's perfect gift of His Son to all of mankind. Jesus is the only Savior for all people.

THANK YOU

to our organist Mrs. Karen Schaser; and to Mr. Matt Schaser for formatting this evening's Christmas Eve Booklet

YOU ARE INVITED

to continue your Christmas worship with us tomorrow morning in our Christmas Day Festival of 9 Lessons and Carols at 10:00 a.m. Our Christmas Sermon will be preached on Sunday, December 26th.

PARTICIPANTS:

Pastor: Mark Bernthal

Organist/Pianist: Mrs. Karen Schaser

Levi Schaser: Pre-school

Jayse Hallahan: Pre-school

Emmalyn Schaser: Kindergarten

Riley Hallahan: 4th Grade

Ayden Hallahan: 5th Grade

Hailey Hallahan: 8th Grade

Narrators: John Gerbitz, Josh Gerbitz

Adapted from:

The Signs of Christmas by *Michael Marquardt*

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