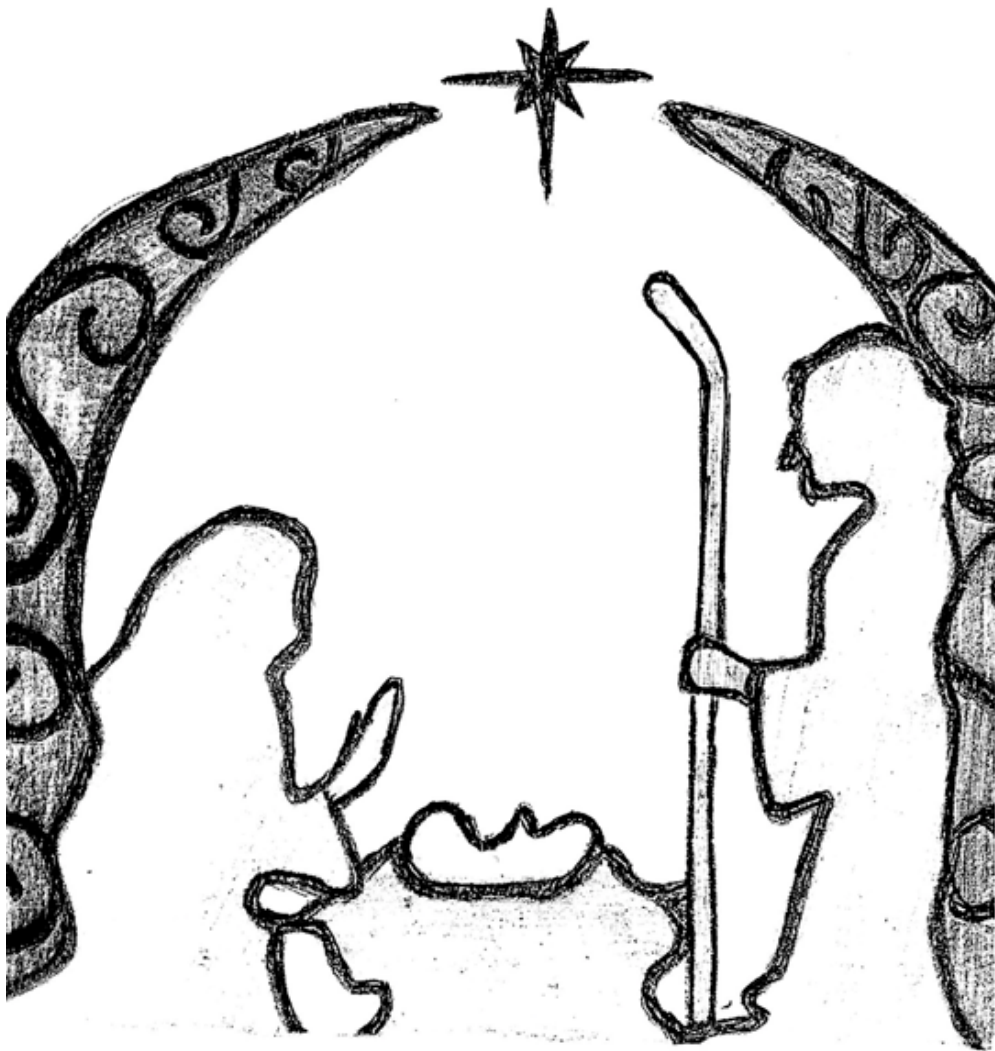


Amazing Grace in a Manger



Pre-Service Music

As We Gather

As we prepare for worship, pray that the sounds of hymns, God's Word and children's voices will draw you to God's amazing grace in a manger—Jesus—and that all of the blessings he brings will resonate in your heart.

Processional Hymn: *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* LSB #380

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!"

Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"
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.
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

Invocation and Call to Worship: *(with selections from Luke 2)*

L In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

L Hear the sound of the angels declaring, "Fear not, for behold, I bring good news of great joy that will be for all people."

C Amazing grace, how sweet the sound!

L Hear the announcement of God's promise delivered: "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

C Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound!

