



**ADVENT MIDWEEK 1**  
**DECEMBER 2, 2009**

TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
GIRARD, ILLINOIS

# THE INVITATION

Not all invitations are glorious! Not all invitations are what they appear to be.

Left to our own sinful ways, we would refuse to do what we consider is below us. The tempting lies of the devil have us believing that we are what we really are not! As children of Adam and Eve, we desire to be like God. We seek after fame and fortune. We desire the praise of others. We covet splendor, power, prestige, and possessions. We believe ourselves to be above all others.

And so we have gladly accepted the devil's invitation to join him in his make-believe kingdom: a kingdom built on shallow promises and selfish lies, a kingdom of the flesh catering to all our baser desires.

Repent. Confess the sins that you hid even from yourself, the delusions of your heart. Confess who you truly are: full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and malice; a gossip, slanderer, God-hater, insolent, arrogant, and boastful; senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Repent. The lies of the devil are never delivered as promised.

Through the voice of the Gospel hear and heed the invitation—the invitation to join Christ in His kingdom. Of course, not all invitations are glorious! Not all invitations are what they appear to be.

**Savior of the nations, come,  
Virgin's Son, make here Your home!  
Marvel now, O heav'n and earth,  
That the Lord chose such a birth. (LSB 332:1)**

When there was nothing, there was God the Holy Trinity. **“The only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made”** (Nicene Creed).

Out of pure darkness, when there was yet nothing, the invitation came from the Father to His Son, an invitation to join Him in the creating of all things **“visible and invisible.”** An invitation to be the Word, the Word in which all things were made and without which nothing was made. Of course, not all invitations are glorious! Not all invitations are what they appear to be.

For in that loving and gracious speaking, in such creating, God the Holy Trinity was wholly vulnerable. The creation could turn against its creator. The self-giving love of the Holy Trinity could never coerce its creation, would never manipulate for self-satisfaction.

For when perfect creation fell into the abyss of darkness and night, the all-creating Word could do nothing but become incarnate among that which He had once made and spoken good. The perfect Word of creation, Jesus the Christ, became the Word made flesh. The Father's invitation to come down among His sinful children was fully and completely embraced by the Son so that He might speak words of light and life into all the world.

In humility and truest love, the Son left His throne in heaven and joined Himself to Mary's womb. Taking up flesh through the speaking of a word, the only-begotten Son of God was knitted inside the Virgin mother that He might be fully what He had once created.

The invitation to become one of us is the greatest miracle of God. Not only that He created all things, but that He would create Himself to be like us in every way, that He might speak us righteous.

For this Word made flesh spoke the very words of life. Healing disease, raising to life, forgiving sin, granting eternal life—all with a word. And, unlike the devil’s word, His word always does what it says. His word restores and makes whole all that which was once sick and separated.

**From the manger newborn light  
Shines in glory through the night.  
Darkness there no more resides;  
In this light faith now abides. (LSB 332:7)**

Advent is, in my opinion, the most contemplative of all Church seasons. Advent is an invitation. Not all invitations are glorious! Not all invitations are what they appear to be. The invitation to join Christ in His kingdom (no matter what the season) is an invitation to follow in His suffering and death. The Advent invitation is a call to take up our cross and daily follow Him. The Advent invitation at the same time calls us to share the Gospel to the very ends of the earth, to sow the seed that has been given, to work while it is still light.

Faith is the truest theme of Advent. Faith given by our heavenly Father, through the Word, that trusts the Word to deliver all that it promises. A faith that is certain of what is hoped for and is sure of what is not seen. For very soon, the invitation will come from the Father for the Son to come down again, not in new flesh, but in His crucified flesh now glorified. And on that great and glorious day, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. And then the invitation: **“Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world”** (Matthew 25:34). The Word made flesh will be in our hearts and upon our lips for all eternity. Amen.