

The Annunciation of our Lord

“And behold, you will conceive in your womb . . .”
(Luke 1:31 ESV)¹

Words of Preparation

A sign in the Holy Land reads, “Here the Word became flesh.” You will not find this sign in Bethlehem, but in Nazareth. There the angel announced to Mary, not just that she would bear a son, but also that she would conceive a son. By the power of the Holy Spirit, through the words of the angel spoken in Mary’s ear, the Son of God took on human flesh as a tiny embryo. This Scriptural truth is part of our confession. “We believe that the Son of man according to His human nature is really exalted to the right hand of God because He was assumed into God when He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in His mother’s womb and His human nature was personally united with the Son of the Most High.”² The path to Calvary began, not in a manger, but in Mary’s fallopian tube and womb! The Word of God, incarnate as an embryo, gives value to all embryos! Today, nine months before Christmas, we contemplate the beginning of our Savior’s humiliation.

Prelude

Opening Hymn “O Word of God Incarnate”³ (LSB – 523, LW – 335, TLH – 294)

O Word of God incarnate, O Wisdom from on high,
O Truth unchanged, unchanging, O Light of our dark sky:
We praise You for the radiance That from the hallowed page,
A lantern to our footsteps, Shines on from age to age.

The Church from You, dear Master, Received the gift divine;
And still that light is lifted O’er all the earth to shine.
It is the chart and compass That, all life’s voyage through,
Mid mists and rocks and quicksands Still guides, O Christ, to You.

O make Your Church, dear Savior, A lamp of burnished gold
To bear before the nations Your true light as of old!
O teach Your wand’ring pilgrims By this their path to trace
Till, clouds and darkness ended, They see You face to face!

Invocation

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

Confession

Pastor: “Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil” (Hebrews 2:14). As we consider Jesus’ humiliation from His conception in Mary to His death and burial, let us humble ourselves before God and confess our unworthiness of such sacrificial love.

People: Merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful, sinful from the moment our humanity began, from the moment of conception. (Psalm 51:5) **This sinful nature causes us to sin, to do those things you forbid and to not do those things you command.** (Romans 7:19) **We confess our sins knowing You are “faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”** (1 John 1:9)

Pastor: God is faithful! He took your place from the womb to the tomb. His holy conception, life, and death cleanses you from your unholy conception and life. His resurrection from the dead assures you of victory over death and eternal life through the forgiveness of your sins. Therefore, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen!

Entrance Psalm (From Psalm 139)

Pastor: For you formed my inward parts;

People: **You knitted me together in my mother’s womb.**

Pastor: I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

People: **Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.**

Pastor: My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret,

People: **Intricately woven in the depths of the earth.**

Pastor: Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them,

People: **The days that were formed for me, when as yet there were none of them.**

Pastor: How precious to me are your thoughts, O God!

People: **How vast is the sum of them!**

Pastor: If I would count them, they are more than the sand.

People: **I awake, and I am still with you.**

All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Collect

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: **And with your spirit.**

Pastor: Let us pray to the Lord.
We implore you, O Lord, to pour forth your grace on us that, as we have known the incarnation of your Son Jesus Christ by the message of the angel, so by His cross and Passion we may be brought to the glory of His resurrection; through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen!

Old Testament Reading Isaiah 7:10-14

¹⁰Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, ¹¹“Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” ¹²But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” ¹³And he said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? ¹⁴Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Epistle Reading Hebrews 10:4-10

⁴For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. ⁵Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; ⁶in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. ⁷Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.'" ⁸When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), ⁹then he added, "Behold, I have come to do your will." He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. ¹⁰And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Gospel Reading Luke 1:26-38

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke the 1st chapter.

People: **Glory to You, O Lord.**

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" ²⁹But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³²He 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, ³³and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. ³⁶And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: **Praise to You, O Christ.**

Apostles' Creed

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

And 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 sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence 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.

Catechism⁴

Pastor: What was Christ's humiliation?

People: **Christ's humiliation was that as man He did not always or fully use His divine powers.**

Pastor: Which words of the Apostles' Creed describe the stages of Christ's humiliation?

People: **"Conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried."**

Pastor: What do the Scriptures teach about Christ's conception?

People: **They teach that Christ, the Son of God, received a true human body and soul in the Virgin Mary through the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit, not through a human father.**

Hymn of the Day "My Soul Now Magnifies the Lord"⁵ (LSB – 934, TLH – 275)

My soul now magnifies the Lord; My spirit leaps for joy in Him.
He keeps me in His kind regard, And I am blest for time to come.

For He alone who shows such might Has done amazing things to me.
His mercy flows; His name like light Remains in time perpetually.

His arm is strong; His strength is great. He scatters those of proud intent
And casts them down from high estate, Then gives the low His nourishment.

He feeds the hungry as His own; The wealthy leave with empty hands.
He gives His help to Israel; His gracious promise always stands.

Sermon

Offering

Prayers/Lord's Prayer

Benediction

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

People: **Amen!**

Closing Hymn "God of Grace and God of Glory"⁶ (LSB – 850, LW – 398)

God of grace and God of glory, On Your people pour Your pow'r;
Crown Your ancient Church's story; Bring its bud to glorious flow'r.

Grant us wisdom, grant us courage For the facing of this hour,
For the facing of this hour.

Lo, the hosts of evil round us Scorn the Christ, assail His ways!
From the fears that long have bound us Free our hearts to faith and praise.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage For the living of these days,
For the living of these days.

Cure Your children's warring madness; Bend our pride to Your control;
Shame our wanton, selfish gladness, Rich in things and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage Lest we miss Your kingdom's goal,
Lest we miss Your kingdom's goal.

Save us from weak resignation To the evils we deplore;
Let the gift of Your salvation Be our glory evermore.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, Serving You whom we adore,
Serving You whom we adore.

Postlude

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² The Book of Concord, Theodore G. Tappert, Ed. *Epitome*, Art. 8 p. 488.

³ Text public domain.

⁴ *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*. (Concordia Publishing House, 1986) 130-131.

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