



Sunday, December 28, 2025

10:00 a.m.

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Christmas



Pastor Steve Albertin



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2201 E. 106th Street, Carmel IN 46032  [kogcarmel.org](http://kogcarmel.org)

Worship and Ministry Center · ELCA

# WE GATHER TO WORSHIP

## Prelude

“Two Carol Settings”

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice  
From Heaven Above to Earth I Come

Wilbur Held

## Announcements

## Gathering Song

Jesus, Joy of the Highest Heaven

## Call to Worship

L: On this day earth shall ring –

C: **Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

P: Love has come down at Christmas,

C: **Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

P: Friends, let us rejoice this day!

C: **And perfect love casts out all fear.**

P: Friends, let us rejoice this day!

C: **For Christ is born, and the angels sing: Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

## Song

How Suddenly a Baby Cries

## Confession and Forgiveness

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✕ one God, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty Savior, Prince of Peace.

C: **Amen.**

P: Trusting in God’s steadfast love and faithfulness, let us confess our sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

P: Reconciling God,

C: **we yearn for your presence to transform our grief, pain, and despair. We confess that we have not always prepared room in our hearts for your love; we have not always recognized your presence among us; we have not always embraced your message of peace. We cry out, weary with the burden of violence, oppression, and fear. We confess our failure to make room for those seeking refuge; our participation in violent systems that harm your innocent ones; our reluctance to embody your good news. Be born in us today and teach us to sing the joyful song of your salvation. Amen.**

P: God’s grace upon grace flows over you. ✕ Christ’s presence redeems the whole creation. Your sins are forgiven. Let the earth rejoice and be glad!

C: **Amen.**

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: And also with you.

*(pass the peace as you feel comfortable)*

## Prayer of the Day

P: O Lord God, you know that we cannot place our trust in our own powers. As you protected the infant Jesus, so defend us and all the needy from harm and adversity, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

*please be seated*

## Lesson 10 Hebrews 2:10-18

Gospel Matthew 2:13-23

## Gospel Response

P: Word of God, word of life.

C: Thanks be to God.

## Children's Message

Pastor Steve

## Sermon

Pastor Steve

## Hymn

FIW 286

## The Nicene Creed

C: We believe in one God.

the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,**

the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through Him all things were made. For us and for our salvation He came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit He became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and became truly human. For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate; He suffered death and was buried. On the third day He rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
Who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son  
He is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets. We  
believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one  
Baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the  
dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

*please be seated*

## The Offering

**The Offering Response**      “What Feast of Love”      ELW 487  
(vs 1 & 3)

### Offertory Prayer

P: God of glory, great are your wonders among us and many are the blessings you bestow. Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world, that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace, through Christ our Savior.

C: **Amen.**

**Prayers of the Church** (*the congregation joins in speaking the first names of those for whom we pray.*)

Members: Judy, Marion, Kelly, Jeff, Lee, Marj, Vickie

Family & Friends: Faizah, Darin, Tom, Chris, Chuck, Sylvia, Bill, Ken, Dana,  
Marie, Mary, Carol, Susan, Bob

## Communion

### Words of Institution

#### The Lord's Prayer

C: 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. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the Kingdom, the power, and the glory are Yours, now and forever. Amen!

## Distribution

*All baptized Christians who seek the blessings of Christ's true body and blood in the bread and wine of Holy Communion are welcome. Those who do not wish to receive may come forward for a blessing. Please let your server know if you desire a gluten-free wafer.*

P: God is now in flesh appearing. Come to the feast of joy!  
C: **Amen.**

*please be seated*

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## Benediction

P: The God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus.

C: Amen.

P: The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: The God of all grace ✡ bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

## Song What Child is This

## Sending

P: Glory to God in the highest!

C: And peace to God's people on earth!

P: Go in joy. Embody God's redeeming grace.

C: Thanks be to God!

## Postlude

“God Rest You Merry”

Wilbur Held

## Announcements

### Thank You

As we've shared time with family and friends this past weekend, we wanted to thank our KOG Family for the most generous Christmas Gift to the staff. It is our greatest honor to serve with you, in the name of Jesus. Christmas blessings to you and your loved ones.

### Poinsettias

Please don't hesitate to take a poinsettia home with you (even if, perhaps, you didn't purchase one ... unless you have a curious cat!!! ... don't take one if you have a cat).

### Year End Giving

For those wanting contributions to be included for your 2025 taxes, please make sure checks are received in the office by 11:00 am Wednesday, December 31 (the office closes at noon). There are members planning year end giving to include an early start for 2026. Questions? Contact Neisha, neisha.johnson@kogcarmel.org or 317-846-1555 ext 3.

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### PRAYER REQUESTS

Members  
Kelly Baugh  
Lee Bucher  
Marion Loyda  
Jeff Minich  
Judy Naaman  
Vickie Sampspon  
Marj Schott

### Family & Friends

Tom Anderson, Bob Bohn, Marcia Duhm,  
Mary Hall, Carol Happ, Susan Haywood,  
Brenda Ingle, Ken North, Billy Ross, Chuck  
Sousa, Darin & Faizah, Chris, Wendy, Sylvia

### CALENDAR

- SUNDAY, December 28  
10:00 am Worship
- MONDAY, December 29  
9:00-3:00 Office Open
- TUESDAY, December 30  
9:00-3:00 Office Open
- WEDNESDAY, December 31  
9-12 Office Closes at Noon  
Last Day for 2025 Giving

- THURSDAY, January 1  
Office Closed

- FRIDAY, January 2  
Office Closed

## WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

### Theme of the Week: The Cost of Discipleship

Having celebrated the Nativity of our Lord, the church now turns toward the hard and honest call of discipleship. Following Christ is not sentimental or easy, for the spirit of Herod is still alive and active in the world, resisting the reign of God wherever it appears. When we examine our own hearts, we must admit that we are not naturally prepared to bear the crosses that come with faithfulness. Like Peter during Holy Week, our confidence often falters when the cost becomes clear. Yet discipleship is not sustained by our courage or resolve. We live by faith in the promises of God, who meets us precisely in our weakness. God strengthens us in times of need and supplies grace sufficient for each day. The cost of following Jesus is real, but it is never greater than the mercy of the One who calls us. We pray not that the road be easy, but that we would not grow weary, trusting that Christ walks it with us.

