

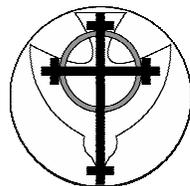
An Advent Tea Celebration

9 December Anno ✠ Domini 2008 ~ 7:00 p.m.

“The Story of the Christmas Tree”



Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church



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Welcome

With great joy, we welcome you ladies to our congregation for our 3rd annual Advent Tea Celebration. It is our goal this evening to provide you with a peaceful, relaxing atmosphere in which you can escape the hustle and bustle of the holiday season for a couple of hours to prayerfully reflect upon the true reason for the season, the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We sincerely hope and pray that your time with us will be blessed, that your lives will be touched, and your faith enlivened, by the message you hear.

About Advent

The word, “Advent,” means “coming,” or “arrival.” It comes from the Latin *adventus*, which signifies the approach of someone of dignity, power, and glory, someone who has the power to bestow favor or exact penalties. The coming of God’s Son, Jesus Christ, is the epitome of such an *adventus*.

The season of Advent, which always begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas day, has a long history within the Christian Church. Like Lent, the season which precedes Easter, Advent is a penitential season in which Christians take stock of their lives, recognize their sinfulness, and realize their desperate need for a Savior. As they examine themselves, they are led to repentance and to joyfully anticipate the coming of the Savior they need in the birth of Jesus Christ. The season of Advent leads up to the grand celebration of the miraculous and glorious event in which God became one of us in the flesh of Jesus to save us from our sins. But, Advent is not only a time for Christians to focus on the glory of Christ’s first coming. It’s also a time for Christians to meditate upon the fact that the same Jesus who was born in Bethlehem, died at Calvary, rose from the tomb on Easter morn, and ascended into heaven, continues to come to them by means of His Holy Word and Sacraments, and will return in great glory on the Last Day to judge the living and the dead. Christians look forward to that great and glorious Day, for it is then that they will be welcomed into their Lord’s eternal and perfect kingdom to enjoy unimaginable peace, joy, and comfort in Paradise. The prayer of Christians throughout the season of Advent, as they prepare for the celebration of Christ’s birth, contemplate how He continues to come today, and anticipate His glorious return on the Last Day, is “Come, Lord Jesus, Come.”

A Word of Welcome and Introduction of Participants

Opening Prayer

- P** Let us pray: Heavenly Father, you have shown Yourself to be faithful to Your promises, for You sent Your Son into our flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior. Quiet our minds this evening and in the days ahead, that we might, in faith, remain focused on the coming of our Savior. Bless our time together tonight, that we may be strengthened and inspired by Your Holy Word and by the fellowship we enjoy with one another. May all that we do and say be to Your glory, honor, and praise; 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 Story of the Christmas Tree, Part 1:

The Origin of the Fir Tree in Christianity

(The story of St. Boniface of Mainz felling the giant oak tree dedicated to Thor)



“O Christmas Tree”

(AHS Chamber Choir)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,
With faithful leaves unchanging;
Not only green in summer's heat,
But also winter's snow and sleet,
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,
With faithful leaves unchanging. | 2. O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,
Of all the trees most lovely;
Each year, you bring to me delight
Gleaming in the Christmas night.
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,
Of all the trees most lovely. |
|--|---|



3. O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,
Your leaves will teach me, also,
That hope and love and faithfulness
Are precious things I can possess.
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,
Your leaves will teach me, also.



The Story of the Christmas Tree, Part 2: The First Christmas Tree?

(The story of the supposed first Christmas tree in Riga, Latvia)



Riga's first Christmas tree in 1510 A.D.

“The Christmas Tree with Its Candles Gleaming”

(AHS Chamber Choir)

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|--|--|
| 1. The Christmas tree, with its candles gleaming,
A glow is kindling in all our hearts.
It speaks of God's pure love-light streaming;
It brings us hope, and joy imparts. | 2. The children stand round the glitt'ring treasure,
Their eyes are sparkling, their spirits bright.
O sweet reminder of love's full measure,
Our shining symbol of heav'nly light! |
|--|--|



3. For ev'ry heart, you offer blessing,
For ev'ry parent as well as child;
For young and old, your beacons beck'ning
Lead us to Jesus, sweet and mild.



The Story of the Christmas Tree, Part 3:

What About Martin Luther?

(The story of Martin Luther's discovery of the Christmas tree)



“Gather Around the Christmas Tree”

(AHS Chamber Choir)

Refrain: Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna, in the highest!

