



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

December 24, 2021

Pastor Randy Ott

Christmas Eve – Candlelight Worship

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 96

Gospel Lesson: [Luke 2:1-20](#)

Sermon Text: [Micah 5:2-5a](#)

He Will Be Our Peace

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

In Christ, dear fellow redeemed:

As we all were coming in, someone in the back asked me to make sure that I talk about the Lions in the sermon because they finally beat some team that is halfway decent and now they have 2.5 wins or something like that. I'm not going to do that. But I will talk to you a little bit about football to kind of make a point about Christmas, if that works for you.

There are a couple games tomorrow. Your team has a home game tomorrow against Cleveland. I don't know and I don't care, but that's what I hear. There will be thousands and thousands of people cramming into the stadium to watch the football game. Of those tens of thousands of people, how many are there because they really want to watch the refs? Do you think any of them? Do you think any of them are there because they say, "This is my favorite head referee. I travel around and go to see him wherever he plays. I make all of his home and away games"? Is there anybody? Do you think one? Not even the refs' wives are doing that, or husbands, or children, right? None of that happens. The focus is on the teams, the game, the outcome and all the things in between. Some of the other stuff is ancillary; it's there and it's necessary but it isn't the main point.

Do you ever get the idea that at this time of the year many of us, even many of us mature Christians, kind of forget the point of what it is that we gather together to celebrate? We get caught up in the trappings of the season.

My wife drove back from South Dakota, got home last night, and said she was trying to find Christmas music. She couldn't find it on the radio. I don't believe that, but that's what she said. We want those kinds of things and sometimes we get a little irritated when they start two weeks before Thanksgiving. There are all these other things; the

shopping, the meal prep, finding the right gift, watching the joy in someone's eyes as they open the gift. There are a lot of things that are pretty cool and pretty fun about this time of the year. I understand that. But do we ever get so wrapped up in our family traditions and our memories that we forget it's all about Jesus? This night is so special because God Himself left heaven and spent nine months in Mary's womb.

Just think of that. The One who created the world had to journey that 90 miles in Mary's womb to get from Nazareth to Bethlehem so He could be born to fulfill the prophecy I read to you from Micah. What He did isn't very God-like. Why would He do that? When I get to heaven, you aren't getting me back down here. I don't know why He would want to leave to come here. The only reason it can be is because of this incredible love He has for us, who at times can focus on all the wrong things. Yet His love is still there and His love is still certain.

Even as you read this prophesy that I read to you, it starts out just talking about Podunk Bethlehem, like that's the big news. ***"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah,"*** we're going to talk about you. But notice how quickly the message that God gave to the prophet shifts from the location to who would arrive at that location, this person who was from ancient times, whose origins are from of old. [John 1](#) tells us ***"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made."*** That Word was Jesus. He doesn't really have any origin. He is eternal. Yet He comes to earth.

He is going to come and shepherd the people and His strength and His renown will go from across the earth, His majesty and His renown. I guess part of it is evidenced right in front of us right here. In this season of loud busy-ness and of running here, there and everywhere, it's a pretty nice group of people that came together at church at 11p.m. I'm assuming you're here because you love Jesus and you know who it is that was born. Through all of the distractions, there is a part of your heart that still says, "I long to hear how much my Savior loves me." Especially at this time of the year, we can all become pretty messed up. We can all have all kinds of struggles, all kinds of worries, all kinds of anxiety and yet here is this message; the One who came to be born in Bethlehem, whose origins are from of old, who has the strength that is beyond our imagining, He came to be our peace.

So many things in life don't bring us peace. They just bring us stress. But here is what brings us peace. I don't care how messed up you are or if you got the wrong gift or you forgot to get a gift or you blew it and said the wrong thing at the family Christmas dinner (or you will tomorrow), I don't care about any of that, if this Christmas isn't the Christmas of a Hallmark movie, it's okay. Jesus is still your peace. He still lived perfectly because He loves you. He came to earth because He loves you! He was absolutely perfect because you and I can't be.

In fact, by our own nature we are not at peace with God. We see God as the problem. The sinful mind is hostile to God it says in Romans. It does not submit to His will nor can it do so. The sinful mind is hostile to God. You've probably experienced it, haven't you? Someone who says, "Why do you worship God? I can't believe in a God who allows children to get cancer or things like that." It points to some of the hardships and difficulties of life and says the whole problem is God.

But God isn't the problem. God created a world that was absolutely perfect and mankind ruined it, but God didn't turn His back on that world. Instead He came up with a plan that He had from His origins from of old to take away the guilt of our sins and give us the perfection that He absolutely demands of us. He Himself would come and be our peace. He would be the perfection God demands of us. He would die the death that you and I should die, forsaken completely by God. He gives that all to us as a free gift. We don't earn it. We don't deserve it. We don't do anything for it. **He will be our peace.** He does it all. We sit back and each and every day of our lives we can tear off this bright, shiny paper and there below it is the forgiveness Christ won for us. This is the most incredible thing in the world!

I'm not at odds with my God even though I have failed Him. I'm not uncertain about whether He loves me or whether He doesn't love me because I've failed Him again. I have this absolute certainty, and so can you, that He is our peace. If that doesn't warm your heart, get yourself a new heart. Amen.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ([Philippians 4:7.](#)) Amen.