



**Christ  
Lutheran**  
CHURCH

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LESSONS  
AND

*Carols*



**First Sunday of Christmas  
DECEMBER 31, 2023**

## **We Welcome You to Christ Lutheran Church! We are a community of people sharing God's love through Christ and growing together in faith.**

We celebrate all the ways we are made in the image of God, seeking to see God in everyone. We honor and respect each person's age, ethnicity, family composition, gender identity, gender expression, life history, mental well-being, physical ability, relationship status, sexual orientation, skin color, and socioeconomic standing. Together, we strive to love and serve our neighbor and all creation, including working toward racial and social justice. We would love to walk with you on this creative adventure\* of faith, grace, and love.

*\* The first sermon ever preached at Christ Lutheran was titled "A Call to Creative Adventure."*

### **ABOUT WORSHIP**

We gather to worship weekly to hear and remember our shared hope: the life, death, and resurrection of Christ makes all things new, even us.

You will find everything that happens in worship printed in this bulletin, with hymns found in the red hymnals ("ELW") in the seats in front of you.

If you have a prayer request, note it on a yellow card from the seatback holder and pass it to an usher; the other side is for any information you would like about Christ Lutheran. Please feel welcome to remain seated as necessary during the service.

### **CHILDREN ARE ALWAYS WELCOME IN CHURCH!**

God's people come in all shapes and sizes – it is a gift to the whole community when the smallest of us are present! Sitting with parents and learning to treasure times of worship is the foundation for helping build a growing faith in a child's life. There's some noise and movement that we expect from little ones - feel free to make use of the **activity bags, doodle pads, bookshelf in the overflow area and cry room at the back of the sanctuary** as needed. Whatever sacrifice of energy and effort you make to include your children in worship is multiplied as the good news of God's love takes root in their lives!

### **WHEN NURSERY CARE IS NEEDED DURING WORSHIP**

A fully equipped and staffed Nursery is available for both infants and toddlers during all services. The Nursery is located west of our gathering area in **Room 110**.

### **RESTROOMS**

Men's and women's restrooms off the Gathering Area and Church Hall have changing tables, as does the all-gender restroom near the nursery. A second all-gender restroom is through the Vestry off the East hallway, past the Welcome Center.

### **HOLY COMMUNION**

**Holy Communion** is the family meal of God's people, to which we come at Jesus' invitation. The body and blood of Christ, in the bread and wine, are his real presence with us and offer the gift of forgiveness because of his death and resurrection. Drawn together and strengthened by this meal, we are given a taste of the fullness of God's coming kingdom, and are equipped to be the hands and feet of God's love in the world. All baptized Christians are always welcome at the Lord's table.

Our services are on video, and occasional photographs are taken for our website and e-mail news. If you have concerns, please speak to a church staff member.

*Hearing assistance devices are available to those who need help with listening to the service and are located at the entrance to the sanctuary, or please see an Usher for assistance.*

**A Reminder: Please turn off all cell phones during worship services.**

As on the first day of creation, on this First Sunday of Christmas the Word illumines the world, shining forth to bring all things into being. Today we celebrate the incarnate Word, God becoming flesh to live among us in the person of Jesus Christ then and now. Emboldened by the good news of Christ's birth, along with the shepherds, Mary and Joseph, and all witnesses to the light of Christ, we declare to the world that we have indeed seen and been transformed by the arrival of "the salvation of our God." O come, let us adore!

## GATHERING

*The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God*

**PRELUDE**

*From Heaven Above to Earth I Come*

Pachelbel

**WELCOME**

**GATHERING CAROL ELW #283**

*O Come, All Ye Faithful*

1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant! O  
 2 The high - est, most ho - ly, light of 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, a mor - tal he comes;  
 sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heav - en a - bove!  
 Je - sus, to thee be . . . glo - ry giv'n!

come and be - hold him, born the king of an - gels:  
 Son of the Fa - ther now in flesh ap - pear - ing!  
 Glo - ry to God . . . in . . . the . . . high - est:  
 Word of the Fa - ther, now in flesh ap - pear - ing:

*Refrain*

Ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus, ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus,  
O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him,

ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus Do - mi - num.  
O come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord!