1. Gather around the Christmas tree!
Gather around the Christmas tree!
Ever green have its branches been,
It is king of all the woodland scene;
For Christ, our King, is born today!
His reign shall never pass away.

Refrain



2. Gather around the Christmas tree!
Gather around the Christmas tree!
Once the pride of the mountainside,
Now cut down to grace our Christmas tide:
For Christ from Heav'n to earth came down,
To gain, through death, a nobler crown.

Refrain

3. Gather around the Christmas tree!
Gather around the Christmas tree!
Ev'ry bough has a burden now,
They are gifts of love for us, we trow:
For Christ is born, His love to show,
And give good gifts to men below.

Refrain



The Story of the Christmas Tree, Part 4:

The Christmas Tree in England and Colonial America

(Early accounts of how the Christmas tree was introduced to England and America)



“You Green and Glittering Tree, Good Day”

(AHS Chamber Choir)

1. You green and glittering tree, good day!
With joy and gladness we hail your coming;
Be-decked with candles and spangles gay,
Your top-most star is as sunlight dawning!
Our hearts' reminder, of Heaven's splendor,
Our hearts' reminder of Heaven's splendor,
And God's great love, and God's great love.



2. When Jesus came to the earth that day,
The largest star in the sky He lighted;
He gave a beacon to show the way
To ev'ry soul, His salvation plighted.
Above Him singing, the angels winging,
Above Him singing, the angels winging,
O'er Bethlehem, o'er Bethlehem.

3. Oft-times at evening in our old home,
Our dearest Mother would tell the story
Of Jesus' love, and His words sublime –
The mem'ry fills our hearts with glory.
The tree in splendor our hearts' reminder,
The tree in splendor our hearts' reminder
Of God's great love, of God's great love.



The Story of the Christmas Tree, Part 5: The Popularization of the Christmas Tree in Modern Times *(How the Christmas tree became a holiday tradition)*



A Christmas tree in the home



National Christmas Tree—Wash. D.C.



Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree—New York

“The Holly and the Ivy” *(AHS Chamber Choir)*

Refrain: The rising of the sun and the running of the deer, The playing of the merry organ, Sweet singing in the choir.

1. The holly and the ivy,
When they are both full grown,
Of all the trees that are in the world,
The holly bears the crown:

Refrain

2. The holly bears a blossom,
As white as lilly flow’r,
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ,
To be our dear dear Savior:

Refrain

3. The holly bears a berry,
As red as any blood,
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ,
To do poor sinners good:

Refrain

4. The holly bears a prickle,
As sharp as any thorn,
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ,
On Christmas day in the morn:

Refrain

5. The holly bears a bark,
As bitter as the gall,
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ,
For to redeem us all:

Refrain

6. The holly and the ivy,
When they are both full grown,
Of all the trees that are in the wood,
The holly bears the crown:

Refrain



The Story of the Christmas Tree, Part 6:

Yeah, But What Does It All Mean?

(The meaning and symbolism of the Christmas tree for our Christian faith)



The Christmas Tree



“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

(AHS Chamber Choir)

1. O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice, Rejoice, Emmanuel
Shall come to Thee, O Israel.
2. O come, Thou Dayspring, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice, Rejoice, Emmanuel
Shall come to Thee, O Israel.
3. O come, Thou Key of David, come,
And open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.
Rejoice, Rejoice, Emmanuel
Shall come to Thee, O Israel.

The Lighting of the Table Candles

The table hostesses light their individual candles from the light of the Christ Candle and then light their table candles. After all of the table candles have been lit, the lights will be turned down and we will pray:

- P** Let us pray: O God, because you once caused that holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light, grant that we who have known the mystery of that Light here on earth may come to the full measure of its joys in heaven; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** Amen.

A Time for Dessert and Fellowship

May the Lord bless the time you spend together at your tables. Sit back, relax, and enjoy the delicious dessert your hostess has prepared for you. The men will be around to fill your cups with your beverage of choice. Guitarist Roger Humphrey will entertain you.



