

HUNTERSVILLE LUTHERAN

*A Changeless Message for
A Changing Community*

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Welcome! Thank you for joining us for worship this evening. Our service is centered on our Savior, Jesus Christ, who lived, died, and rose from the dead so that we would have eternal life in him. God reveals this soul saving message in his Word. We gather to find strength through God's powerful and holy Word. Take a few moments to familiarize yourself with the order of service, readings, and hymns, and fill out the take action card. May God bless our time together this morning.

About Our Worship

The gospel is the good news about what Jesus did to be the Savior for sinners. It is also the power of God—the very thing he uses to work faith in our hearts and transform our lives. Therefore, gospel-centered worship places the gospel in central focus. This order of service is called the liturgy. In the message, in specially selected Scripture readings, and in carefully crafted songs, prayers, and creeds, the liturgy proclaims the good news about Jesus from start to finish. Gospel-centered worship is also designed to include the participation of the entire assembly (including children).

For Your Convenience

Restrooms are located in the gathering space, to the left of the kitchen. There is also a family restroom located in the classroom

Cry Room: If your little one needs some room to move around, head to the back of the sanctuary and you'll find a cry room. You can also go into the classroom off the gathering space if you need more space.

Service Participants

Rev. Douglas R. Van Sice, *pastor of Huntersville Lutheran*

Mrs. Michelle Fouts, *pianist*

Abby Thompson, *Crucifer*

Elizabeth Carresquero, *Torch Bearer*

Addison Schubring, *Torch Bearer*

Casey Vogt, *Gospel Bearer*

SERVICE NOTES

For over a thousand years the Christian world has marked the passing of time from the year of Jesus' birth. Recognizing his coming into the world as the central event in the story of human kind, Christians count the years before his birth as B.C. (Before Christ) and the years after his birth as A.D. (*Anno Domini*, In the Year of Our Lord).

The celebration of Christmas Eve marks the beginning of the Church's celebration of Jesus' birth. The *Christmas Season* lasts for twelve days from December 25th until the Festival of the Epiphany on January 6th. We do not know from Scripture on what day of the year Jesus was born. The tradition of celebrating Jesus' birth on December 25th goes back over 1,700 years. One theory holds that Christians in the Roman Empire deliberately celebrated Christmas at the same time the pagans celebrated the winter solstice. A second theory is perhaps more interesting: An ancient superstition held that great men were conceived and died on the same day. Early biblical scholars computed that Jesus died on March 25th. Therefore, according to this theory, he would have been born nine months later on December 25th.

The *legends* behind the date of Christmas are interesting. The *historical* events surrounding Jesus' birth that are scripture are far more than interesting theories from a bygone age. They are clear, precious, and saving truths that fundamentally change hearts and lives.

A Prayer Upon Entering Worship

Almighty God, how truly wondrous is the whole chronicle of the Nativity. For this night the ancient slavery is ended, the devil confounded, the demons take to flight, the power of death is broken, paradise is unlocked, the curse is taken away, and sin is removed from us. On this holy night, a heavenly way of life has been planted on the earth. On this most holy night, angels communicate with men without fear, and men now hold speech with angels. Help us to once again marvel at the mystery of the incarnation and to find peace, hope, and comfort in our Savior born in Bethlehem. Amen.

~Christmas Prayer of John Chrysostom, 349AD-407AD~

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying:

Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.

~Luke 2:13,14~



AN ORDER FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

Tonight, we gather to celebrate the Nativity of Our Lord. This is the night where grace and truth took on flesh and blood for us. This is the night when peace was manifest in a baby laid in a feeding trough. This is the night when God fulfilled all his promises to you: "Today, in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ, the Lord." God bless our worship as we ponder the good news of this gift given to us by God.

At the Pastor's invitation, please stand and face the processional group at the entrance of the sanctuary. As the cross moves through the sanctuary, turn and face the front.

CALL TO WORSHIP

- ☐ L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- ☒ C **Amen.**
- ☐ L Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come to his people and redeemed them.
- ☒ C **Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.**
- ☐ L Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things;
- ☒ C **His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for us.**
- ☐ L The Lord has made his salvation known
- ☒ C **And revealed his righteousness to the nations.**
- ☐ L He has remembered his love and faithfulness to Israel;
- ☒ C **All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.**
- ☐ L Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth,
- ☒ C **Shout for joy before the Lord, the King!**
- ☐ L For to us child is born. To us, a Son is given.
- ☒ C **In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.**
- ☐ L Now to Him—the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God,
- ☒ C **be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.**
- ☐ L O Come, let us adore him.