Text: attr. John Francis Wade, 1711–1786; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802–1880, sts. 1, 3–4; tr. unknown, st. 2  
Music: ADESTE FIDELES, attr. John Francis Wade

## GREETING

Peace to you and welcome,  
from the God who has always known you,  
the Savior who is already born,  
the Spirit who listens before you ask.  
**Amen.**

*Children: This is the day that the Lord has made.*  
**Let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

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.**

## WORD

*God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching and song.*

*When children read, they may read a version that is appropriate to their reading level and voice, which may vary from the printed texts.*

### **CHILDREN'S TIME**

*The assembly is seated as children come forward for a time together.*

#### **FIRST READING: ISAIAH 9:2–7**

<sup>2</sup>The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep darkness —  
on them light has shined.

<sup>3</sup>You have multiplied the nation,  
you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you  
as with joy at the harvest,  
as people exult when dividing plunder.

<sup>6</sup>For a child has been born for us,  
a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders;  
and he is named  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

<sup>7</sup>His authority shall grow continually,  
and there shall be endless peace  
for the throne of David and his kingdom.  
He will establish and uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time onward and forevermore.  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

FIRST CAROL ELW #295

*Of the Father's Love Begotten (vs. 1, 2, 5)*



1 Of the Fa - ther's love be - got - ten ere the worlds be -  
 2 Oh, that birth for - ev - er bless - ed, when the vir - gin,  
 3 This is he whom seers in old time chant - ed of with  
 4 Let the heights of heav'n a - dore him; an - gel hosts, his  
 5 Christ, to thee, with God the Fa - ther, and, O Ho - ly



gan to be, he is Al - pha and O - me - ga,  
 full of grace, by the Ho - ly Ghost con - ceiv - ing,  
 one ac - cord, whom the voic - es of the proph - ets  
 prais - es sing; pow'rs, do - min - ions, bow be - fore him  
 Ghost, to thee, hymn and chant and high thanks - giv - ing



he the source, the end - ing he, of the things that are, that  
 bore the Sav - ior of our race, and the babe, the world's re -  
 prom - ised in their faith - ful word; now he shines, the long - ex -  
 and ex - tol our God and King; let no tongue on earth be  
 and un - wea - ried prais - es be: hon - or, glo - ry, and do -



have been, and that fu - ture years shall see,  
 deem - er, first re - vealed his sa - cred face,  
 pect - ed; let cre - a - tion praise its Lord  
 si - lent, ev - 'ry voice in con - cert ring  
 min - ion, and e - ter - nal vic - to - ry



ev - er - more and ev - er - more.  
 ev - er - more and ev - er - more.  
 ev - er - more and ev - er - more.  
 ev - er - more and ev - er - more.  
 ev - er - more and ev - er - more! A - men.

Text: Marcus Aurelius Clemens Prudentius, 348-413; tr. composite  
 Music: DIVINUM MYSTERIUM, plainsong mode V, 13th cent.

## SECOND READING: MICAH 5:2-5a

<sup>2</sup>But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. <sup>3</sup>Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. <sup>4</sup>And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; <sup>5</sup>and he shall be the one of peace.

## SECOND CAROL ELW #272 *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming* (vs. 1-3)

1 Lo, how a rose e'er bloom - ing from ten - der stem hath  
2 I - sai - ah had fore - told it, the rose I have in  
3 This flow'r, whose fra - grance ten - der with sweet-ness fills the  
4 O Sav - ior, child of Mar - y, who felt our hu - man

sprung! Of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing as  
mind; with Mar - y we be - hold it, the  
air, dis - pels with glo - rious splen - dor the  
woe; O Sav - ior, king of glo - ry, who

seers of old have sung, it came, a flow'r so bright, a -  
vir - gin moth - er kind. To show God's love a - right, she  
dark-ness ev - 'ry - where. True man, yet ver - y God, from  
dost our weak - ness know: bring us at length, we pray, to

mid the cold of win - ter, when half - spent was the night.  
bore to us a Sav - ior, when half - spent was the night.  
sin and death he saves us and light - ens ev - 'ry load.  
the bright courts of heav - en and in - to end - less day.

### THIRD READING: LUKE 2:1-16

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup>Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. <sup>5</sup>He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup>While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup>And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

<sup>8</sup>In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup>But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see — I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: <sup>11</sup>to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup>This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup>"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

<sup>15</sup>When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." <sup>16</sup>So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.