L Hear the song of angels and mankind together praising God:

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

Prayer of the Day

L The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

L Let us pray. Heavenly Father, tune our hearts and open our eyes to receive the message proclaimed by the children whom you sent to bring us the joyous message of Jesus' birth and the amazing gifts he brings. Give us new insight into the Christmas story and inspire us to worship with a sense of awe and with great joy.

C **Amen.**

A Meditation

Amazing Grace That Opens Eyes

(Children sing)

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.

Tristin Today is the day! Are you all ready, angels? The Savior God promised will soon be born, and we get to make the announcement.

DJ Look! Here come Mary and Joseph. They've made it to Bethlehem just in time for the baby to be born.

Brock Bethlehem has waited a long time for this moment. God's prophet, Micah, told everyone that something big would happen here.

Leonard 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 coming forth is from of old, from ancient days. (Micah 5:2)

Liesel Something big is about to happen here. Or should I say, something small. And God has put everything in place for it to happen.

Leonard In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And 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, to be registered with Mary, who was with child. (Luke 2:1-5)

Leonard While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. (Luke 2:1-7)

Tenley Here he is. Baby Jesus, God's amazing grace in a manger.

Caleb Aw. Little Jesus is crying.

DJ How sweet the sound of this baby's cry. His cry is a reminder that he will suffer the punishment for all people's sins in order to save them.

Brock People have wandered from God's ways. Because of their sin, they're lost and separated from God.

Madi But this child has come to open their eyes and lead people back to God's loving arms, where they will be safe forever.

Tenley It's just like God's prophet Isaiah said.

Leonard Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped ... and the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing. (Isaiah 35:5, 10a)

Nacole Amazing grace indeed! Here for all to see.

Song by Congregation: *Lift Up Your Heads, You Mighty Gates*
LSB #341

Lift up your heads, you mighty gates! Behold the King of glory waits.

The King of kings is drawing near; the Savior of the world is here.
Life and salvation he doth bring; therefore rejoice and gladly sing.
To God the Father raise your joyful songs of praise.

Come see the baby, meek and small, who gives amazing grace to all.

The Child who in a manger cries has pow'r to open ev'ry eye
To see the glory of the Lord and all the love that he outpoured.
To Christ the Savior raise your grateful hymns of praise.

Amazing Grace That Crushes Fear

Caleb Come on, angels. We're up.

Leonard In the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night

Shay I kind of hate sneaking up on them like this. Aren't we going to scare them?

Lillian Nah! Once they hear the good news we have for them, their fear will be crushed. Just watch.

Leonard An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear.

Caleb I told you so.

Brock Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find the baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

Emma Everybody! Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!

Leonard When 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." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. (Luke 2:8-16)

Tristin Jesus is the one who has the power to crush everyone's fears. Instead, they will learn what it's like to live in awe of God's mighty power and unconditional love.

Tenley Pretty soon, all of Bethlehem will hear the good news.

Leonard When they saw [Jesus], they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told to them. (Luke 2:17-20)

Nacole Now all of Bethlehem can celebrate. God's amazing grace through Jesus crushes fear!

Song by Children: *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

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.

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.

Amazing Grace That Protects

(Children sing)

Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come:
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

DJ Look! It's God's special star that he sent to lead other people to Jesus.

Liesel And there they are! Wise men from the far east.

Shay They look like they're still a long ways off. But wait, they're not heading to Bethlehem. They won't get to see the baby in time with the shepherds!

Leonard Behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." (Matthew 2:1-2)

DJ God wants people everywhere to know Jesus as their Savior. What amazing grace!

Lillian That's for sure. Our enemy, Satan, who broke ranks from our army of God's angels, fights hard to keep people away from God. He changed the whole course of their journey.

Madi He's the one who first tempted people to sin, which led all people to some very dark, scary places.

Shay But, like that star, Jesus is God's Light that has come to protect people from Satan's power and to lead them safely to live in God's grace. It's like the prophet Isaiah said.

Leonard Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will

arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. (Isaiah 60:1-2)

Nacole Yes, and because Jesus is God's amazing grace that protects, all people can safely come to him.

