

I Spy a Sign for You

In the children's "I Spy" hidden object picture book series, each page is a close-up photograph of an intricately arranged world. A rhyming riddle tells what we get to find: particular objects hidden in plain sight. No further clues are given; we can only look deeper into the picture. Things like thimbles and pine cones become catalysts for wonder, the extraordinary hiding in the ordinary.

That is Christmas: holiness concealed in the everyday. What we search for is not distant but right in front of us. Our "riddle" is a deceptively simple story:

I spy an empire taking count for greed,
and travel forced upon people in need.
I spy a woman in maternity gown
and her fiancé returning to ancestral town.

The deeper we look, the more we see. Crowded together, just as in an I Spy photograph, are Caesar Augustus and one poor unmarried couple. Also Judea and Rome. Shepherds and angels. Heaven and earth. A stable and glory. God and human flesh. An angel says, "This will be a sign for you. You will find . . ." (Luke 2:12).

Just as the combination of lots of close-up little things and rhyming riddles coaxes kids to play I Spy, so the promise of a sign to be found and the beauty of the angels' song summons the shepherds' response. The artistry of the story appeals to our imagination, each word the careful, bright brushstroke of a deceptively small, simple painting, the words creating a music of their own. Enchanted, we too go to Bethlehem to see this thing which the Lord has made known. We imagine the world as it could be: poor lifted up, hungry filled with good things, peace and good will among all. We practice for such a realm by learning to find where it is already: hidden, in plain sight.

I spy a child lying in hay
wrapped in cloth, born for you this day.

Nativity of Our Lord: Christmas Eve
Saturday, December 24, 2017, 4:00 pm
Holy Communion

Introduction to the day

On a long winter evening we gather to proclaim the coming of the light. Isaiah announces that the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Paul reminds us that the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all. In the familiar account of Christ's birth, the evening sky is bright with the heavenly host singing, "Glory to God in the highest." Amid our broken world we proclaim that the prince of peace is born among us. God comes to us in human flesh—in Christ's body and blood—so that we may be bearers of divine light to all the world.

If hearing assistance is needed, please ask an usher for a personal PA receiver.

The ushers also have large print copies of today's worship folder available.

If it will be difficult for you to stand along with the congregation during any part of the worship service, please feel free to remain seated.

There is a nursery available during the worship service for those who wish to use it. It is located at the end of the hall beyond the coat racks.

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

"A Christmas Piano Kaleidoscope"

*We cordially greet all who have come to worship today.
Please register your attendance and join us in fellowship after the service.*

PRELUDE

The pre-service music signals the beginning of the worship service. Silence during the pre-service music enables worshippers to prepare for worship through quiet meditation.

"O Come All Ye Faithful"

arr. Burkhardt

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

The assembly stands

GATHERING SONG

O Come, All Ye Faithful

ELW #283

Please use the hymnal in your seat.

GREETING

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

And also with you.

HYMN OF PRAISE

Angels We Have Heard on High

ELW #289

Please use the hymnal in your seat.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

The assembly is seated.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 9:2-7

This poem promises deliverance from Assyrian oppression, a hope based on the birth of a royal child with a name full of promise. While Judah's king will practice justice and righteousness, the real basis for faith lies in God's passion for the people: The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this!

A reading from Isaiah.

²The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.

³You have multiplied the nation,
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.

⁴For the yoke of their burden,
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors
and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

⁶For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.

He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Word of God, word of life.

The assembly responds:

Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING: Titus 2:11-14

The appearance of God's grace in Jesus Christ brings salvation for all humanity. Consequently, in the present we live wisely and justly while also anticipating the hope of our Savior's final appearance.

A reading from Titus.

¹¹The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all,
¹²training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly,
¹³while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. ¹⁴He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

Word of God, word of life.

The assembly responds:

Thanks be to God.

The assembly stands to welcome the gospel

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Go Tell It on the Mountain

ELW #290

Please use the hymnal in your seat.

The assembly is seated

GOSPEL: Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]

God's greatest gift comes as a baby in a manger. Angels announce the "good news of great joy" and proclaim God's blessing of peace.

The holy gospel according to Luke.

¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to

her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

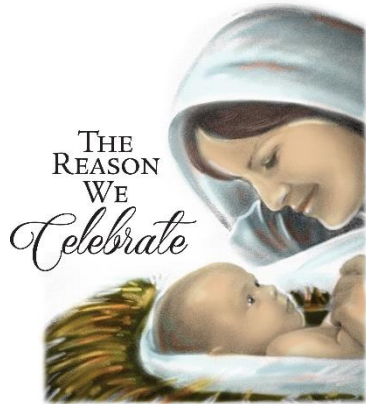
¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.]

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

The children are invited to come forward for the Christmas story as told from the Spark Story Bible.



The assembly stands to proclaim the word of God in song.

HYMN OF THE DAY

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

ELW #270

CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

This night the eternal Word of God is born in us. We pray for Christ's light of life to take flesh in the church, the creation, and all people of God.

*Prayers of intercession are prayed.
To each petition, the assembly responds:*

Lord, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

*The presiding minister concludes the
prayers, and the assembly responds:*

Into your outstretched arms, O God, we commend ourselves and all for whom we pray, trusting in Jesus Christ, the light and life of the world. **Amen.**

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace, and may say, "Peace be with you," or similar words.

The assembly is seated.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

OFFERING

"Mary, Did You Know?"

(Greene/Lowry)

Chris & Paige Lewis, duet

OFFERING PRAYER

God with us:

You came as a baby to a manger.

You slept on straw and greeted shepherds.

You come again in bread and wine.

Remind us how good you are at blessing ordinary things.

And then, through these gifts,

help us to bless the lives of others

in the strength of your holy name.

Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

To the tune of "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

The Lord be with you,
And with you, his servant.

O, Come let us lift our hearts unto the Lord.

With hearts uplifted thanks to Him we render:

With joy we come before Him, in gratefulness implore Him,

With thankful hearts adore Him Evermore!

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ.

In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh
you have opened the eyes of faith

to a new and radiant vision of your glory,

that, beholding the God made visible,

we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see.

And so, with all the choirs of angels,

with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,

we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

To the tune of "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord!

God of hosts, by all adored!

Heav'n and earth cannot contain

All the glory of your name!

Hail, hosanna, God most high!

Blest is He who now draw nigh

in the name of God the King!

Hallelujahs glad we sing:

Hail, hosanna! Praises due

be forever, Lord, to you!



THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy God, Creator of all and Source of life, at the birth of time your word brought light into the world. In the fullness of time, you sent your Word, born of Mary, to shine in our darkness and to make us your daughters and sons.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his birth and life among us, his death and resurrection, we await his coming again when all things will be restored in him.

By your Spirit bless us and this bread and cup, that, held and nourished by you, we may live as your children, shining with the light of your Son.

Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever.

Amen



LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom
and teach us to pray.

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Joy to the world! The Lord is come.
Let every heart receive your Savior.
The assembly is seated

COMMUNION

When giving the bread and cup, the communion ministers say

The body of Christ, given for you.
The blood of Christ, shed for you.
and each person may respond
Amen.

WE WELCOME ALL GUESTS worshiping with us today and invite all baptized Christians to come to the Lord's table. Children who have not yet received First Communion instruction are invited to come forward with their families to receive a blessing. There will be one chalice (cup) of wine, as well trays of individual cups. In the center of each tray, there are a few glasses filled with white grape juice for those who prefer juice rather than wine.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

“Hark, the Herald Angels Sing”

Juliana Lewis, trumpet

(traditional)

CONGREGATIONAL SONG

Away in a Manger

Please use the hymnal in your seat.

ELW #277

CONGREGATIONAL SONG

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Please use the hymnal in your seat.

ELW #279

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ
Strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Amen

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray.

On this day, O God, you gave us
Christ the Son to save us.

As you sent the one foretold,
send us now with good news for all people.

Let the gladness of this feast have no end
as we share with others the joy that fills us;
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

The assembly is seated



LIGHTING OF THE CHRISTMAS CANDLES



Candlelight
Service

*The Fire Marshall
has asked that
children age 6 and
under do not hold
candles
independently.*

The assembly stands



Silent Night, Holy Night!

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht!

