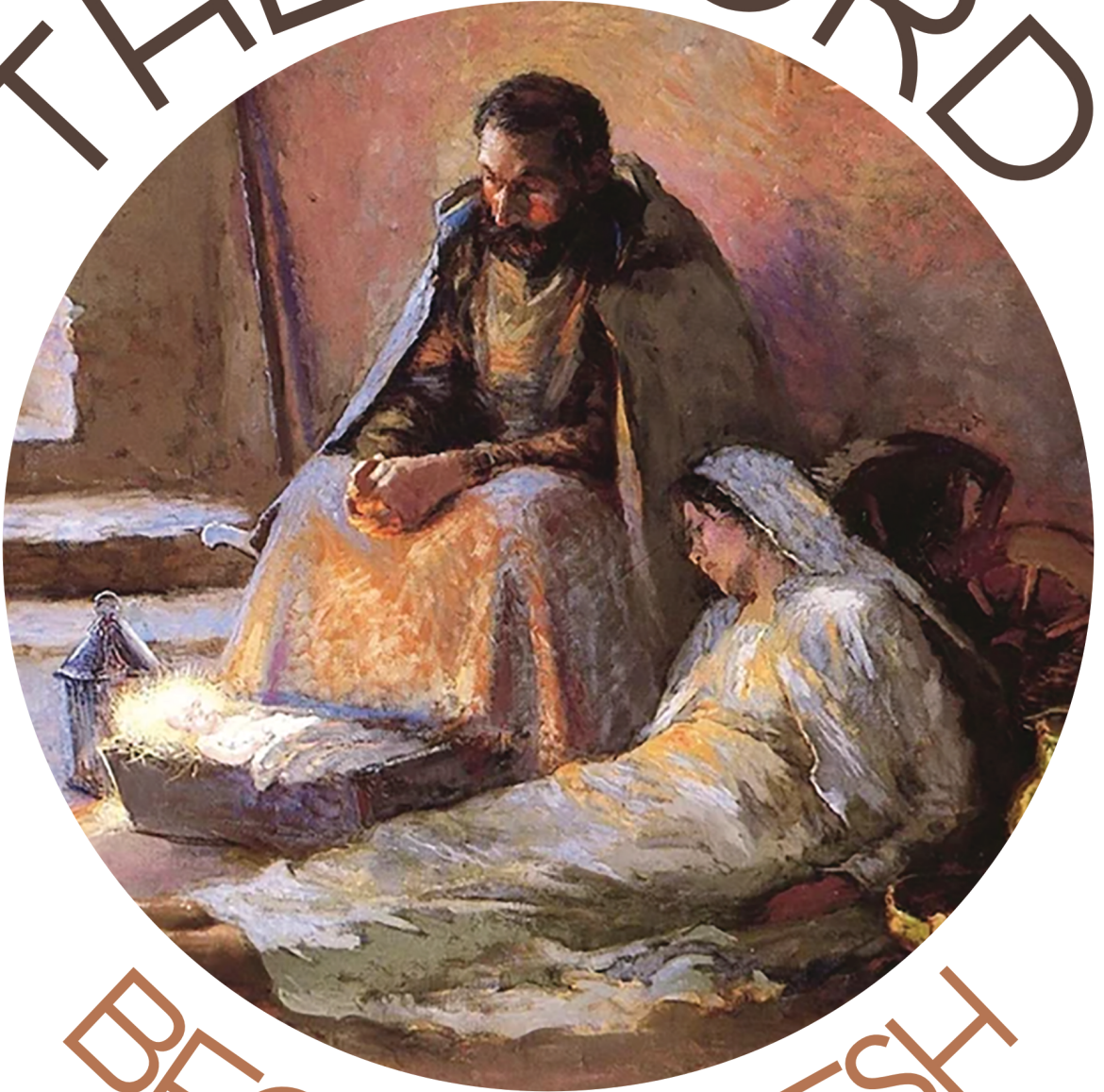


THE WORD



BECAME FLESH



RIVER OF LIFE LUTHERAN | refreshing truth for all people

725 S. Estrella Pkwy (Suite 120) Goodyear, Arizona 85338

The Festival of Christmas Day

OUR PASTOR

Pastor Lincoln Albrecht (623) 312.8650 pastor.lincoln.albrecht@gmail.com

WELCOME TO RIVER OF LIFE

Thank you for joining us this morning. In our worship service, God's children—you & I—gather together before God to be strengthened through God's Word. In response to God's message of love to us, we offer God our worship and praise.

