

## NATIVITY OF OUR LORD, CHRISTMAS EVE

DECEMBER 24, 2025

### Introduction

In winter's deepest night, we welcome the light of the Christ child. Isaiah declares that the light of the long-promised king will illumine the world and bring endless peace and justice. Paul reminds us that the grace of God through Jesus Christ brings salvation to all people. The angels declare that Jesus' birth is good and joyful news for everyone, including lowly shepherds. Filled with the light that shines in our lives, we go forth to share the light of Christ with the whole world.

### Prelude and Special Music by:

**3:30** Allison Nelson, Nelson Family Strings, Schneider Family, Sophia Weltz

**5:30** Isaac Kuenzli, Sarah Hanigan Whitney, Praise Team, Jaxon Roberts

**10:30** Jackie Reinders, Mackenzie Frush, Chancel Choir, Rick Hicks

### Welcome and Announcements

### Lighting of the Advent Candles

Through this Advent Season,

we have waited and watched, **prayed and prepared.**

We have been invited **into the hope of God's promise.** (first candle)

We have been blessed **for the peace of God's people.** (second candle)

We have been filled **with the joy of God's presence.** (third candle)

We have been called **by the love of God's heart.** (fourth candle)

As we celebrate the Messiah's birth and await his coming again, we turn our hearts to God in Confession.

## **Confession and Forgiveness**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty Savior, Prince of Peace. **Amen.**  
Trusting in God's steadfast love and faithfulness, let us confess our sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

**Reconciling God, 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.**

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! **Amen.**



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;



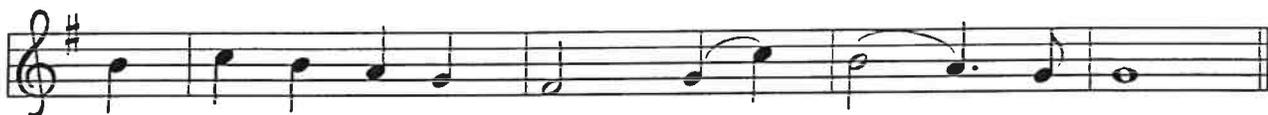
come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem;  
 born of a vir - gin, a mor - tal he comes;  
 sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heav - en a - bove!  
 Je - sus, to thee be . . . glo - ry giv'n!



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

Christ has called us to this place,  
gathered one and all by his Holy Spirit.

**We are followers of Christ  
who seek to hear the Word,  
Live the Word, and Share the Word.**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## Special Music #1

## Children's Sermon

### First Reading: Isaiah 9:2-7

*This poem promises deliverance from Assyrian oppression, a hope based on the birth of a royal child with a name full of promise. While Judah's king will practice justice and righteousness, the real basis for faith lies in God's passion for the people: The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this!*

<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 exultation;  
you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you  
as with joy at the harvest,  
as people exult when dividing plunder.

<sup>4</sup> For the yoke of their burden  
and the bar across their shoulders,  
the rod of their oppressor,  
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

<sup>5</sup> For all the boots of the tramping warriors  
and all the garments rolled in blood  
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

<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> Great will be his authority,  
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.

... Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

### **Second Reading: Titus 2:11-14**

*The appearance of God's grace in Jesus Christ brings salvation for all humanity. Consequently, in the present we live wisely and justly while also anticipating the hope of our Savior's final appearance.*

<sup>11</sup> The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, <sup>12</sup> training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, <sup>13</sup> while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. <sup>14</sup> He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

... Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

### **Special Music #2**

The Holy Gospel according to Saint Luke, the Second Chapter.  
**Speak Lord, your servants are listening.**

### **\*Gospel: Luke 2:1-7.**

*God's greatest gift comes as a baby in a manger. Angels announce the "good news of great joy" and proclaim God's blessing of peace.*

<sup>1</sup> In those days a decree went out from Caesar 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 in the guest room.