1 An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
 2 Shep - herds, in the fields a - bid - ing, watch - ing o'er your flocks by night,  
 3 Sa - ges, leave your con - tem - pla - tions, bright - er vi - sions beam a - far;  
 4 All cre - a - tion, join in prais - ing God, the Fa - ther, Spir - it, Son,

once you sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry, now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:  
 God with us is now re - sid - ing, yon - der shines the in - fant light.  
 seek the great de - sire of na - tions, you have seen his na - tal star.  
 ev - er - more your voic - es rais - ing to the e - ter - nal Three in One.

*Refrain*

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

Text: James Montgomery, 1771–1854, alt., sts. 1–3; *Salisbury Hymn Book*, 1857, st. 4  
 Music: REGENT SQUARE, Henry T. Smart, 1813–1879

#### FOURTH READING: LUKE 2:21–38

<sup>21</sup>After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

<sup>22</sup>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 <sup>23</sup>(as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), <sup>24</sup>and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

<sup>25</sup>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. <sup>26</sup>It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. <sup>27</sup>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, <sup>28</sup>Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, <sup>29</sup>"Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; <sup>30</sup>for my eyes have seen your salvation, <sup>31</sup>which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, <sup>32</sup>a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."

<sup>33</sup>And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. <sup>34</sup>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 <sup>35</sup>so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed — and a sword will pierce your own soul too."

<sup>36</sup>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, <sup>37</sup>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. <sup>38</sup>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.

#### FOURTH CAROL ELW #288 *Good Christian Friends, Rejoice* (vs. 1 & 3)

1 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;  
 2 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;  
 3 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;

give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to - day;  
 now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!  
 now ye need not fear the grave; Je - sus Christ was born to save!

ox and ass be - fore him bow, and he is in the man-ger now.  
 He has o - pened heav-en's door, and we are blest for - ev - er - more.  
 Calls you one and calls you all to gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.

Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!  
 Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!  
 Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

Text: Medieval Latin carol; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818–1866  
 Music: IN DULCI JUBILO, German carol, 14th cent.; arr. Robert L. Pearsall, 1795–1856

### FIFTH READING: MATTHEW 2:13-18

<sup>13</sup>Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." <sup>14</sup>Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, <sup>15</sup>and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son." <sup>16</sup>When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. <sup>17</sup>Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

<sup>18</sup>"A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."

*Lul-lay, thou little tiny Child,  
By, by, lully, lul-lay;  
Lul-lay, thou little tiny Child,  
By, by, lully, lul-lay.*

*O sisters, too, how may we do,  
For to preserve this day;  
This poor Youngling for whom we sing,  
By, by, lully, lul-lay.*

*Herod the King, in his raging,  
Charg-ed he hath this day;  
His men of might, in his own sight,  
All children young, to slay.*

*Then woe is me, poor Child, for Thee,  
And ever mourn and say:  
For Thy parting nor say nor sing,  
By, by, lully, lul-lay*

**SIXTH READING: JOHN 1:1-14**

*The assembly stands.*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup>in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. <sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. <sup>9</sup>The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup>He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. <sup>12</sup>But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, <sup>13</sup>who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. <sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

## SIXTH CAROL ELW #292

*Love Has Come*

1 Love has come— a light in the dark - ness! Love shines forth in the  
 2 Love is born! Come, share in the won - der. Love is God now a -  
 3 Love has come and nev - er will leave us! Love is life ev - er -



Beth - le - hem skies. See, all heav - en has come to pro - claim it;  
 sleep in the hay. See the glow in the eyes of his moth - er;  
 last - ing and free. Love is Je - sus with - in and a - mong us.



hear how their song of joy a - ris - es: Love! Love! Born un - to  
 what is the name her heart is say - ing? Love! Love! Love is the  
 Love is the peace our hearts are seek - ing. Love! Love! Love is the



you, a Sav - ior! Love! Love! Glo - ry to God on high.  
 name she whis - pers; Love! Love! Je - sus, Im - man - u - el.  
 gift of Christ - mas. Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

Text: Ken Bible, b. 1950

Music: UN FLAMBEAU, F. Seguin, *Recueil de Noël's composés en langue provençale*, 1856

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## NICENE CREED

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,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and 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,  
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
who 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.

## PRAYERS

Glory to God in the highest,  
**and peace to God's people on earth.**

You are called the Prince of Peace -

**may your rule of peace come to all nations of the world.**

You uphold your kingdom with justice and righteousness -

**may the powers of this world be shamed by the power of your love.**

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light -

**shine with healing and hope shine for all who are sick or suffering.**

O newborn King, reign with love in the lives of those we name before you now...