#### SUNDAY SCRIPTURE: John 21:20–24 The Crosses of Others

After the resurrection, Peter turns his attention away from his own calling and toward the future of another disciple. Jesus responds firmly: “What is that to you? Follow me.” With these words, Christ redirects Peter from comparison to faithfulness. Each disciple is given a particular path, shaped by different joys, sufferings, and responsibilities. This perspective remains necessary for the church. We are tempted to measure our burdens against those of others or to worry excessively about paths that are not ours to walk. Yet Christ promises to be present in every cross, working through suffering for good, even when we cannot see how. Our story, whatever its particular shape, is grounded in the same promise: we are redeemed by Christ, called to follow, and held securely in hope. In Christ, the ending is life. *Lord, help us to follow you faithfully and entrust others to your care. Amen.*

#### MONDAY SCRIPTURE: Matthew 2:13–18 Evil’s Perverted Kingdom

Herod’s violent response to the birth of Jesus reveals how deeply threatened earthly power becomes when confronted with God’s reign. The newborn Christ exposes the fragility of human kingdoms built on fear and control. Rather than repent, Herod lashes out, bringing suffering and grief to Bethlehem. This story confronts us with an uncomfortable truth: the same impulse lives within us. We resist Christ whenever we fear losing control, comfort, or autonomy. Yet the Gospel speaks a different word. Christ does not come to steal life from us, but to give us a better and lasting kingdom. Where there is fear, Christ brings peace. Where there is shame, Christ brings forgiveness. By grace alone, the true King delivers us from lesser kingdoms that never satisfy and invites us into life that endures. *Jesus, you are our true and gracious King. Amen.*

#### TUESDAY SCRIPTURE: Galatians 4:1–7 Children of God

Paul proclaims the astonishing good news that God sends the Son to redeem all who live under the burden of the Law. Redemption is costly for its through Christ’s death that we are freed from fear. The salvation we receive is not an abstract idea, but a concrete act of divine mercy. Through Christ, we are not merely forgiven; we are adopted. The Holy Spirit bears witness within us, crying out “Abba, Father,” assuring

us that we belong to God. We are no longer enslaved by fear, but live as children and heirs of grace. This identity does not rest on our obedience, but on God's promise. Even when faith feels fragile, God's claim on us remains firm. *Gracious God, by your mercy we are your children. All praise to you. Amen.*

#### WEDNESDAY SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 11:1–5 Jesse's Stump

Isaiah speaks to a people who know loss and judgment. The royal line of David appears cut off, reduced to a stump. Yet God's promise does not end in ruin. From what looks dead and lifeless, God brings forth new life—a living shoot from Jesse's line. This promise is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, whose reign is marked not by violence but by righteousness and peace. In him, even creation itself is healed. Those who abide in Christ are grafted into this living vine, sharing in his resurrection life. Death does not have the final word, because Christ lives forever. In baptism and faith, we are joined to this life that cannot be undone. *Lord Jesus, graft us into yourself by your Word, that we may live in you forever. Amen.*

#### THURSDAY SCRIPTURE: Luke 2:22–32 He Comes and Is Coming

Simeon stands as a witness for all who wait in hope. Having trusted God's promise across a lifetime, Simeon now holds the Christ child and sees salvation made flesh. In this moment, waiting turns into peace, and longing gives way to fulfillment. We, too, live between promise and fulfillment. Christ has come, and all that is necessary for salvation has been accomplished. Yet we still wait for the fullness of God's reign. Like Simeon, we are strengthened by the Spirit to live in hope, confident that God's promises do not fail. Christ comes to us now in Word and Sacrament, and Christ will come again to bring all things to completion. *Come, Lord Jesus, come. Amen.*

#### FRIDAY SCRIPTURE: Hebrews 2:9–16 Suffering Glory

The letter to the Hebrews reshapes our understanding of glory. Glory is not found in power or acclaim, but in the suffering of Christ for the sake of the world. Jesus is crowned with glory precisely because he endured the cross and reconciled us to God. This truth reframes our own suffering. Faithfulness may lead to hardship, but suffering borne in Christ is not wasted. Because Christ has entered fully into human pain and death, our crosses are held within God's promise. Even death itself becomes a passage, not an ending. Hidden within suffering is the hope of resurrection and the glory of the life to come. *Jesus, strengthen us to confess your name faithfully. Amen.*

#### SATURDAY SCRIPTURE: Psalm 111 Worship Is Remembering

Psalm 111 reminds us that worship begins not with our feelings, but with remembering God's mighty works. The gathered community recalls what God has done and who God has been revealed to be: gracious, merciful, and faithful. Without this remembering, worship easily turns inward, focused on personal piety rather than God's saving action. In Word and Sacrament, especially in Holy Communion, the church remembers Christ as commanded, trusting that God continues to act through these means. God's faithfulness does not fade with time. It endures from generation to generation, anchoring our hope until God brings us home. *Faithful God, keep us rooted in your saving acts. Amen.*