O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!  
 For Christ is born of Mar - y, and, gath - ered all a - bove  
 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is giv'n!  
 O ho - ly child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;



A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by;  
 while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won-d'ring love.  
 So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heav'n.  
 cast out our sin, and en - ter in, be born in us to - day.



yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light.  
 O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth,  
 No ear may hear his com - ing; but, in this world of sin,  
 We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;



The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.  
 and prais - es sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!  
 where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.  
 oh, come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Im - man - u - el!

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835-1893

Music: ST. LOUIS, Lewis H. Redner, 1831-1908

### Gospel: Luke 2:8-14.

<sup>8</sup> Now in that same 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!"

## Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

Please greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace;  
the same peace the angels proclaimed.

## Offering

As the good news has come to us and to all people, so God calls us to share good news in word and in deed. In thanksgiving for the first and best Christmas Gift given, Christ Jesus himself, we receive the gifts of God's people for the work of God's kingdom on earth.



## Offering Hymn

### "What Child is This?"

ELW 296



- 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.

### **\*Offering Prayer**

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. **Amen.**

### **\*Prayers of Intercession**

Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need. *A brief silence.*

Gathering God, you bring your people from every corner of the earth together before the manger that you have made a throne. Unite the church in love as we rejoice in the news of your coming. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Creating God, you brought forth the earth and all that is in it. Join our voices with the roaring seas, the exulting fields, and the trees of the forest singing for joy on this holy night. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Transforming God, the world trembles amid violence and war. Empower our hands, feet, and hearts with your Spirit to shatter the rod of the oppressor and turn swords into plowshares. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Shepherding God, you lead us to your love in the face of our neighbor. Send us into the world to find your Word made flesh in one another, especially those who are sick or struggling (*especially*).

Mel Satnan, Stephany Sanborn, Summer, Lyn Smith, Dana Hansen, Angie Robbins, John Robbins, Doug Knutson, Lucy Bergan, Lacey Mescher, Ann Huffman, Dawn Jensen, Dave Blasingame, Tim Wegner, *Kathy Heilaman, Norma Jones*

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Nurturing God, you dwell with us in humble places. Sustain housing and clothing ministries in this community, that all find shelter and warmth. We pray especially for youth seeking safety and care. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Abiding God, you remain at the side of all the departed. Grant all who mourn hope in the resurrection and peace in Christ Jesus. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

### **Special Music #3**

#### **Gospel: Luke 2:15-16.**

<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.

### **\*The Great Thanksgiving: Dialogue**

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We light them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord, Our God.

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

### **\*Eucharistic Prayer and Words of Institution**

This God of whom we speak, of whom we sing, is indeed a Holy and Mighty God, powerful and merciful. And this God not only came to us, but became one of us; God grew in Mary's womb, nurtured by her body, and as he grew, the hope and fears of all the years drew near to their fulfillment.

On the night in which he was born, our Lord Jesus took a body, in all its human brokenness, and his mother placed him in a feeding trough – a foreshadowing of another night, when Jesus would offer his own body, broken as food. That night, when God came to earth, the new covenant began to take shape, a covenant begun with the pains of labor and brought to completion with the agony of the cross. On the night in which he was born, our very God became very human, so that he might live and die for us.

On the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, gave thanks; and broke it, and gave it to his disciples saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying, take and drink, this is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

For as often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim that the Lord comes, that the Lord has come, that the Lord will come again. **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

God who comes to us, pour out your Holy Spirit upon this bread and wine, and upon all your people gathered here: grant us faith so that we may live in hope; lead us into Peace with self, neighbor, creation, and Creator; bring us the Joy of living in the freedom of salvation; send us out with the Love that is born in Bethlehem and in our hearts; so that we may proclaim Christ in word and deed. **Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.**

All glory and honor is yours, O God, who comes to fulfill all expectation in the most unexpected of ways, through Jesus Christ the Word made flesh, with the Holy Spirit who breathes life into a dying world; now and forever. **Amen.**

### **\*Lord's Prayer**

Gathered together by the Holy Spirit, 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**

God is now in flesh appearing. Come to the feast of joy!