The worship folder you're holding has the entire Order of Service. If you have questions, feel free to ask one of our ushers or anyone near you. The unfamiliar can be intimidating—let us help you. We want you to be comfortable & comforted here.

Restrooms are located in the front corner for your convenience.

God wants everyone to worship together. We recognize that public worship is a learning process for children. Parents, if you feel like you need a moment, there is a room in the back of the worship area where you can see, hear, and participate in worship without being heard.

OUR FOCUS FOR WORSHIP THIS MORNING

Today we take a deeper look at the birth of Jesus. It is not just the details of his birth that are remarkable. Rather, the reason he was born—what he came to do and be—is most marvelous to the hearts and minds of sinners like us. He is not some cute and cuddly baby, but rather the Lord who comforts his people. Stories about the lack of his own tears as an infant are immaterial. He has come to wipe away all our tears for eternity. Jesus always was the Son of God and was there in the beginning. But now the Word made flesh and blood has come to be our Savior from all sins. In Christ Jesus, the nations see the salvation of our God. He is the Light of life, and offers eternal life to all who believe in him. God is with us!

OPENING HYMN

Once in Royal David's City | **50 (1-2)**

1 Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y
 2 He came down to earth from heav - en

Stood a low - ly cat - tle shed, Where a
 Who is God and Lord of all, And his

moth - er laid her ba - by In a man - ger
 shel - ter was a sta - ble, And his cra - dle

for his bed; Mar - y was that moth - er mild,
 was a stall; With the poor and mean and low - ly

Je - sus Christ her lit - tle child.
 Lived on earth our Sav - ior ho - ly.

The Rite of Baptism

INVOCATION

Minister: In the name of the Father, and of the Son +
and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.



CONFESSION OF SINS

M: Our Savior Jesus Christ commanded baptism when he said: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." All of us are born into this world with a deep need for baptism. From our parents we inherit a sinful nature; we are without true fear of God and true faith in God and are condemned to eternal death. But Jesus took away our sin by giving his life on the cross. At our baptism he clothes us with the robe of his righteousness and gives us a new life. Our sinful nature need not control us any longer. We recall what baptism means for our daily lives as we speak these words:

P: Baptism means that the sinful nature in us should be drowned by daily sorrow and repentance, and that all its evil deeds and desires be put to death. It also means that a new person should daily arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

M: As baptized children of God we confess our sins:

P: Holy and merciful Father,

I confess that I am by nature sinful, and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and actions.

I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good.

For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity.

But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.

FORGIVENESS OF SINS

M: God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son ✝ and of the Holy Spirit.

P: Amen.

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism

M: In obedience to the command of our Lord and trusting in his promise, you have brought Jacob to be baptized. Jesus told us: "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." It is in baptism that God grants the new life of forgiveness, joy, and peace to little children. By the power of God's Word, this gracious water of life washes away sin, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe.

Jacob Moreno Lara, I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The Almighty God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—has forgiven all your sins. By your baptism, you are born again and made a dear child of your Father in heaven. May God strengthen you to live in your baptismal grace all the days of your life. Peace be with you.

ENCOURAGEMENT AND PRAYER

M: Brothers and sisters in Christ: Our Lord commands that we teach his precious truths to all who are baptized. Christian love therefore urges all of us to assist in whatever manner possible so that Jacob may remain a child of God until death. If you are willing to carry out this responsibility, then answer: Yes, as God gives me strength.

P: Yes, as God gives me strength.

M: Let us pray: Merciful Father in heaven, we thank you for the blessing of baptism by which you offer and grant the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. Help us to regard our baptism as the robe of righteousness we are to wear all the days of our life. Look with special favor on Jacob and grant him a rich measure of your Spirit that he may grow in faith and godly living. Make us willing to carry out our responsibilities to those who have been baptized, so that all of us may finally come to the blessed joys of heaven, through Jesus our Lord.

P: Amen.

Praise & Prayer

M: Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come and has redeemed his people.

P: My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

M: We have received the assurance of real, lasting peace from God in the flesh. Let us praise the Immanuel! God is with us!

SONG OF PRAISE

Angels We Have Heard on High | 63



1 An - gels we have heard on high, Sweet - ly sing - ing
2 Shep - herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous
3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see Him whose birth the



o'er the plains, And the moun - tains in re -
strains pro - long? What the glad - some ti - dings
an - gels sing; Come, a - dore on bend - ed



ply, Ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.
be Which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?
knee Christ the Lord, the new - born King.

Refrain



Glo - ri - a



in ex - cel - sis De - o; Glo - ri - a



- ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

The Word of God

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Micah 5

²“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
though you are small among the clans of Judah,
out of you will come for me
one who will be ruler over Israel,
whose origins are from of old,
from ancient times.”

