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First Sunday of Christmas  
9:30 am worship service

# **FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH** | Inviting, Growing, Serving...

## Becoming fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

December 31, 2023

### **WELCOME TO WORSHIP**

Faith is a growing faith community in the Aurora area. We're people just like you, who are hungry to know God better. We're looking for the answers to life's tough questions. We're struggling to be better parents, spouses, friends, and neighbors. We don't have all the answers but we're growing as we go.

Faith is a great place to find healing for broken hearts and broken lives. In every Sunday message you'll learn new skills and attitudes to help you live life with the kind of joy that God intends for us. You'll also meet people who are also growing in their journey through the joys and challenges of life. You'll find lots of "walking partners" for your journey here. There are no closed doors at Faith, just lots of opportunities to grow in Christ, friendship, and love.

Faith is a church with a great vision; however, accomplishing a great vision requires the participation of many great people like you. There's a place in our vision for you to use your unique gifts and talents.

### **CURRENT MESSAGE SERIES : ONE THING**

The New Year is full of possibilities that fuel potential for a better future. That's why we make resolutions . . . even though those resolutions usually fall by the wayside. Here's something simple you can do to make the most of this year.

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# The Gathering

**OPENING SONGS** *please stand*

## **O Come, All Ye Faithful**

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant

O come ye, o come ye to Bethlehem

Come and behold Him, born the King of Angels

*Chorus* O come, let us adore Him

O come, let us adore Him

O come, let us adore Him

Christ the Lord

Oh sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation

Oh sing all ye citizens of heaven above

Glory to God, Glory in the highest (*Chorus*)

Our Lord, now we greet Thee, Born this happy morning

Jesus forever more Be Thy name adored

Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing (*Chorus*)

## **The First Noel**

The First Noel the Angels did say  
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay  
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep  
On a cold winter's night that was so deep

*Chorus* Noel Noel Noel Noel  
Born is the King of Israel!

They looked up and saw a star  
Shining in the East beyond them far  
And to the earth it gave great light  
And so it continued both day and night (*Chorus*)

And by the light of that same star  
Three Wise men came from country far  
To seek for a King was their intent  
And to follow the star wherever it went (*Chorus*)

This star drew nigh to the northwest  
O'er Bethlehem it took it's rest  
And there it did both Pause and stay  
Right o'er the place where Jesus lay (*Chorus*)

Then entered in those wise men three  
Full reverently upon their knee  
And offered there in His presence  
Their gold an myrrh and frankincense (*Chorus*) (*Chorus*)

## **OPENING PRAYER**

A: Almighty God, you wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and yet more wonderfully restored it. In your mercy, let us share the divine life of the one who came to share our humanity, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

## **WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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## The Word

### FIRST LESSON

**Galatians 4:4-7**

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Angels We Have Heard on High

*please stand*

Angels we have heard on high  
Sweetly singing o'er the plains  
And the mountains in reply  
Echoing their joyous strains

Chorus    Gloria in Excelsis Deo  
              Gloria in Excelsis Deo

### GOSPEL

**Luke 2:22-40**

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, “Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have

prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.” And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.” There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

## **MESSAGE**

One Thing | Pastor Rob

## **PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH**

- A: Trusting in God’s good news of great joy for all people, we offer our prayers for ourselves, our neighbors, and the world God loves.
- A: You inspire faith in our hearts and call us to rejoice with our whole selves at the salvation you bring. Make our churches places of belonging for all people in the fullness of their being. Raise up the gifts and the witness of people who are neurodivergent, living with disability, or bearing invisible illness. Hear us, O God.
- C: Your mercy is great.**
- A: Your praise is sung throughout creation in all times and seasons. As the new year turns, ground us in your changeless and sustaining love. Keep us attentive to the rhythms of the cosmos and inspire us to live in harmony with all the earth. Hear us, O God.
- C: Your mercy is great.**

A: Give hope and stamina to leaders who work tirelessly for the sake of the most vulnerable. We pray especially for organizations working on behalf of children to provide basic needs, to protect from abuse and neglect, to address trauma, and to rescue from trafficking. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