Stil - le Nacht, hei - li - ge Nacht! Al - les schläft,
 1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm,
 2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake
 3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God,

ein - sam wacht nur das trau - te, hoch - hei - li - ge Paar.
 all is bright round yon vir - gin moth - er and child.
 at the sight; glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far,
 love's pure light ra - diant beams from your ho - ly face,

Hol - der Kna - be im lok - ki - gen Haar, schlaf in himm - li - scher
 Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and mild, sleep in heav - en - ly
 heav'n - ly hosts . . . sing, al - le - lu - ia! Christ, the Sav - ior, is
 with the dawn of re - deem - ing grace, Je - sus, Lord, at your

Ruh, schlaf in himm - li - scher Ruh.
 peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
 born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is
 birth, Je - sus, Lord, at your birth.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Word that Mary brought to birth
carry into new and abundant life.

Amen

May the Word that Joseph cradled in
his arms enfold you with love and strength.

Amen

May the Word that angels proclaimed
in song bring harmony to our world.

Amen

And the blessing of almighty God,
the Father, ✝ Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you and remain with you always.

Amen

CLOSING HYMN

Joy to the World

ELW #267

Please use the hymnal in your seat.

DISMISSAL

Glory to God in the highest!

Peace to God's people on earth!

Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

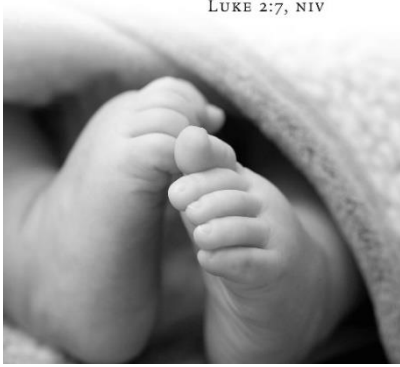
“Christians be Joyful” (Christmas Oratorio)

Bach, arr. Ritter

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of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

*She wrapped him
in cloths and placed
him in a manger...*

LUKE 2:7, NIV



Welcome, one and all, to
Christmas Eve worship!
May you be touched
tonight not only by the
sweetness of the Babe of
Bethlehem but by the
profound love of God the
Father and the miracle-
working power of the Holy
Spirit.

Sunday Education Hour Resumes January 7th
Sunday Worship

9:00 am
10:00 am

Pastor	Ellen Schoepf	prellen@faithlutheranokemos.org
Secretary	Katie Love	klove@faithlutheranokemos.org
Director of Christian Education		Katie Love
Director of Music		Debra Borton-McDonough
Organist/Pianist		Bruce Williams

Serving Faith Today

Acolyte	Griffin Ransom
Altar Care	Keren Whitmeyer, Heidi Bowers & Brielle Bowers
Greeters	Marla Holle
Lay Assistant	Jim Crum
Reader	Diane Wilke
Ushers	Schoepf

2017 Poinsettia Dedications



Warren & Tammy Heilman in memory of Tammy's parents, Gene & Ida Joachim and Warren's dad Les Heilman.

The Dingledine Family in memory of our parents Dorothy & Darry.

Mike Eschelbach in celebration of New Life.

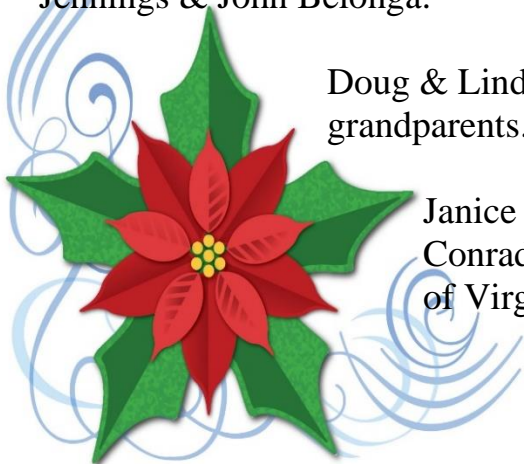
Lee & Linda Gerard in memory of our mothers Virginia Gerard and Jean Boone.

Harry Nawrock & the Richardson Family in memory of Rose Marie Nawrock.

Keith & Beth Belonga in memory of Richard & Lillian Jennings & John Belonga.