³Therefore Israel will be abandoned
until the time when she who is in labor bears a son,
and the rest of his brothers return
to join the Israelites.

⁴He will stand and shepherd his flock
in the strength of the Lord,
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.
And they will live securely, for then his greatness
will reach to the ends of the earth.

⁵And he will be our peace...

VERSE OF THE DAY

Galatians 4:4-5

M: Alleluia. When the time had fully come,

P: God sent his Son,

M: born of a woman, born under the law,

P: to redeem those under the law. Alleluia.



1 Christ the Lord to us is born, Al - le - lu - ia!
 2 Proph - e - sies in days of old, Al - le - lu - ia!
 3 Our poor hu - man form he took, Al - le - lu - ia!
 4 God has saved us through his Son, Al - le - lu - ia!



On this joy - ous Christ - mas morn, Al - le - lu - ia!
 God has sent him as fore - told, Al - le - lu - ia!
 Realms of heav - en he for - sook, Al - le - lu - ia!
 Con - quered lies the e - vil one, Al - le - lu - ia!

Refrain



Of a vir - gin low - ly, He, the King most



ho - ly, Born this day to save us.

NEW TESTAMENT READING

Galatians 4

⁴ But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. ⁶ Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." ⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.

GOSPEL

John 1

M: The Gospel for the festival of Christmas Day, according to St. John.

P: **Glory be to you, O Lord.**

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

⁶ There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. ⁸ He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

⁹ The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹ He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹² Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

M: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

P: **Praise be to you, O Christ.**





1 Of the Fa - ther's love be - got - ten
 2 Oh, that birth for - ev - er bless - ed
 3 This is he whom heav'n - taught sing - ers
 4 Let the heights of heav'n a - dore him,
 5 Christ, to you, with God the Fa - ther,



Ere the worlds be - gan to be, He is
 When the vir - gin, full of grace, By the
 Sang of old with one ac - cord; Whom the
 An - gel hosts his prais - es sing, Pow'rs, do -
 And the Spir - it cease - less - ly Hymn and



Al - pha and O - me - ga, He the source, the
 Ho - ly Ghost con - ceiv - ing, Bore the Sav - ior
 Scrip - tures of the proph - ets Prom - ised in their
 min - ions bow be - fore him And ex - tol our
 chant and high thanks - giv - ing And un - end - ing



end - ing he, Of the things that are, that
 faith - our race, And the babe, the world's Re -
 God and King. Now he shines, the long - ex -
 prais - es be, Let no tongue on earth be
 Hon - or, glo - ry, and do -



have been, And that fu - ture years shall
 deem - er, First re - vealed his sa - cred
 pect - ed; Let cre - a - tion praise its
 si - lent, Ev - 'ry voice in con - cert -
 min - ion And e - ter - nal vic - to -



see Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
 face Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
 Lord Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
 ring Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
 ry Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.

Our Response to God's Word

M: When the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

P: We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

M: I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.

Let us now join and confess our faith:

APOSTLES' CREED

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his 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 into hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

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

THANK OFFERING



God's people respond with thankful hearts. The people of River of Life have joined to offer God the first-fruits of all he has given us. Our offerings support God's work in this community and the world. If you are a visitor with us, thank you for joining us today. Please do not feel obligated to support our ministry, but we ask that you do take time to fill out a digital connect card (azriveroflife.com/connect) so we can thank you for joining us. Thank you & God bless you!

HYMN

Away in a Manger | 68



1 A - way in a man - ger, no crib for a bed,
2 The cat - tle are low - ing, the ba - by a - wakes,
3 Be near me, Lord Je - sus; I ask you to stay



The lit - tle Lord Je - sus laid down his sweet head.
But lit - tle Lord Je - sus, no cry - ing he makes.
Close by me for - ev - er and love me, I pray.



The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
I love you, Lord Je - sus; look down from the sky,
Bless all the dear chil - dren in your ten - der care,



The lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.
And stay by my side un - til morn - ing is nigh.
And take us to heav - en to live with you there.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

M: On this holy day, dear Father, we rejoice to hear the good news of great joy that a Savior has been born for us and for our salvation.

P: Unto us a child is born! Unto us a Son is given!

M: What a great mystery of our faith this is: that God has become fully human for our salvation. Even though he is the all-powerful, eternal Lord of all, he was born of a woman, wrapped in strips of cloth, and placed in a manger.

P: He was born under law to redeem those under law, that we might receive God's adoption to sonship. Help us always to believe that this precious child was born as our Substitute and Savior.