Prayer of Thanksgiving

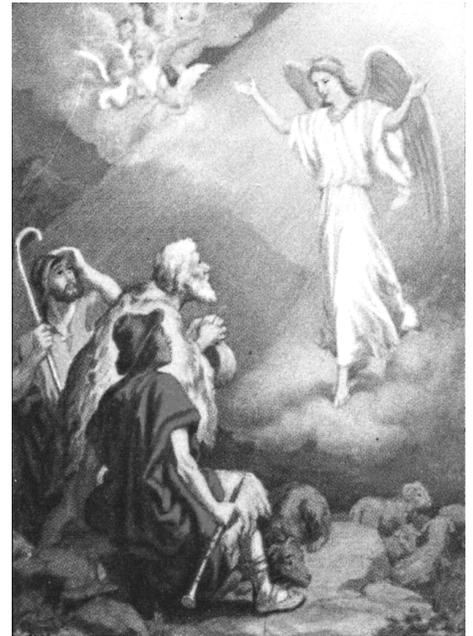
- P** Let us pray: Heavenly Father, God of all grace, govern our hearts that we may never forget Your blessings but steadfastly thank and praise You for all Your goodness in this life until, with all Your saints, we praise You eternally in Your heavenly kingdom. We thank you especially for the blessing of Your presence among us, for the fellowship we have shared, and for preparing our hearts for the coming of Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, in whose Name we pray.
- C** Amen.

“Angels We Have Heard on High”

(Sung by All)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply,
Echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Gloria in excelsis Deo. | 2. Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heav'nly song?
Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Gloria in excelsis Deo. |
|--|--|

3. Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Gloria in excelsis Deo.



“O Rejoice, Ye Christians, Loudly”

By Christian Keimann (Read by Sharyn Greening)

*O rejoice, ye Christians, loudly,
For our joy has now begun;
Wondrous things our God has done.
Tell abroad His goodness proudly,
Who our race has honored thus,
That He deigns to dwell with us.*

*Joy, O joy, beyond all gladness,
Christ has done away with sadness!
Hence, all sorrow and repining,
For the Sun of Grace is shining!*

*See, my soul, thy Savior chooses
Weakness here and poverty;
In such love He comes to thee.
Neither crib nor cross refuses;
All He suffers for thy good
To redeem thee by His blood.*

*Joy, O joy, beyond all gladness,
Christ has done away with sadness!
Hence, all sorrow and repining,
For the Sun of Grace is shining!*

*Lord, how shall I thank Thee rightly?
I acknowledge that by Thee
I am saved eternally.
Let me not forget it lightly,
But to Thee at all times cleave
And my heart true peace receive.*

*Joy, O joy, beyond all gladness,
Christ has done away with sadness!
Hence, all sorrow and repining,
For the Sun of Grace is shining!*

*Jesus, guard and guide Thy members,
Fill them with Thy boundless grace,
Hear their prayers in every place.
Fan to flame faith's glowing embers;
Grant all Christians, far and near,
Holy peace, a glad new year!*

*Joy, O joy, beyond all gladness,
Christ has done away with sadness!
Hence, all sorrow and repining,
For the Sun of Grace is shining!*

“God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen”

(AHS Chamber Choir)

1. God rest you merry, gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
Remember Christ our Savior
Was born on Christmas Day;
To save us all from Satan's pow'r
When we were gone astray.
O tidings of comfort and joy,
comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy.



2. In Bethlehem, in Jewry,
This blessed Babe was born,
And laid within a manger
Upon this blessed morn;
The which His Mother Mary,
Did nothing take in scorn.
O tidings of comfort and joy,
comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy.

3. From God our heav'nly Father,
A blessed Angel came;
And unto certain shepherds
Brought tidings of the same;
How that in Bethlehem was born
The Son of God by Name.
O tidings of comfort and joy,
comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy.

“Don't Forget Jesus”

By M.S. Lowndes (Read by Sharyn Greening)

*Christmas is a special time
To reflect on Jesus Christ
The wonder of His lowly birth
Brings meaning to our lives*

*There really is no other reason
We celebrate this day
The birth of God's precious Son
And the life He willingly gave*

*But so much seems to distract us
In the busy-ness of our lives
We lose our focus in all the happenings
Not knowing, we leave out Christ*

*We lose sight of the true meaning
As we endlessly rush about
Trying to find that perfect gift
Seems to cloud our Savior out*

*We need to stop and reflect awhile
Remembering our precious Lord
His birth, His life, and sacrifice
And all that He stands for*

*For though the world may celebrate
It seems tough for other reasons
Let's keep in mind that Jesus Christ
Is the true meaning of the season*

✠ Jesus is the Reason for the Season ✠

“Joy to the World”

(Sung by All)



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 heav'n and nature sing.
2. Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let men their songs employ,
While fields and floods,
Rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
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,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as the curse is found.
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, wonders of His love.