*In the silence, we lift up all in need, and join the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle in lifting up the lands, people, and churches of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine.*

Lord Jesus, you are good news of great joy to all the world.

**Fill us with your good news, so that like the shepherds we go glorifying and praising God! Amen.**

## SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

*We invite those worshipping by livestream to share a sign of peace in the chat, and for those in person we turn to offer them our greeting of peace before sharing a sign of peace with one another: **Peace be with you!***

## MEAL

*God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ*

## OFFERING

*This congregation serves our neighbors, community, and the world through the participation and support of its members and guests.*

*Because offerings are never just about us, this month we are sharing a portion of your gifts with **Bethel Lutheran Church**, a diverse, urban ELCA congregation in the Miller neighborhood of Gary, Indiana (part of NW Indiana Conference of I-K Synod) <http://bethelmiller.org> and <http://facebook.com/bethelmillerbeach>.*

*If you wish to give electronically, use the QR code or browse to our secure on-line portal at [clcvalpo.org/give](http://clcvalpo.org/give) or use [our CLC app](http://our-CLC-app) (download at [clcvalpo.org/app](http://clcvalpo.org/app)).*



## OFFERTORY

*From Heaven Above to Earth I Come*

Pachelbel

## **OFFERTORY PRAYER**

*The assembly stands as the gifts are brought forward.*

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.**  
**Amen.**

## **GREAT THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

*The pastor begins the prayer and all join in singing:*

**SANCTUS ELW #289**      *Angels We Have Heard on High (v. 3)*

*Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing;  
Come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn king.*

*Refrain*

*Gloria in excelsis Deo;  
gloria in excelsis Deo.*

## **TABLE PRAYER**



## LORD'S PRAYER

*Children: The Spirit makes us one. We pray as Jesus taught us:*

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.**

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Glory to God in the highest!

Come to the table of peace.

**Thanks be to God!**

## DISTRIBUTION

*The assembly is seated.*

*The pastor invites those worshipping via **livestream** to commune:*

The body of Christ, given for you.

**Amen (receive the bread)**

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

**Amen (receive the cup)**

**In-person distribution:** When indicated by the ushers, come up the right-hand ramp to approach the altar rail. When finished you may leave individually without being dismissed. WINE is lighter-colored and GRAPE JUICE is dark; they are received via individual cups in the trays. USED GLASSES are placed in the basket located near the ramp. GLUTEN-FREE BREAD IS AVAILABLE, please indicate to the server that you require this.

COMMUNION HYMNS: ELW #296

*What Child is This*

1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar-y's lap is sleep-ing?  
 2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - ing?  
 3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas-ant, king, to own him.

Whom an - gels greet with an-thems sweet while shep-herds watch are keep - ing?  
 Good Chris-tian, fear; for sin-ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.  
 The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; let lov - ing hearts en-throne him.

This, this is Christ the king, whom shep-herds guard and an-gels sing;  
 Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;  
 Raise, raise the song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by;

haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y!  
 hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y!  
 joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y!

Text: William C. Dix, 1837-1898  
 Music: GREENSLEEVES, English ballad, 16th cent.

ELW #287 *Let All Together Praise Our God*

1 Let all to - geth - er praise our God be - fore the  
 2 From God's right hand the Son de - scends, is born an  
 3 O ten - der Child, you veil in flesh the splen - dor  
 4 Your moth - er feeds you ten - der - ly, sings you a

high - est throne; to - day God o - pens heav'n a - gain and  
 in - fant small, and lies in pov - er - ty, his bed a  
 of your might; a ser - vant's garb now wraps the one who  
 lul - la - by, while an - gels, hail - ing Da - vid's heir, your

sends the on - ly Son, and sends the on - ly Son.  
 man - ger in a stall, a man - ger in a stall.  
 clothed the sky with light, who clothed the sky with light.  
 glo - ry mag - ni - fy, your glo - ry mag - ni - fy.

5 A wonderful exchange you make:  
 you take our flesh and blood,  
 and in return give us to share  
 the shining realm of God,  
 the shining realm of God.

6 Unlock the door again today  
 that leads to paradise;  
 the angel bars the way no more.  
 To God let praises rise,  
 to God let praises rise!