M: While we are joyful, we grieve for the many people in our world who do not know that Jesus has come to bring them forgiveness and healing. As the shepherds spread abroad the good news of the Christ born to redeem the world, may we also make use of our own unique opportunities this season.

P: Grant that true peace between God and fallen mankind may comfort all.

M: As the angels sang out their praise, move us also to sing out our praise to you in all that we do, every day, as the joy of Christmas moves us to pray:

P: 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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

THE CHRISTMAS DAY BLESSING

M: May he who, by his incarnation gathered things earthly and heavenly into one, fill us with such joy that comes with the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins and the hope of eternal life.

And the blessing of God Almighty—the Father, the Son, ✚ and the Holy Spirit—be upon you and remain with you always.

P: Amen.

SONG OF DEPARTURE

Joy to the World! | 62



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let
 2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let
 3 No more let sins and sor - rows grow Nor
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace And



earth re - ceive her King; Let ev - 'ry
 all their songs em - ploy, While fields and
 thorns in - fest the ground; He comes to
 makes the na - tions prove The glo - ries



heart pre - pare him room And heav'n and
 floods, rocks, hills, and plains Re - peat the
 make his bless - ings flow Far as the
 of his right - eous - ness And won - ders



na - ture sing, And heav'n and na - ture sing, And
 sound - ing joy, Re - peat the sound - ing joy, Re -
 curse is found, Far as the curse is found, Far
 of his love, And won - ders of his love, And



heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
 peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
 as, far as the curse is found.
 won - ders, won - ders of his love.



THANK YOU FOR JOINING US THIS MORNING

We recognize how busy this world and your life can be. Thank you for setting aside time on this Christmas Day to be with us in God's house. One of life's greatest pleasures is meeting new people and growing lasting relationships. We'd love to get to know you better.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR KINDNESS & LOVE THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON

Thank you all this Christmas season. Your prayers, kind words, and tokens of appreciation have warmed our hearts. You've made this time a joy for our family. May God bless all of you and continue to accomplish his great plans through our growing River of Life family. –Pastor Lincoln, Jenni, Fiona, Zeke, & Gigi

WHY DO YOU BAPTIZE INFANTS?

A newborn baby cannot understand the words of his parents' lullaby or the legal implications of his parents' will. Does that mean parents should not sing lullabies or prepare wills with their children as beneficiaries? Absolutely not. **Although infants cannot understand such words, they are still able to receive the blessings and benefits of their parents' love and care.** Most objections to infant Baptism are based upon human conditions (i.e. that children don't need it, can't understand it, or are incapable of desiring it). Yet God's grace is unconditional. **The direction of giving in Holy Baptism is from God to us, not from us to God...**We did not decide to be born. Nor does an infant who is adopted play any part in determining who adopts her or what rights and privileges of the family she receives. Instead, an infant receives all the blessings and privileges from being adopted into the family simply because the family chose to adopt her. The same is true for our adoption by God. **He chose us to be His sons and daughters. He clothes us in Christ. We are recipients of His grace in our Baptism.**

Engelbrecht, Edward A.

The Lutheran Difference: An Explanation & Comparison of Christian Beliefs

RIVER OF LIFE

Certainty & Hope In The Coming Days

Dec. 31 (9:00 am)

Worship (w/ Lord's Supper):
Good News: Means Peace

Jan. 6 (8:00 am)

The Bible Breakfast Club

Jan. 7 (9:00 am)

Worship (w/ Lord's Supper):
Good News: For the World

Jan. 7 (10:20 am)

Family Bible Study: **Immanuel:
Ate & Drank with the Sinners**

Jan. 14 (9:00 am)

Worship: **Enduring Joy:
The Joy of Belonging**

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Hymn #50 **Once in Royal David's City** Text: Cecil Frances Alexander, c. 1818-95, abr., alt.

Hymn #63 **Angels We Have Heard on High** Text: Nouveau recueil de cantiques, 1855; tr. The Crown of Jesus, Part 2, London, 1862, alt.

Hymn #59 **Christ the Lord to Us Is Born** Text: Bohemian carol, 15th century, abr.; tr. Vincent Pisek, 1859-1930, alt.

Hymn #35 **Of the Father's Love Begotten** Text: Aurelius Clemens Prudentius, 348-c. 413, abr.; tr. John M. Neale, 1818-66, st. 1-4, alt.; Henry W. Baker, 1821-77, st. 5, alt.

Hymn #68 **Away in a Manger** Text: *Little Children's Book*, Philadelphia, 1885, st. 1-2; *Vineyard Songs*, Louisville, 1892, st. 3.

#62 **Joy to the World** Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748, alt.
