

# LET US LIVE CHRISTMAS WITH JESUS!

Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Jesus came to save us. Jesus died on the cross for our sins. Jesus rose again and lives forever. That is why we can celebrate with joy.

**The manger announces the Savior to us. The cross shows us his love.  
The resurrection announces life to us.**

And every Christmas we can hear the good news again: *“For to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.”* (Luke 2:11) Jesus was born for us. Jesus died and rose again for us. Jesus lives with us.

🎵 LET US ALL SING TOGETHER “O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL”

## To keep learning after Christmas



### The app: Luther’s Catechism • Faithful Friend

Free, to learn it by playing: **40 lessons, lives, houses that compete and events all year long.** No ads.

### Sunday School, every Sunday

The lesson for each Sunday, with pictures and activities, for teachers and pastors. Free, in Spanish, English and Portuguese.



### Download the app for free

Scan the code with your phone (Android). For everything else, go to [catecismodelutero.com](http://catecismodelutero.com).

Our congregation:

Sponsored by



**Cristo Para Todas  
Las Naciones**  
Chile

Text: Cristian Rautenberg (English translation of the Spanish original)

Illustrations: public-domain paintings and engravings (Wikimedia Commons). Hymn lines: Martin Luther, translated by Catherine Winkworth (1855), public domain.

# WHAT IS CHRISTMAS ABOUT?



Gerard van Honthorst, "Adoration of the Shepherds", 1622

## Jesus is born: God came to us

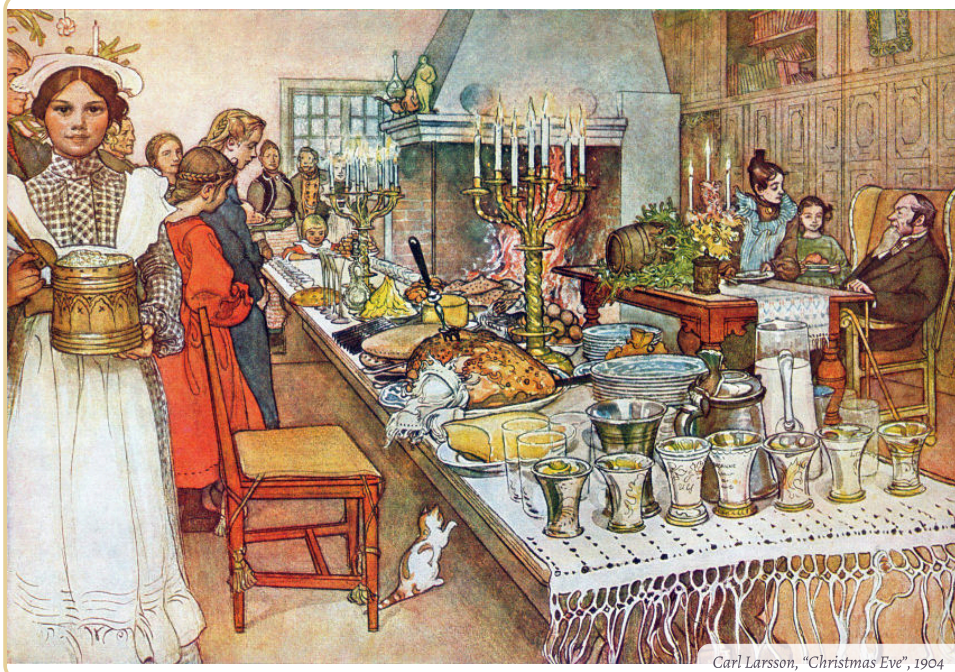
*A Christmas story, Martin Luther, the Christmas tree and a hymn that announces Jesus.*

Sponsored  
by



**Cristo Para Todas  
Las Naciones**  
Chile

## WHAT DO WE CELEBRATE AT CHRISTMAS?



Carl Larsson, "Christmas Eve", 1904

When December arrives, lights, gifts, special meals and decorated trees appear. The streets fill with colors and our homes get ready to celebrate.