Prayer for Preparation

P Let us pray: Most merciful God, You gave Your eternal Word to become incarnate of the pure Virgin. Grant Your people grace to put away fleshly desires and to not get side-tracked by the busy nature of the world in which we live, that we may remain steadfast in the one, true faith, and that we may ever stand ready for Your holy visitation; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

“Silent Night, Holy Night”

(Sung by All)

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,
Heavenly hosts sing, Alleluia!
Christ, the Savior, is born!
Christ, the Savior, is born!

(Stanza 3 sung without piano)

3. Silent night, holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from your holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth



Concluding Collect

P Let us pray: O God, as You make us glad by the yearly festival of the birth of Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, grant that we, who joyfully receive Him as our Redeemer, may with sure confidence behold Him when He comes to be our Judge. Until that great and glorious Day, keep us, O God, in the faith and use us as Your instruments in this dead and dying world to share Your Gospel and spread Your love that others might know the salvation accomplished by Your Son; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

The Blessing

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

C Amen.



“Go Tell It on the Mountain”

(Sung by All)

Refrain:

Go tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and everywhere;
Go tell it on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born!



1. While shepherds kept their watching
O'er silent flocks by night,
Behold, throughout the heavens
There shone a holy light. *(Refrain)*

2. The shepherds feared and trembled
When lo, above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus
That hailed the Savior's birth. *(Refrain)*

3. Down in a lonely manger
The humble Christ was born;
And God sent us salvation
That blessed Christmas morn. *(Refrain)*



Soli Deo Gloria!

(To God alone be the Glory!)

WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US FOR SERVICE!

We gather together every Sunday morning at **9:30 a.m.** for **Divine Service**.
A time of **fellowship** with coffee, juice, and snacks follows Service each Sunday.

Adult Bible Study and **Sunday School** every Sunday at **11:00 a.m.**

Upcoming Advent and Christmas Schedule:

Wednesday Evening **Advent Services** at **7:00 p.m.** on December 10, 17

Christmas Eve - **Service of Lessons and Carols** at **7:00 p.m.**

Christmas Eve (Day) - **Midnight Mass** at **11:30 p.m.**

We would love to have you join us some time!



Special Thanks to:

Ms. Georgia Fisher, B.A., M.A.

Georgia is currently in her seventh year teaching at Alma Public Schools as the Vocal Music Director. In 2002, she graduated with honors, and earned a Bachelor of Music Education degree, from Alma College. As a college student, she performed and toured across the country with the prestigious Alma Choir. Georgia has performed with many outstanding choral ensembles including the University of Michigan Honors and Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp International Touring Choir. She has gone on to earn a Master of Music Education degree from Central Michigan University, and received the honor of her lifetime when she was nominated a couple of years ago for "Woman of the Year" by the Alma Area Business Professional Women's Organization. While Georgia is a talented performer, her true love is teaching. She believes that every student has musical ability to contribute and is confident that every student can benefit from music. We are thrilled that Georgia graciously took time out of her busy schedule to bless us with leading the Alma High School Chamber Choir in entertaining us this evening.

Alma High School Chamber Choir

The Chamber Singers are Alma High School's premier performing ensemble. They consistently earn first division ratings at district and state choral competitions, are frequently invited to perform at local community events, lead Alma High School athletic fans in the National Anthem, and are always the highlight of Alma's music department concerts. These fourteen girls (ten of which join us this evening: Morgan Anthony, Amber Carter, Charity Cool, Devin Glover, Jordan Henry, Sarah Kimmel, Sarah Messer, Katie Miller, Joslyn Potter, Sage Wimmer) have a love for music and a love for sharing music. We are overjoyed that these ladies have agreed to take part in our program this evening, and we thank them for doing so.

Welcome and Introductions:

Lisa Messer

Minister:

Rev. Thomas C. Messer, Pastor

Pianist:

Mary Jakolat

Guitarist:

Roger Humphrey

Reader:

Sharyn Greening

Advent Tea Committee:

Gretchen Harrison

Lisa Messer

Lois Ramsey

Dorothy Trgina

Table Hostesses:

Megan Brown/Kim Greening

Andrea Elliott

Gretchen Harrison/Sharyn Greening

Cheryl Henry

Carolyn Johnson

Coaline Luplow

Lisa Messer

Marlene Miller/Charlotte Dargie

Dorothy Trgina

Carol Zeile

Choir Table (decorated by Cheryl Henry)

Parking Attendants and Servers:

Chris Brown Pastor Messer

Larry Elliott Gary Miller

Vern Jakolat Miguel Ortiz

Terry Luplow Dave Zeile