Song by Congregation: *God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen*

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.

"Fear not," then said the angel, "let nothing you affright;
This day is born a Savior, the true and only light,
To free all those who trust in him from Satan's pow'r and might."
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy.

Amazing Grace That Secures Hope

(Children sing)

The Lord has promised good to me,
His Word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures.

Leonard In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God ... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:1; 14)

Shay God's Son left his glorious place in heaven for this? Not good.

Emma And this is just the beginning. Jesus will give up so much more—even his own life. Everything in order to save people from the sin and eternal death they deserve.

Tristin Jesus' sacrifice secures a real hope for God's people! He freed them from sin so they can enjoy his goodness in this life, and forever.

Leonard From his fullness we have all received, grace upon

grace. (John 1:16)

Nacole How wonderful it is for all those who put their hope in Jesus.

Song by Children: *Away in a Manger*

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing; the poor baby wakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky.
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

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.

Amazing Grace that Gives Eternal Life

(Congregation sings)

Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess, within the veil,
A life of joy and peace.

(Children sing)

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,
The sun forbear to shine;
But God, who called me here below,
Will be forever mine.

Emma God told his people that their Savior would come from the family line of King David.

Madi That's the family Mary belongs to, but she's just an ordinary girl, not royalty. She must have been really surprised to learn that she was chosen to be Jesus' mother.

Liesel She was. I was the one who told her!

Leonard You will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and

you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to 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. (Luke 1:31-33)

Liesel I guess Mary isn't so ordinary after all.

Brock And neither is anyone who believes in Jesus. And, he promises eternal life for all who believe in him. Even though their earthly bodies will die, he will raise them to life, where they will live in peace with God forever and ever.

Nacole Now that really is amazing grace!

Song by Congregation: *Once He Came in Blessing* LSB #333

Once He came in blessing,
All our sins redressing;
Came in likeness lowly,
Son of God most holy;
Bore the cross to save us;
Hope and freedom gave us.

Come, then O Lord Jesus,
From our sins release us.
Keep our hearts believing,
That we, grace receiving,
Ever may confess You,
Till in heav'n we bless you.

Amazing Grace That Tunes Our Voices

(Children and congregation sing)
When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we'd first begun.

Lillian Well, it's time for us to go back to heaven. Good work, everybody. The song we sang to the shepherds was per-

- fectly in tune.
- Brock** Our voices aren't the only ones well tuned. Jesus has come to tune the hearts and songs of people everywhere to praise God.
- Madi.** Jesus overcame the dangers, toils and snares of this world so that even in times of trouble, those who trust in Jesus can sing his praise.
- Tristin** And it's a song that will never end! People from every nation will join us around Jesus' throne in heaven, singing praises to him forever!
- Leonard** I looked and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and people and languages, standing before the throne and before the lamb ... crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" And all the angels were standing around the throne ... and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen!" (Revelation 7:9-12)
- Nacole** God's amazing grace in a manger. That's Jesus. Let heaven and nature sing!

Song by Children: *Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing*
LSB#686

Come, Thou Fount of ev'ry blessing,
 Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
 Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
 Call for songs of loudest praise.
 While the hope of endless glory
 Fills my heart with joy and love,
 Teach me ever to adore Thee;
 May I still Thy goodness prove.

Oh, to grace how great a debtor
 Daily I'm constrained to be;
 Let that grace now like a fetter
 Bind my wan-d'ring heart to Thee;
 Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it;
 Prone to leave the God I love.

Here's my heart, O take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above.

Offering

Closing Prayer

Thank you, Lord, for sending these children, your precious messengers, to bring your Word to us this day. May we respond in praise and thanksgiving for your amazing grace in a manger—our Savior, Jesus, as we spread this good news wherever we go. Amen.

Benediction

May Jesus, God's amazing grace in a manger, open your eyes, crush your fear, protect your coming and going, instill in you the hope of eternal life, and tune your voices to sing his praises this Christmas and forever and ever. Amen.

Closing Song: *Joy To the World*

LSB #387

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,

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.