But what are we really celebrating?

At Christmas we celebrate something wonderful: God kept his promise and sent his Son Jesus into the world.

Jesus did not come simply to be a baby in a manger. He came to be our Savior.

**That is why, for Christians, Christmas does not begin with the gifts. It begins with Jesus.**

## OUR CHRISTMAS SONG



Sandro Botticelli, "Mystic Nativity", 1500

The last stanza of the hymn takes us back to the angels:

*"Glory to God in highest Heaven,  
Who unto man His Son hath given!  
While angels sing with pious mirth  
A glad New Year to all the earth."*

This can be our song too. When you see the lights, remember Jesus. When you see the tree, remember Jesus. When you see the manger, remember Jesus. When you receive a gift, remember God's gift.

And when you sing "Glory to God!", remember that Christmas has a name: **JESUS CHRIST**.

## CHRISTMAS IS FOR SHARING, TOO



Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, "Adoration of the Shepherds", c. 1650

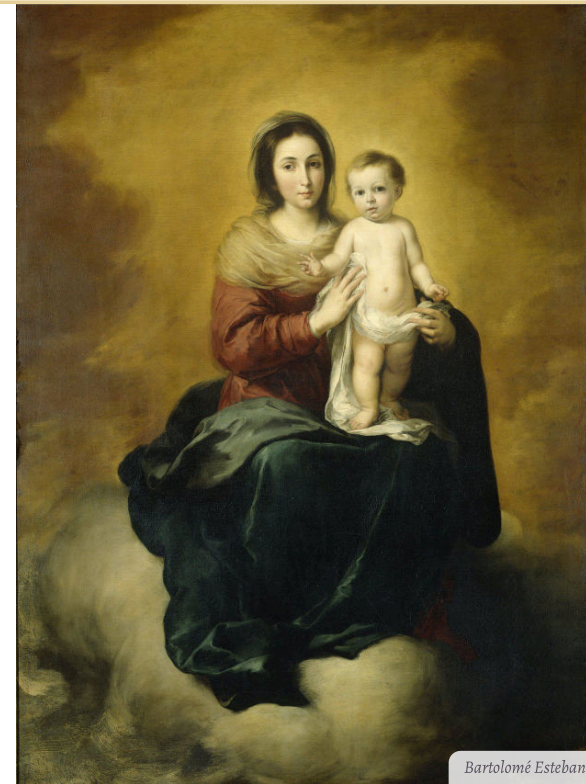
The shepherds did not keep the news to themselves. After seeing Jesus, they returned glorifying and praising God.

We too can share the joy of Christmas. We can tell our friends who Jesus is. We can help someone who needs company. We can visit a relative. We can forgive. We can give thanks.

But above all we can announce the good news:

**"Jesus is born! God kept his promise! We have a Savior!"**

## GOD BECAME MAN



Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, "Virgin and Child"

Jesus is the eternal Son of God. He was always with the Father. But at Christmas something extraordinary happened: the Son of God became a true man.

Jesus was a baby. He got hungry, he needed to sleep, and his mother Mary took care of him. He grew up the way children grow. But that little child was also true God. He is Immanuel: God came to live among us in Jesus Christ.