A: Sustain all people who, like Simeon and Anna, have been waiting for salvation and wholeness. We pray especially for anyone living with cancer or chronic illness, all people who are in physical rehabilitation or addiction recovery, and those experiencing complications from long COVID. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

A: Let this community of faith be a joyful and welcome place for all ages and generations. Teach us to honor the wisdom of children, the inquisitiveness of youth, the thoughtfulness of adults, and the knowledge of elders. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

A: Gracious and loving God, we pray for the family and friends of Faith... Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

A: Abide with us, O God of mercy, and receive our prayers according to your abundant grace.

**C: Amen.**

**SHARING OF THE PEACE**

**OFFERING**

## OFFERING RESPONSE

What Child is This

*please stand*

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;  
come, peasant, king, to own Him.  
The King of Kings salvation brings;  
let loving hearts enthrone him.

## OFFERTORY PRAYER

A: God of abundance,  
receive and bless these gifts we have offered.  
Join our hearts with the song of the angels,  
and gather us at your table of celebration.  
Strengthen us to share with all the world  
the abundance of your grace upon grace,  
poured out in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.

C: **Amen.**

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## *The Meal*

P: God, you are with us.

C: **You are always with us.**

P: May we open our hearts.

C: **May we know your presence.**

P: In thanksgiving,

C: **And in deepest honor.**

P: Holy God, we honor you in whom our lives are founded, and in whom our futures lie. We remember and honor also the human searching over the centuries that has perceived your presence in life, and your meaning for all of life.

Above all we honor Jesus, our Christ, whose life and death reveal to us, as his resurrection, the full nature of your being and the potential nature of ours.

We remember that, on the night before his death, Jesus, as he'd always



done, gathered his friends for a common meal. He took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread and gave some to each one, saying:

“Take, eat: This is my body given for you and for everyone.

Do this in remembrance of me.”

After supper he took a cup of wine, and, when he had given thanks, he gave it to them and said:

“Drink this, all of you: This is my blood which is shed for you and for everyone. Drink this in remembrance of me.”

In light of this, we proclaim the mystery of our faith:

**C: Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ’s spirit renews our lives.**

**P:** Holy God, may our hearts and minds be alive to what is sacred in this bread and wine. May they open us to your guidance and to your love for us, for all humankind, and for all life on this earth. This is our hope, our common will, and the expression of our love and trust in Jesus, our Christ.

And now, in the spirit of Christ’s teaching, we pray:

## **THE 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;**

**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.**

## INVITATION TO THE MEAL

P: Glory to God in the highest!  
Come to the table of peace.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

## DISTRIBUTION

### AN INVITATION

*We invite you to share in Holy Communion this morning, regardless of your church background or lack thereof. We believe that God is present in the bread and wine as it becomes the body and blood of Jesus Christ and that this presence is a gift of grace in the lives of those who receive it. All are welcomed to the table enjoy this gift of God's love and mercy. Grape juice is in the center of the communion tray. Gluten free wafers available at usher stand.*

## COMMUNION BLESSING *please stand*

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in His grace.

C: **Amen.**

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## *The Sending*

### SENDING PRAYER

A: God our redeemer,  
you have fed us at this table  
with gifts of grace, truth, and life.  
As you have gathered us in joy,  
send us forth as messengers of your peace.  
Make us shine with the good news of your glory,  
born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: **Amen**

## He Has Come For Us

### CLOSING SONG

God rest ye merry gentlemen  
Let nothing you dismay  
Remember Christ, our Savior  
Was born on Christmas day  
To save us all from Satan's power  
When we were gone astray

O, tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy  
O, tidings of comfort and joy

He has come for us this Jesus  
He's the hope for all mankind  
He has come for us the Messiah  
Born to give us life (He is born to give us life)

From God, our heavenly Father  
A blessed angel came  
And unto certain shepherds  
Brought tidings of the same  
How that Bethlehem was born  
The Son of God by name