Doug & Linda Hirt in memory of our grandparents.

Janice Taschner in memory of Conrad Taschner and in honor of Virginia Taschner



Dorothy Rush in memory of Leo Rush, Steven Rush and Marsha Rush Schoepf.

Bob & MaryAnn Scheuerman in celebration of His birth.

Kurt Steinke & Beth Balleger in celebration of another year of good health, joy and happiness.

Bruce Williams in memory of Gladys & Stanley Williams.

The Kadrofske family in memory of our parents, Bernard & Lois Kadrofske and Gerald Brandt.

Lori & David Haven in memory of Jerry Landry and in honor of Dane, Isaac & Maddie Webb & Gabriella & Alexa Haven.

Walter, Brenda, Katy, Becca, Austin & Ciara in memory of William & Hilda Kopf, Richard & Jane Kemmler, Hannes & Eleanor Tietje and Sandra Fox.





Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



- To make disciples for Jesus Christ. . .
..we **Gather** in faith for worship, prayer,
study and fellowship
..we **Equip** the people of God with a faith
that works in real life
..we **Serve** the world in the name of Jesus Christ
-



Faith Lutheran Church's Welcoming Statement:

We, at Faith Lutheran Church, welcome you as a child of God. As Paul said in his letter to the Galatians, “for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith.” (Galatians 3:26)
We strive to be a place where everyone is welcomed and affirmed.

No matter your age, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, marital status, faith background, political leanings, or mental or physical ability - you are welcome as you are. As children of God, we are all one in Christ Jesus and rely on the unconditional nature of God’s love and grace to be our help and guide.

Email address

faith@faithlutheranokemos.org

Websites

Faith Lutheran Church ≈ www.faithlutheranokemos.org
North/West Lower Michigan Synod ≈ www.mittensynod.org
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ≈ www.elca.org

Facebook

facebook.com/faithlutheranokemos

You also can find the audio available on Faith’s website under worship
Sermons

<http://faithlutheranokemos.org/sermons/>

STEPHEN MINISTRY TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

- A new class Stephen Minister Training will take place at Martin Luther Chapel, beginning on Tuesday, January 9, 2018. Interested members of Faith Lutheran have been invited to join this group training.

Key Decision Elements for Participation: Stephen Ministers are laypeople—Christian men and women—trained to provide one-to-one care to people experiencing a difficult time in life, such as grief, divorce, job loss, chronic or terminal illness, relocation, or separation due to military deployment. Stephen Ministers come from all walks of life. Their commonality? A passion for bringing Christ’s love and care to people during a time of need. Since 1975, more than 650,000 people from more than 12,000 congregations and other organizations have been trained as Stephen Ministers.

- This is a two (2) year commitment to the Martin Luther Chapel Stephen Ministry program.
 - Applications must be completed and submitted to Pastor David Dressel by **Friday December 29, 2017.**
 - All applicants will work initially through (meet with) Pastor David Dressel prior to starting class.
 - All trained Stephen Ministers will receive their caring assignments through Martin Luther Chapel “Only”.
 - Active Stephen Ministers meet twice Monthly (Tuesday evenings) for peer supervision & continuing education.
- Stephen Ministers are trained by the Martin Luther Chapel’s Stephen Leaders.
- The training they receive at Martin Luther Chapel equips them to provide high-quality care to people who are hurting, through Martin Luther Chapel only.
- “The Best 50 Hours of Training You’ll Ever Experience!”
 - Stephen Minister training teaches principles and skills that equip you to provide high-quality, Christ-centered emotional and spiritual care to others.

- You gain insight into the thoughts, feelings, and actions of people who are hurting.
- You develop relational and caring skills you can apply to all aspects of your life.
- You deepen your faith as the Holy Spirit fashions you into a Christ-centered caregiver.
- You feel a special bond with those in your class—experiencing real Christian community.
- Stephen Minister training is a lot of fun!
- Martin Luther Chapel Stephen Ministry Training “2018”
 - Tuesday Evenings 7:00 to 9:30 PM
 - January 9th through May 29th , 2018
 - Possible two “Saturday” sessions “TBD” (as determined by class participants at the start of training)



Merry Christmas!