**God did not stay far away. He came near to us. And he did it out of love.**

## THE MANGER



Giorgione, "Adoration of the Shepherds", c. 1505

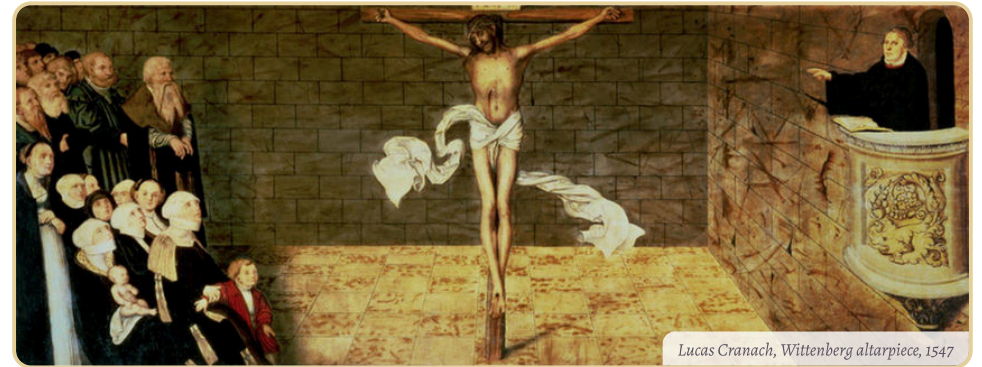
Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem. There Jesus was born. There was no comfortable room for them. Jesus was laid in a manger, the place where the animals lived. What a humble place for the King of the universe! But Jesus was there.

The shepherds received the news from the angels:

*"For to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:11)*

And they went quickly to see him. The Savior was there, small and humble, lying in a manger.

## HOW DO WE LUTHERANS LIVE CHRISTMAS?



Lucas Cranach, Wittenberg altarpiece, 1547

Living Christmas as Lutherans means putting Christ at the center. We celebrate with joy, but our joy has a reason: Jesus was born for us.

We decorate, but we remember what those things can teach us. We sing, because we have good news to announce. We read the Bible, because there we hear about our Savior. We pray, because we depend on God. And we gather as God's family to receive his gifts.

**Christmas is Christ for us.**

## JESUS WANTS TO LIVE IN US



Fritz von Uhde, "Come, Lord Jesus, Be Our Guest", 1885

The hymn also contains a prayer:

*"Ah dearest Jesus, Holy Child,  
Make Thee a bed, soft, undefiled,  
Within my heart, that it may be  
A quiet chamber kept for Thee."*

What a beautiful picture! We cannot make a bed like the one in Bethlehem inside our heart. But we can ask Jesus to reign in our life through his Word. That is why we can pray:

*Jesus, teach me to trust in you. Forgive my sins. Help me to hear your Word and to live as your child. Amen.*

Christmas does not end when we put away the decorations. Jesus wants to be with us every day.

## FROM THE MANGER TO THE CROSS



Lucas Cranach, Weimar altarpiece, 1555

When we look at the manger we see a baby. But we know something the shepherds could not yet fully understand.

That child had come to save us. Jesus was born to die on the cross and rise again for us. That is why, when we look at the manger, we must also remember the cross.

It is the same wood of the manger on which he gave his life for us.

Martin Luther, the Reformer, taught us to look at Jesus and not to stop at the tenderness of the child alone. The child in the manger is the same Jesus who will give his life for our sins.

**The manger shows us that God came to us. The cross shows us how far his love for us went.**

## WHO WAS MARTIN LUTHER?



Lucas Cranach the Elder, "Martin Luther", 1528

Many years ago, in Germany, there lived a man named Martin Luther. Luther was born in 1483 and became a monk and a professor of the Bible.

He loved the Word of God and wanted people to know Jesus and trust in him.

Luther discovered in the Bible that we are not saved because we do enough good things for God. We are saved by God's grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

**That is why Christmas was so important to Luther: in Jesus, God had come to save sinners!**

## THE GREAT KING BECAME SMALL



Gerard van Honthorst, "Adoration of the Child", c. 1620

The hymn makes us think about something surprising: why did the Lord of the world want to come as a poor child?

Jesus did not need to come that way. But he chose to. He humbled himself for us.

The Creator came to his creation. The King came as a child. The Holy One came to save sinners.

**The eternal God became man to bring us to God. That is the wonder of the Incarnation.**

## WHO LIES IN THE MANGER?



Correggio, "The Holy Night", c. 1530

One of the stanzas of the hymn asks a beautiful question:

*"Who is it in yon manger lies?  
Who is this child so young and fair?"*

It seems a simple question. What do we see? We see a child. But faith answers:

*"The blessed Christ-child lieth there."*

That is the heart of Christmas. We can look at the manger and say: **It is Jesus!** We can look at the cross and say: **It is Jesus!** We can open the Bible and hear: **It is Jesus!** All of Christmas points us to him.