PROCESSIONAL

Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful

Christian Worship #354



1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant! O
2 God from true God, and Light from Light e - ter - nal,
3 Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,
4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py morn - ing;



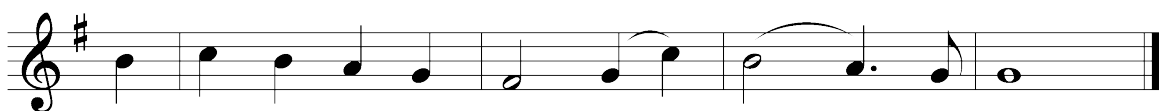
come ye, O come_ ye to Beth - le - hem!
born of a vir - gin, to earth he comes!
sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heav'n a - bove!
Je - sus, to thee_ be all glo - ry giv'n!



Come and be - hold him, born the King of an - gels:
On - ly - be - got - ten Son of God the Fa - ther:
Glo - ry to God, all glo - ry in the high - est:
Word of the Fa - ther, now in flesh ap - pear - ing:



O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him,



O come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord!

CHRISTMAS DIALOGUE

L The people who walked in darkness

C have seen a great light,

L The light shines in the darkness,

C but the darkness has not understood it.

L Those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness, on them light has shined.

C We have seen the glory of the Christ, the glory of the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.

L O Loving God, you once caused this holy night to shine with the brightness of the true light. Turn our thoughts toward Bethlehem and the Christ-child. May the words of Scripture we hear tonight remind us again that the old story is ever so new. May the carols we sing tonight reveal to us again the mystery of his birth. May the candles we see tonight symbolize for us your Son as the Light of the world. May all who have known that Light on earth come to the full measure of its joys in heaven.

C Help us, O Lord, in our worship this night. Amen.



CAROL

Angels from the Realms of Glory

Christian Worship #347, vv1-2, 4-5



1 An - gels from the realms of glo - ry, wing your
2 Shep - herds, in the fields a - bid - ing, watch - ing
4 Saints be - fore the al - tar bend - ing, watch - ing
5 All cre - a - tion, join in prais - ing God the

flight o'er all the earth; once you sang cre -
o'er your flocks by night, God with us is
long in hope and fear, sud - den - ly the
Fa - ther, Spir - it, Son, ev - er - more your

a - tion's sto - ry, now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:
now re - sid - ing; yon - der shines the in - fant light.
Lord, de - scend - ing, in his tem - ple shall ap - pear.
voic - es rais - ing to th'e - ter - nal Three in One.

Refrain

Come and wor - ship, come and wor - ship,
wor - ship Christ, the new - born King.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

☐ Let us pray

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true light. Grant that as we have known on earth the wonder of that light, we may also behold him in all his glory in the life to come; through your only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

☒ Amen.



THE WORD

FIRST READING

Micah 5:2-5a

The Savior is our peace.

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

[L] The Word of the Lord.

[C] Thanks be to God.

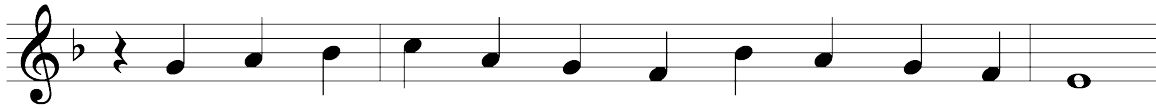
CAROL

Where Shepherds Lately Knelt

Christian Worship #345, vv 1, 3, 4



1 Where shep-herds late - ly knelt and kept the an - gel's word,
3 How should I not have known I - sa - iah would be there,
4 Can I, will I for - get how Love was born, and burned



I come in half - be - lief, a pil - grim strange - ly stirred;
his proph - e - cies ful - filled? With pound - ing heart I stare:
its way in - to my heart— un - asked, un - forced, un - earned,



but there is room and wel - come there for me,
a child, a son, the Prince of Peace for me,
to die, to live, and not a - lone for me,



but there is room and wel - come there for me.
a child, a son, the Prince of Peace for me.
to die, to live, and not a - lone for me?

SECOND READING

Titus 2:11-14

The Savior offers salvation to all people.

