

Matthew explained the way that Jesus is God and Man (Mary was "found to be with Child through the Holy Spirit.") By the way, this is the only place in the Bible where Joseph is called the "son of David." Joseph as a son of David also established Jesus' legal descent from David through Joseph. Joseph wasn't strictly the father of Jesus (more of an adopted father,) he was the one appointed by God to take on the legal requirements of a father. This Man, born of Mary, was David's Son by Joseph's legal paternity and God's Son by the Holy Spirit. (God always follows and fulfills the rules so that Jesus was fully legitimate in every sense.)

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

¶ O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in eternity You appointed a time for the sending of Your Holy Child Jesus. By Your Spirit, You caused the Virgin to conceive and bear a Son our Savior. In Love You made Him true God begotten from eternity, and true man, born of a woman. Accept the thanks of Your grateful people for Your Love.

Help each of us enter into the true joy of this day and welcome the Savior into our hearts. Implant within us such an understanding of this divine visitation that from our very inmost being, we may give glory and honor and thanksgiving to You.

Grant, O Father, that the whole Earth may come to the obedience of the Child born in the Manger and cause everyone everywhere to know Him as Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. We pray that people all over the world, would acknowledge Mary's Child as Lord and Savior, the only incarnate God. Let the light of this truth reach the hardest of hearts and the most stubborn of wills; let it shatter the brittle ideologies of men; and let it pierce the darkness of all who dwell in the shadow of fear and death.

Let the glad tidings of the true Christmas enter every home this day, that all children and parents may know the greatest gift of all, the Child of Bethlehem.

Look with compassion on all who are in any want or need this day. We lift up for Your compassion the lonely and the forsaken, the sick and the troubled, the sorrowing and the dying. Give them the assurance that in Christ You are with all who call on Your name.

Hear us as we bring to You our private petitions. (**Time of silent prayer.**)

For the gift which no words can describe, the gift of Jesus, we pray, O heavenly Father, that this gift may be ours in faith. Grant that our hearts are a fit dwelling place for Your Son and that we will know the joy of His presence, the blessing of following Him and have life in His name.

© Amen.

CHRISTMAS EVE

Chant Tone



Introit

I will tell of — the decree:*

The Lord said to me, "You are my Son; today I have be — gotten You."

The Earth is the Lord's and the full | ness thereof,*

the world and those who | dwell therein.

Who shall ascend the hill | of the Lord?*

And who shall stand in His | holy place?

He who has clean hands and a — pure heart,*

who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear de | ceitfully. He will receive blessing | from the Lord* and righteousness from the God of his sal — vation.

Glory be to the Father and | to the Son* and to the Holy — Spirit; as it was in the be — ginning,* is now, and will be forever. — Amen.

I will tell of — the decree:*

The Lord said to me, "You are my Son; today I have be — gotten you."

(Antiphon, Psalm 2:7;
Psalm 24:1, 3-5)

Collect of the Day

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

Gradual

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.

Sing to the Lord a — new song,*

for He has done — marvelous things!

(Isaiah 9:6; Psalm 98:1a)

ENTRANCE PRAYER: Praise, honor, and glory to You, O Lord our God. With angels and archangels we magnify Your name. We adore Your Love and divine goodness. We praise You for sending deliverance to Zion and for including us in the fulfillment of Your promises. Bless the reception of this Good News of the birth of our Savior, in the hearts of those who hear it. Bless, O Lord, the spread of the Christmas message throughout the world. May these glad tidings bring assurance to the discouraged and peace to the troubled. May the joy of Christmas fill our nation and the nations of the world. This we ask in the name of our Savior, Christ the Lord. Amen (So be it, Lord.)

THROUGHOUT CHRISTIAN HISTORY CHRISTMAS EVE HAS BEEN WORSHIPED WITH MANY DIFFERENT LITURGIES. Our attempts to worship our Christ, born in the manger, have been lead by more and less words throughout the years. The one constant in our worship has always been the hymns. Music is significant to Worship, especially Lutheran Worship. Tonight is our attempt to join with the all Christians throughout history as we launch into song to sing the praise of God for the wonders He performs in our presence. Tonight we join our hymns with those of Mary. We join our hymns with Isaiah. We join our hymns with those of Paul. We join our hymns with the New Testament Church throughout history as we worship our Savior Who was willing to take on human flesh for our redemption. Come and Worship Him.

THEME OF THE DAY:
The Birth of our Savior

INTROIT—(Antiphon: Psalm 2:7;) Psalm 24:1, 3-5

Psalm 2 was written by Ezra. In Psalm 2 he introduced us to the Son of God, the King of kings. We use the latter part of verse 7 to remember the promise of His birth made 950 years before His incarnation. Psalm 24 was written by David. It concerns the kingdom of Christ. While born in human flesh, Jesus' kingdom extends far beyond the boundaries of Jerusalem. We Gentiles are therefore included in His reign.

COLLECT

Darkness is dangerous. We look then to the Light Who will light our path to eternity, Jesus our Savior.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON—Isaiah 7:10-14

Isaiah was sent to Ahaz to persuade him to trust in God rather than to rely on political alliances. He was warned that judgment was coming on his allies. Instead of trusting God, Ahaz gave his allegiance to Assyria. Isaiah told Ahaz that Assyria would also be destroyed unless he believed in God. God offered Ahaz a sign as proof. Ahaz pretended that he didn't want to test God. The truth is that Ahaz didn't want to believe. Ahaz wore out God's patience and received the sign of our marvelous virgin born Savior, not in his lifetime, but in the Fullness of Time.

GRADUAL—Isaiah 9:6; Psalm 98:1a

We use verse 6 of Isaiah from our Old Testament lesson because it is a statement of victory. God won a victory in the Birth of the Savior. Psalm 98 is a prophecy of the Messiah. We use the first half of verse 1 to express our wonder over the birth of God in human flesh.

EPISTLE LESSON—1 John 4:7-16

Love is complete only when it comes from God and lives in God. John identified the essence of the attributes of God by narrowing them to the self-giving love that manifested itself in the giving of the most precious gift of God's Son to we who were the least worthy to receive Him by reason of our sin. The perfect Love of God creates a complete trust in the will of God for all believers. We are then freed to love each other. We have received the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, Who will show forth our love of God by demonstrating God's Love in us to others.

GOSPEL LESSON—Matthew 1:18-25

Matthew concentrated on the Man Jesus, a man Who lived in first century Palestine. Matthew showed that at all times and in every way, the Man Jesus, was in the same instance the Son of God. Jesus did not become the Son of God later in His life. Jesus was the Son of God in His incarnation.