## LUTHER AND CHRISTMAS



"Luther with his family on Christmas Eve", 19th-century engraving

Luther liked to celebrate Christmas with his family. For him, teaching children about Jesus was very important.

Christmas could be an opportunity to sing, to pray, to hear the Word of God and to talk about what God had done for us.

Luther wanted people to be able to say:

*"Jesus was born for me, too."*

Because Christmas is not only a story that happened a long time ago. It is the story of the gift that God gives us today as well:

**Jesus Christ, our Savior.**

## THE CHRISTMAS TREE



Vilhelm Kyhn, "Winter Evening in a Forest", 1853

Tradition connects Martin Luther with the Christmas tree.

The story goes that, one winter night as he was walking, Luther was amazed to see the stars shining among the branches of the trees.

When he got home he wanted to share that picture with his family. He put up a tree and added small lights to remind them of the stars he had seen. In time, this tradition became linked with the Christian celebration of Christmas.

**We do not worship the tree. The tree can help us remember Jesus.**

## LET US SEEK THE CHILD



Georges de La Tour, "Adoration of the Shepherds", c. 1644

The angels gave the shepherds a sign:

*"These are the tokens ye shall mark,  
The swaddling clothes and manger dark;  
There shall ye find the young child laid,  
By whom the heavens and earth were made."*

The shepherds went to look for Jesus. We too can come near to Jesus. Where do we find him?

We find him where he has promised to be: in his Word and in his gifts.

When we hear the Bible, we hear about Jesus. When we sing Christian hymns, we confess our faith. When we receive the gifts Christ gives us, we remember that he is near us.

## A SONG THAT TELLS THE CHRISTMAS STORY



Govert Flinck, "Annunciation to the Shepherds", 1639

In the hymn we hear the announcement:

*"To you, this night, is born a child  
Of Mary, chosen mother mild;"*

Then we discover who that child is:

*"'Tis Christ our God, who far on high  
Hath heard your sad and bitter cry;"*

What wonderful news! The child born in Bethlehem is not only a child. He is Jesus Christ, our God and our Savior.

**He comes to look for his sheep. He comes to forgive our sins. He comes to give us life.**

## WHAT DOES THE TREE REMIND US OF?



Viggo Johansen, "Merry Christmas", 1891

When we see a Christmas tree full of lights we can remember that Jesus is the light of the world.

When we see its green branches we can remember the life God gives us, and that Jesus does not change.

When we hang ornaments we can remember that Christmas is a feast of joy.

And when we place gifts under the tree we can remember the greatest gift: God gave us his own Son.

That is why we can have a tree at home and enjoy it, but without ever forgetting what matters most:

**Christmas is Jesus!**

## A DIFFERENT GIFT



Lucas Cranach the Elder, "Law and Grace", 1529

Do you like gifts? Surely you do. But imagine that someone gave you something you could never buy, something you needed very much, and that someone decided to give you free of charge.

That is what God did for us. He gave us his Son. Jesus came into the world to carry our sin, to die on the cross and to rise again.

Salvation is a gift from God. We cannot buy it. We cannot earn it.

**We receive it by faith in Jesus Christ.**

📖 FIND IT IN THE BIBLE: **EPHESIANS 2:8-9**

## FROM HEAVEN ABOVE I COME



"From heaven above I come", Valentin Babst hymnal, Leipzig

Martin Luther also wrote songs to teach the Christian faith. One of them begins like this:

*"From heaven above to earth I come  
To bear good news to every home;"*

It is as if an angel were arriving to announce the great news: **Jesus is born!** The hymn is based on the angels' announcement to the shepherds in Luke chapter 2.

Luther took the Christmas story and turned it into a song so that families, and especially children, could sing it and learn it. Someone in the family would dress up as an angel and they would sing together.

🎵 **HYMN: "FROM HEAVEN ABOVE TO EARTH I COME" (MARTIN LUTHER, 1535; TR. CATHERINE WINKWORTH, 1855)**