**Communion Hymns**

**"Away in a Manger"**

**ELW 277**



1 A - way in a man - ger, no crib for his bed, the lit - tle Lord  
2 The cat - tle are low - ing; the ba - by a - wakes, but lit - tle Lord  
3 Be near me, Lord Je - sus; I ask you to stay close by me for -



Je - sus laid down his sweet head; the stars in the bright sky looked  
Je - sus, no cry - ing he makes. I love you, Lord Je - sus; look  
ev - er and love me, I pray. Bless all the dear chil - dren in



down where he lay, the lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.  
down from the sky and stay by my cra - dle till morn - ing is nigh.  
your ten - der care and fit us for heav - en, to live with you there.

Text: North American, 19th cent.

Music: AWAY IN A MANGER, James R. Murray, 1841-1905

**"Infant Holy, Infant Lowly"**

**ELW 276**



1 In - fant ho - ly, in - fant low - ly, for his bed a cat - tle stall;  
2 Flocks were sleep - ing, shep - herds keep - ing vig - il till the morn - ing new



ox - en low - ing, lit - tle know - ing Christ the child is Lord of all.  
saw the glo - ry, heard the sto - ry, tid - ings of a gos - pel true.



Swift-ly wing-ing, an - gels sing-ing, bells are ring-ing, tid - ings bring-ing:  
Thus re - joic - ing, free from sor - row, prais-es voic-ing, greet the mor - row:



Christ the child is Lord of all! Christ the child is Lord of all!  
Christ the child was born for you! Christ the child was born for you!

Text: Polish carol; tr. Edith M. G. Reed, 1885-1933, alt.  
Music: W ZLOBIE LEZY, Polish carol

### "Angels We Have Heard On High"

ELW 289



1 An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,  
2 Shep-herds, why this ju - bi-lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?  
3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;



and the moun-tains in re - ply, ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.  
What the glad - some tid - ings be which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?  
come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born king.

*Refrain*



Glo

ri - a



in ex - cel - sis

De - o;

glo



ri - a

in ex - cel - sis

De

o.

Text: French carol; tr. H. F. Hemy, *The Crown of Jesus Music*, 1864  
Music: GLORIA, French carol

May the body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ, strengthen you, and keep you in his grace, now and forever. **Amen**

**Gospel: Luke 2:17-19.**

<sup>17</sup>When the shepherds saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child, <sup>18</sup>and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them, <sup>19</sup>and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.

**\*Prayer after Communion**

Incarnate God, you are among us at this table. May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts the mystery of your presence. Move us to discover the wonders of your love in the everyday moments of our lives, through Christ born in us. **Amen.**

**Message**

**Hymn**

**"Silent Night, Holy Night"**

**ELW 281**

*Please stand and raise your candles as we sing the third verse.*



Stil - le Nacht, hei - li-ge Nacht! Al - les schläft,  
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,



ein - sam wacht nur das trau - te, hoch - hei - li - ge Paar.  
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 your ho - ly face,



Hold - er Kna - be im lok - ki - gen Haar, schlaf in himm - li - scher  
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 your



*Refrain*



Go tell it on the moun - tain, o-ver the hills and ev - 'ry - where;



go tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born!



- 1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,
- 2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when, lo, a - bove the earth
- 3 Down in a lone - ly man - ger the hum-ble Christ was born;

*Refrain*



be - hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.  
rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.  
and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless-ed Christ-mas morn.

Text: African American spiritual, refrain; John W. Work Jr., 1872–1925, stanzas, alt.  
Music: GO TELL IT, African American spiritual

\*Dismissal

Glory to God in the highest! **And peace to God's people on earth!**  
Go in joy. Embody God's redeeming grace. **Thanks be to God.**