

The Shepherd's Staff

Songs of Our Emmanuel

The Agnus Dei and the Nunc Dimittis point us to Jesus Christ, who is with us in a very real way.

By John A. Frahm, III



FROM THE INVOCATION through the benediction, the Lord's gracious presence is manifested, proclaimed and responded to in the Divine Service. This message of God being with us in the flesh is essentially the message of Christmas: that the man Jesus is "Emmanuel" (God with us).

Let's look at how this comforting fact is recognized in the Agnus Dei and the Nunc Dimittis, two songs of our Emmanuel. The Lord has promised, "I am among you as the One who serves" (Luke 22:27). This is a fact that the historically received Divine Service of our church proclaims so well.

The Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei is Latin for "Lamb of God." It is one of the several songs in the Divine Service that serve as a fitting response to the Lord's presence.

In *Lutheran Worship* the text for the Agnus Dei is: "O Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, have mercy on us. O Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us. O Christ, the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, grant us your peace. Amen."

The basic text of the Agnus Dei has been a part of the western church's liturgy since about the seventh century. Its text is based upon the words of John the Baptizer, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29).

In the Agnus Dei we pray to the Lord that He would have mercy upon us and grant us His peace. This is made especially clear by where the Agnus Dei is placed within the service. There it serves as adoration of the present Lord Jesus. Like the proclamation of John the Baptizer, the Agnus Dei points us to Jesus who approaches us.

The Divine Service is more than several songs put together at random. The structure or ordering of the liturgy has behind it the real presence of Jesus' body and blood in the Sacrament of the Altar. This fact has shaped the liturgy of the church through each century as the Lord's Supper was celebrated in the midst of the baptized people of God.

And so in the Agnus Dei we recognize that the Lord Jesus has mercy upon us and grants us His peace in the Sacrament. As we approach the altar and kneel at the rail, we come into the presence of our gracious King, the One who is Emmanuel.

The Nunc Dimittis

Nunc Dimittis is Latin for "now depart." The Nunc Dimittis was spoken by aged Simeon at the presentation of Jesus in the temple.

Simeon had a promise from the Lord that He would not die until He had beheld the Lord's anointed one, the Messiah. When Jesus was presented in the Temple, Simeon, knowing that the promise of the Messiah had been fulfilled in the Lord's coming in the flesh, said:

"Lord, now let your servant go in peace; your word has been fulfilled. My own eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared in the sight of every people: a light to reveal you to the nations and the glory of your people Israel" (*Lutheran Worship*, page 174).

As early as the fourth century, the Nunc Dimittis was sung as a final hymn at the end of the Communion liturgy. It was first used in Lutheran Eucharistic liturgies in 1525, and was used in the Divine Service in the very beginnings of the Missouri Synod in the 1840s.

In the Divine Service, the Nunc Dimittis liturgically confesses that Jesus, true God and true man, is our Emmanuel.

Simeon rejoices in this fact, knowing that since the Lord has kept His promise, the true Mediator between God and humanity has come for the life of the world.

So, there in the temple at Jerusalem, the true temple of God was held in the arms of Simeon. This is the temple that would be destroyed and on the third day be living and whole again. It is the temple of His truly human body. Christ is the image of the invisible Father (Heb. 1:1-4). Now that the Lord Himself had come as the Messiah, Simeon could utter those words. We also can depart in peace because we have received the Lord's peace in His promises, in His words of consolation, and His real presence with us. We need not fear death, because we too have received the Lord's consolation like Simeon, having beheld the Word that has become flesh.

God with us

In the midst of loneliness, virtual reality and pop-spirituality, God, in the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, has become one of us to give us access to the Father. Christ is our companion and anchor in the wilderness of this world, as He feeds us with the heavenly manna of His flesh and blood, which He gave once into death for the life of the world. The Agnus Dei and the Nunc Dimittis point us to the Lord who is with us always in a very real and yet mysterious way. Jesus is Emmanuel—now and forever.

**MARCH ATTENDANCE
AND OFFICIAL ACTS**

Church Attendance

	Sat	8:00	10:30	Total
March 2-3	56	52	55	163
March 9-10	30	47	65	142
March 16-17	48	84	89	221
March 23-24	57	56	59	172
March 30-31	74	60	71	205
Comm				195

Transfers/Releases

Transfers Out: Dawnie Danner to Holy Trinity, Ankeny, IA

Burials: Beverly Michehl-March 11
Lawrence Roseke-March 18

LWML NOTES

LWML Board Meeting is Tuesday, May 7 at 1:00 pm.