Text: Nikolaus Herman, 1480–1561; tr. hymnal version  
 Music: LOBT GOTT, IHR CHRISTEN, Nikolaus Herman  
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*After all have returned to their places, the assembly stands as the minister continues.*  
The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

**Amen.**

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

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.

**Amen.**

### **SENDING**

*God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world*

### **BLESSING**

God bless you and keep you,  
✠ Jesus grant you grace and truth,  
and the Spirit send peace upon your hearts,  
now and forever.

**Amen.**

SENDING CAROL ELW #267 *Joy to the World (vs. 1, 2, 4)*

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -  
 2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their  
 3 No more let sin and sor - row grow nor thorns in -  
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the

ceive her king; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him  
 songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and  
 fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings  
 na - tions prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous -

room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture  
 plains re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing  
 flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is  
 ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his

and heav'n and na - ture sing, and

sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.  
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.  
 found, far as, far as the curse is found.  
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

heav'n and na - ture sing,

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748  
 Music: ANITIOCH, English melody, 18th cent.; arr. Lowell Mason, 1792-1872

*Children join the pastors to send us in mission*

**DISMISSAL**

*Children: Go in peace. Christ is with you.*

**Thanks be to God!**

**POSTLUDE**

*Joy to the World*

Held

**Worship Leaders**

	<u>8:00 a.m.</u>	<u>10:30 a.m.</u>
Acolyte		
Lector	Dave Keammerer Darla Hernandez	Doug Schmidt Grace Safrin
Communion Assistants	Phyllis Schroeder Darla Hernandez	
Ushers	Reagan Jackson Irene Adams	
Sound/Light		Tony Reinhold
Video/Livestream	-----	
Pastors	Rev. Timothy Knauff, Jr. Rev. Erica Gibson-Even	
Director of Music Ministries	Brian Bartusch	
Communion Baker	Marilyn McGawn	

## **Ecumenical Prayer Cycle**

This week we pray for the churches and people of **Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine.**

We are **thankful** for:

- lands and monuments sacred in the origins of Judaism, Christianity and Islam
- those who unceasingly work for peace and reconciliation in the Holy Land
- the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel
- those who continue to welcome the multitudes of refugees in their lands

We **pray** for:

- ending the violence racking this region, that the people might live together in peace, security and respect for each other
- those who have grown weary and disillusioned in searching for solutions
- an end to religious differences being exploited to perpetuate conflict and further displacement of people
- political leaders who will courageously bring about justice and reconciliation for the sake of all

### ***Stewardship Snippet***

*“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.” --Luke 2:39-40*

Stewardship of faith involves showing up, doing the right thing, and taking care of responsibilities. Joseph and Mary practiced this by fulfilling God's law for their son Jesus. Why not make 2024 a year to develop good, consistent stewardship practices all year long?

## Affirmation and Expectation

Imagine the baptism of an infant on a winter Sunday morning. Imagine the baby, dressed in a fragile heirloom, and family members and sponsors crowded around the font. Imagine the richness of the ritual—the pronouncement of ancient promises, wet hands and hair, an oily cross on soft skin, a freshly lit candle, laughter and applause.

Now, imagine that an elder in the congregation rises and, unprompted, takes the baby in his arms. As the people look on in stunned silence, he sings a hymn of heartfelt gratitude and wonder. Then another elder stands, turns to face the assembly, and testifies to God’s goodness on account of this child. Imagine the surprise. Imagine the indelible memory.

Something similar happens when Mary and Joseph bring the baby Jesus to the temple to present him to the Lord. Once they have done their part to mark Jesus as a member of God’s people, two strangers unexpectedly acknowledge him too. Simeon and Anna have each spent a lifetime on the lookout for a sign of God’s promised redemption. And stumbling upon him in the temple, they do not hesitate to say so: “My eyes have seen your salvation,” Simeon sings, “which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples.”

But it isn’t all good news. Peering into Mary’s eyes, the prophet also foresees that Jesus will uncover the thoughts of many a heart, and that the end result will feel like a blade to her soul. As if she did not already have plenty to ponder (Luke 2:19)!

There is perhaps nothing like the arrival of a child to inspire our hopes and fears for the future. And spoken words of affirmation and expectation have the power to illuminate the possibilities. Jesus is the child in whom God makes the greatest promises. So rejoice with prophets like Simeon and Anna, those who see him for who he is. And, come what may, hold tight to their testimony until God’s promises are fulfilled.

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