¹¹For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. ¹²It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, ¹³while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, ¹⁴who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

☐ The Word of the Lord.

☒ Thanks be to God.



1 Joy has dawned up - on the world, prom - ised from cre - a - tion—
 2 Sounds of won - der fill the sky with the songs of an - gels
 3 Shep - herds bow be - fore the Lamb, gaz - ing at the glo - ry.
 4 Son of Ad - am, Son of heav'n, giv - en as a ran - som;



God's sal - va - tion now un - furled, hope for ev - 'ry na - tion.
 as the might - y Prince of life shel - ters in a sta - ble.
 Gifts of men from dis - tant lands proph - e - sy the sto - ry:
 rec - on - cil - ing God and man, Christ, our might - y cham - pion!



Not with fan-fares from a - bove, not with scenes of glo - ry,
 Hands that set each star in place, shaped the earth in dark - ness,
 gold— a king is born to - day; in - cense—God is with us;
 What a Sav - ior! What a friend! What a glo - rious mys - t'ry!



but a hum - ble gift of love— Je - sus born of Mar - y.
 cling now to a moth - er's breast, _ vul - n'ra - ble and help - less.
 myrrh—his death will make a way, and by his blood he'll win us.
 Once a babe in Beth - le - hem, _ now the Lord of his - t'ry.

¹In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ²(This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³And everyone went to their own town to register.

⁴So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. ⁵He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

⁸And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

¹³Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor
rests."

¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

¹⁶So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.



□ The Gospel of the Lord.

■ Praise be to you, O Christ!

Charles Wesley was the younger brother of Anglican clergyman, John Wesley. Whereas John stuck largely to theology (and is generally credited as being the founder of the Methodist movement), Charles stuck primarily to hymn writing. He penned "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing", which was first printed in *Hymns and Sacred Poems* in 1739. It quickly became extremely popular. The tune associated with "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" is titled *MENDELSSOHN*. It comes from the second chorus of Felix Mendelssohn's *Festgasang an die Kunstler*, written in 1840 to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Johannes Gutenberg's invention of movable type. The pairing of this tune and text resulted in what is arguably the most popular Christmas hymn of all time.



1 Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new - born King;
 2 Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord,
 3 Hail, the heav'n - ly Prince of Peace! Hail, the Sun of Right-eous-ness!



peace on earth and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled!"
 late in time be - hold him come, off-spring of a vir - gin's womb.
 Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with heal - ing in his wings.



Joy - ful, all ye na - tions rise, join the tri - umph of the skies;
 Veiled in flesh the God-head see, hail th' in - car - nate De - i - ty!
 Mild he lays his glo - ry by, born that man no more may die,



with th' an - gel - ic host pro - claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"
 Pleased as man with man to dwell, Je - sus, our Im - man - u - el!
 born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them sec - ond birth.



Refrain
 Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new - born King!"

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

A sermon by Pastor Douglas Van Sice based on Titus 2.

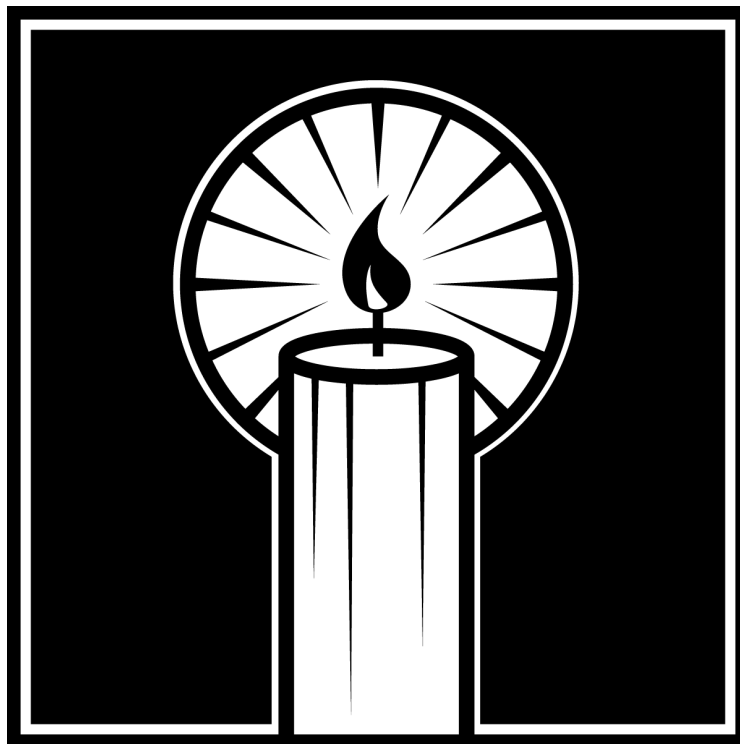
OFFERING | The members of Huntersville Lutheran have joined together to do the Lord's work in this community and around the world. If you would like to give digitally, simply scan the QR code. Guests, you are welcome to participate in supporting our ministry, but certainly do not feel obligated.