All the angels sing hallelujah  
Jesus Christ is born  
All the children sing Hallelujah  
He is Christ the Lord

Angels sing Hallelujah  
Jesus Christ is Lord  
All the children sing Hallelujah  
He is Christ the Lord

### DISMISSAL

L: Christ the Savior is born!  
Go in peace. Proclaim this good news.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

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## NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **Welcome to Faith!**

We are so glad that you have chosen to worship with us today! Have questions about Faith? Wondering how to get connected or get more involved? We'd love to help. No matter where you are in life or how many times you've visited, we're here to guide you towards your next best step. Stop by the welcome center located near the main entrance. If this is your first time at Faith, let us know, we've got a special gift just for you!

### **FAITH'S CONSTITUTION UPDATE**

The constitution of Faith Lutheran Church has not been updated since 2005. The synod has made several suggested modifications available over the years. After several months of research and discussion, your Congregational Council has voted to recommend to conform to the Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, current as of August 2022. A copy of the new constitution was emailed to all members. Additional copies are available at the welcome center. We will conduct an informational session on this constitution and the changes to our current document, along with a question and answer period, before our Annual Meeting on January 28, 2024.

### **MOM'S GROUP: A Moment for Mom**

**Sat 1/13 | 10:00 AM**

We are hosting moms of children infants-elementary school to come together for a time of learning, laughter, and treats. Take a moment to connect with other moms, while enjoying a yummy breakfast, hearing from a knowledgeable speaker on topics related to parenting, and building your mom village along the way. Our group meets the 2nd Saturday of each month, through May, 10:00 AM - 12:15 PM. For more information about our guest speaker and topic lineup, and to register for events, please visit [www.discoveringfaith.com/amomentformom](http://www.discoveringfaith.com/amomentformom).

### **NEXT**

**Sun 1/21 | 9:00 & 10:30 AM**

If you've ever wondered how to get involved at Faith, or how to take the next step, don't worry. We've created a simple next step for you. It's a small gathering called NEXT. This informal gathering lasts only about 20 minutes after services and will provide you an overview of our mission, strategy, and environments to help you determine your best next step for continuing your faith journey. Meets fireside

## ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sun 1/28 | 10:45 AM

All members are invited to attend Faith's annual congregational meeting. Agenda items will include a review and celebration of 2023, approval of the 2024 spending plan, the election of council members and nominating committee members.

## KIDWERKS

Sundays at 9:30 AM

Kidwerks~in person AND online!

Join us as we dive into learning about new virtues each month through stories from the bible so that we can grow in our understanding and relationship with God. To register go to [discoveringfaith.com](https://discoveringfaith.com) or for more information please contact [jenn@discoveringfaith.com](mailto:jenn@discoveringfaith.com)

## REVOLUTION

Sundays | 5:00 PM

On Sunday Nights at Faith, we've created an event that attracts **middle & high school students just like you**. After all, we figure you want to be wherever your friends are. We make this time as fun and relevant as we possibly can. The goal is for you to leave feeling energized to go out there and tackle another week!

## Giving at Faith! As Easy as Click & Give



As followers of Jesus Christ, we embrace irrational generosity. We know it changes lives—ours and the people we're reaching. At Faith, taking action on your generosity is simple. Just scan the QR code with your camera and give. Simple, safe, and secure.

**Prayers**

If you would like to add someone to our prayer list and have the prayer team pray for them, please contact the church office at [\(630\) 862-3500](tel:6308623500) or send an e-mail [prayerteam@discoveringfaith.com](mailto:prayerteam@discoveringfaith.com)

Prayer concerns will be listed for four weeks unless otherwise noted.

**Care**

If you know of someone who is in need of emotional, physical, or spiritual support, please contact our care team at: [careteam@discoveringfaith.com](mailto:careteam@discoveringfaith.com)

**Pastoral Emergency**

In the case of an emergency that requires immediate Pastoral Care, please contact Pastor Rob directly on his cell phone at [\(630\) 248-5515](tel:6302485515).



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