C.I.A.

- Sunday, May 5- 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. - **JR & SR CIA** - NERF War - bring your own drink
- Sunday, June 9-12- **JR & SR CIA** - Maquoketa Caves State Park - permission forms will be handed out at Easter and forms are due back by Noon Sunday, May 5

Camp Okoboji 2019 Program Offerings
Register and get more information at www.campokoboji.org

- Kid's Kamp** (Gr. Kind. To 2nd) May 31 to June 2
Campers attend with a parent or care-giver
- JOY Camp I** (Special Needs) June 6-9
- Guys Lake Adventure** June 9-14
- Girls' Sport Camp** June 9-15
- Minneboji** June 16-22
- Girls Lake Adventure** June 23-28
- Cub Week I** – June 23-29
- July 4 Family Retreat** June 30-July 5
- Quilt Auction** July 7
- Jr High Youth Week** July 7-13
- JOY Camp II** (Special Needs) July 11-14
- Concordia Cub Week** July 14-20
- Sr. High Youth Week** July 21-27
- Family Retreat I** July 28-August 2
- Guitar Camp** – July 28-August 2
- Family Retreat II** August 4-9

Newsorthy Notes

Beacon of Hope Meal will be on Thursday, May 2 at 5 pm.

Attention Just Older Youth (JOY group), we will be cooking for you on Tuesday, May 21. Join us at 11:30 am for devotions followed by our noon meal. Sign up sheet is on the table in the Church Overflow.

Camp Okoboji Quilt Auction will be on Saturday, June 15 beginning at 12:30 pm. Lunch from 11-12:30 pm. View quilts at www.campokoboji.org or on site June 14th 5-7 pm or June 15th from 9-12.

The Endowment Committee recently met and awarded money to the following groups:

1. \$142.30 to the Organists for an LSB Organist copy of accompaniment.
2. \$500.00 to LWML to help support a seminary student at Fort Wayne.
3. \$767.00 to church office to purchase a refurbished computer.
 1. \$245.00 to the Board of Education to purchase ESV Bibles.
 2. \$300.00 to C.I.A. to purchase T-shirts.
 3. \$1000.00 for Trustees to help purchase a new a/c on North side of church.
 4. \$400.00 to Funeral Committee to purchase two tables.
 5. \$1500.00 to Vacation Bible School to help support a day-time VBS program which will be in addition to the evening VBS.
6. \$5000.00 to Trustees to help out with East overhang repair work.
\$800.00 to support Mission Work at the Winnebago Reservation.

The Endowment Committee thanks all who have supported our efforts so the above grants can be made.

Now that spring is finally here, we look forward to spending time outside, working in the garden! Think about the people the Lord's Cupboard serves and plant a few extra rows of those vegetables this year. We can accept any fresh produce you would like to pass along. Or, how about a monetary donation to purchase hamburger for our clients? The Iowa Food Bank does a good job of offering good selections in the meat department, but hamburger is the first item they run out of, and one of our most popular choices. Wednesday, May 8 from 9-12:00 we will be hosting a coffee to show off our pantry and honor our volunteers. At 10:30 a.m., we will hold a dedication of the new refrigerator/freezer purchased in memory of Jennifer Riesberg. Everyone is invited to stop in, have a cup of coffee, meet and thank some of our volunteers and honor Jenny's service to the Lord's Cupboard.

Good Shepherd
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We're on the web
www.goodshepfortdodge.org
Check us out on Facebook
Good Shepherd Fort Dodge

VBS - Miraculous Mission Jesus Saves the World June 17-21, 9 am-12 pm at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church New this year is our daytime morning VBS **in addition to our evening VBS**. Spread the word! Consider now who you could invite to attend VBS at Good Shepherd. Volunteer leaders and helpers are needed in the following areas - Galaxy Snack Site, Blast Off Game Site, Starry Night Bible Story Telling, Creation Craft Site, and Bible Challenge. Crew leaders and helpers to help lead children around to each of the stations. Come be a part of a special week. **We will have a special meeting for leaders on Thursday, April 25 at 6:30 pm.** Prayer team is needed, too. Maybe you can't help in the other areas but would like to pray for VBS children and volunteers - we need your prayers, too. Signup sheets are located in the Narthex on the table. Students age 4 through going in to 5th grade and invited to be participants. Watch in the days to come for registration information. It's going to be an "Out of this World" good time! Please feel free to contact Rhonda Mohr with any questions rhonda@iowadistrictwest.org or call me at 515-573-0010.