CONNECT CARD | In your service folder, you will find connect cards. If you haven't done so already, please take a moment and fill it out completely to give us a record of your attendance. In addition, you may request prayers be said on your behalf today. You may place your Connect Card as the offering plates are passed around this evening.

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

The candles are lighted following the instructions of the presiding minister. Please be careful with the candles as they may drip wax. Be sure to hold them upright. They will remain lighted through the final stanza of the closing hymn. If you need a candle, they are located with the usher just outside the sanctuary doors.



PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

L Let us pray:

Dear Father, thank you for giving us your Son—because only in him may be bold to call you Father. Thank you for being God-with-us. Thank you for fleshing out your love, forgiveness, and peace, in a way we can approach, touch, and believe in our trembling and death-shadowed hearts. Thank you for bringing us the light of eternity in this Babe of Bethlehem, Mary's boy, your Son, and our Savior. Let us join the angels this night in their song:

C **Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.**

L Bless your Church throughout the world, and make it a place where all may hear the angel's song and hasten to see and to adore Jesus, who is their Lord and Savior. Shelter your persecuted Church in your arms, so they may gather to worship in peace and rise to serve you in joy. Lord, in your mercy,

C **Hear our prayer.**

L Bless everyone for whom this season of joy is dimmed by sorrow, pain, loneliness, and everything else that is inflicted by evil's power working through human hands or natural disaster. Come with healing in your wings; with tidings of great joy; and with light and life for all. Lord, in your mercy,

C **Hear our prayer.**

L Bless all who mourn with the certainty that you have opened heaven's doors to all who have died trusting in your promises. Bless us each day of our earthly pilgrimage with peace and mercy, reconciliation and joy. And lead us, at length, we pray, to your bright courts of heaven, and to your endless day. Lord, in your mercy,

C **Hear our prayer.**

L Thank you for hearing our prayers, dear Lord. We entrust them, and our lives into your merciful care.

C **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

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.

LORD'S BLESSING

- ☐ The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.
- ☒ Amen.



"Silent Night" is the undoubtedly the most beloved of all the "cradle carols," those quieter Christmas hymns which remind one of a song a new mother might sing to her infant. It was written in 1818 by Joseph Mohr, assistant priest in St. Nikolaus Church in Oberndorf, a small village in Upper Austria. It is believed that Mohr began writing the hymn late the evening of December 23rd. He had been summoned to the home of a humble woodcutter to bless a baby that had recently been born. On his way home, he contrasted that scene with the birth of Christ in a humble stable. The thought inspired him to write the poem Stille Nacht, which he finished about 4am. After a few hours of sleep, Mohr rose and took the poem to the office of Franz Gruber, who was both Mohr's best friend and the organist at St. Nikolaus, and asked him to set the poem to music for use in that evening's Christmas Eve service. Within a few hours, Gruber had sketched in a melody and simple harmony. Since the organ at St. Nikolaus was broken, Gruber's arrangement was for guitar. The tune quickly spread over Germany and Austria. A touring family of singers, the Raniers, sang it for the Emperor of Austria, the Czar of Russia, Queen Victoria of England, Napoleon III, and in 1839 presented it in New York City before the Alexander Hamilton memorial. All this came from a simple poem and guitar tune that were written in about twelve hours Christmas Eve day.

1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm,
 2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake
 3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God,

all is bright round yon vir - gin moth - er and child.
 at the sight. Glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far,
 love's pure light ra - diant beams from thy ho - ly face

Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and mild, sleep in heav - en - ly
 heav'n - ly hosts sing, Al - le - lu - ia! Christ, the Sav - ior, is
 with the dawn of re - deem - ing grace, Je - sus, Lord, at thy

peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
 born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!
 birth, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth.