



Nativity of Our Lord: Christmas Eve

December 24, 2025



7:00 PM

Welcome to our worship of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God made flesh among us! 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.

GATHERING

GATHERING MUSIC:

"O Holy Night"

-- Linda Hertzog, Soprano

GATHERING HYMN:

"Hark, the Herald Angels Sing"

ELW 270

*Hark, the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled."
Joyful, all you nations, rise! Join the triumph of the skies;
With angelic hosts proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark, the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"*

*Hail the heav'nborn Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings, ris'n with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,
Born to raise each child of earth, born to give us second birth.
Hark, the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"*

INVOCATION, CONFESSION, AND FORGIVENESS:

Blest are You, O Lord our God— our Creator, ✝ our Redeemer, the Spirit of reconciling love!

And blest is Your Reign, now and forever!

Into the midst of a world plagued by violence and strife, You've given us Your Son to be our peace.

But we confess that we're not at peace— not with others, not even with ourselves.

We bring to You all that tears us apart:
discord in our families, violence in our world, and our own conflicted hearts.

***We keep choosing competition over compassion and power over humility;
we're quick to get angry but slow to forgive;
we haven't embraced love in harmony with You.***

Hear us now, O Lord, as we confess the sin that everyone knows and the sins we fear to name:

Silence for personal soul searching and confession.

In Your great mercy, mend our hearts and our relationships,
and reconnect us to one another and to You.

***Let Your peace reign in our hearts and over all the earth
through the Prince of Peace, Christ Jesus our Savior. Amen.***

In the living Word who's come to dwell with us, God's given us grace upon grace:
forgiveness that's stronger than our sins, love that can heal every broken heart.

Listen to this word of God's pardon and peace:

In the Name of ✙ Christ Jesus our Savior, you're free from all your sins.

Rise, shine, for your Light has come!

Amen. Thanks be to God!

HYMN OF PRAISE: "Angels We Have Heard on High"

ELW 289

***Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!***

***Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn king.
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!***

GREETING AND PRAYER:

Alleluia! To us is born a Savior, Jesus the Messiah, our Lord!

Come, let us adore Him! Alleluia!

Good and gracious God, on this holy night You gave us Your Son,
the Lord of the universe, wrapped in swaddling clothes— the Savior of all, lying in a manger.
On this holy night, draw us into the mystery of Your love.
Join our voices with the heavenly host, that we may sing Your glory on high.

Give us a place among the shepherds, that we may find the One for whom we've so longed:
Jesus Christ, Your Word made flesh, who lives and reigns with You
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, in the splendor of eternal light, God forever and ever.

Amen.

WORD AND PRAYER

FIRST READING:

Isaiah 9.2-7

NIV

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. ³ You've enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before You as people rejoice at the harvest, as warriors rejoice when dividing the plunder. ⁴ For as in the day of Midian's defeat, You've shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor. ⁵ Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire. ⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he'll be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there'll be no end. He'll reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

This is holy wisdom; this is holy Word.

Thanks be to God!

SECOND READING:

Titus 2.11-14

NIV

The apostle writes: ¹¹ The grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. ¹² It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, ¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who 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's good.

This is holy wisdom; this is holy Word.

Thanks be to God!

THE HOLY GOSPEL:

Luke 2.1-20

NIV



***Oh, come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant! Oh, come ye, oh, come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold Him born the king of angels:***

***Oh, come, let us adore Him, oh, come, let us adore Him,
Oh, come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!***

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the second chapter.

Glory to You, O Lord!

In 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.) ³ And everyone went to their own town to register. ⁴ So 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. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ and 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.

***The highest, most holy, light of light eternal, born of a virgin, a mortal He comes;
Son of the Father now in flesh appearing!
Oh, come, let us adore Him, oh, come, let us adore Him,
Oh, come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!***

⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Don't be afraid! I bring you good news that'll cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He's the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You'll find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³ Suddenly 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!"

***Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation!
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above: "Glory to God in the highest!"
Oh, come, let us adore Him, oh, come, let us adore Him,
Oh, come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!***

¹⁵ When 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." ¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they'd seen Him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they'd heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

This is the Gospel of our Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ!

*Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born on earth to save us. Jesus, to Thee be glory giv'n!
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:
Oh, come, let us adore Him, oh, come, let us adore Him,
Oh, come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!*

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

HYMN OF THE DAY: “Joy to the World!”

ELW 267

*Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive its King!
Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room
And heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.*

*Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.*

*He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness
And wonders of His love, and wonders of His love, and wonders, wonders of His love.*

CONFESSION OF FAITH:

From Martin Luther's Small Catechism

I believe that Jesus Christ— true God, Son of the Father from eternity,
and true man, born of the virgin Mary—
this same Jesus Christ is my Lord!

*What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the king, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring Him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!*

At great cost He's saved and redeemed me, a lost and condemned person.
*He's freed me from sin, death, and the power of the Devil,
not with silver or gold, but with His holy and precious blood
and His innocent suffering and death.*

***Why lies He in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce Him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;
Hail, hail the Word made flesh, the Babe, the Son of Mary!***

All this He's done that I might be His own, live under Him in His kingdom,
and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness,
***just as He's risen from the dead and lives and rules eternally.
This is most certainly true!***

***So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh; come, peasant, king, to own Him.
The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone Him.
Raise, raise the song on high; the virgin sings her lullaby;
Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the Babe, the son of Mary!***

THE PRAYERS AND PEACE:

Then trusting in this God, living in this Hope, let's pray for a world redeemed,
the Church renewed, and all people restored in the Coming One:

Holy and gracious God, we give You thanks and praise for the incarnation of Your dear Son at the heart of human life, near to those who suffer, beside the sinner, among the poor, and with us now! Though we find Him tonight wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger, we long for the day when He'll rule Your creation with justice and righteousness unto endless peace.

So we bring to the manger our longing for the visible unity of Christ's body here and throughout the world, that we may proclaim with one undivided voice the One whose birth brings good news of glad tidings for all people.

We bring to the manger Your vision of the Reign of the Prince of Peace, praying that the nations, communities, and peoples of this world may see and cherish in one another the very image of Christ, whose scepter is mercy and whose justice is love.

We bring to the manger hope for the well-being of all creation, that every living thing may flourish in its preservation and abundance.

We bring to the manger those whose circumstances make it difficult to celebrate this holiday season, that the darkness of their struggle may be pierced by the light of Christ who takes their sufferings upon Himself.

We bring to the manger our own anxious hearts made even more frenzied by all the preparations of this season. Free us from our preoccupation with what's in the past; relieve us of our fears of what's yet to come; and give us the confident peace to live in this present moment fully and joyfully, in the full assurance that we live in the light of Your unfailing compassion.

We bring to the manger concern for those who have no place to lay their heads this night and for those who dwell in the shadow of loneliness, despair, illness, or death, especially those we remember before You now... Grant that their weakness may become the cradle in which Christ's healing presence is manifested anew, and that renewed in body and spirit, we may all encourage and strengthen one another.

We bring to the manger all those who, like the Holy Family, gather with children in the splendor of this most holy night, that the gift of faith in You may be lavished on our children and their children yet to come.

We bring to the manger the hopes and dreams of all the years, that with Mary and Joseph, angels and archangels, saints and martyrs, loved ones of every time and every place, our prayers and praises may join in a common song uniting heaven and earth in a single peace.

Trusting in Your mercy, saving God, we commend to You all for whom we pray,
through the One born among us, Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen.

The peace of the Lord is with you always.

And also with you.

Reconciled to God and to one another, we share a sign of Christ's peace.

MEAL

THE OFFERING OF OUR GIFTS AND OURSELVES, WITH ANTHEM"

"Come, O Come to Us, We Pray"

-- By Mary Kay Beall and John Carter

OFFERTORY HYMN:

ELW 279

*O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray.
Cast out our sin, and enter in; be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell.
Oh, come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel!*

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING:

Blest are You, holy, mighty, and merciful Lord!
You bring light from darkness, life from death, speech from silence!
We worship You for our lives and for the world You give us.
We thank You for the world to come, and for the love that'll rule all in all.
We praise You for the grace shown to Israel, the people of Your promise:
the rescue from Egypt, the gift of the promised land, the memory of the ancestors,
the homecoming from exile, and the prophets' words that won't be in vain.

In all this we bless You for Your Son, Christ Jesus our Lord,
who fulfilled and will fulfill all Your promises.
Living out Your death-defying love in word and deed,
He gave His life for us even unto death on the cross,
that filled with the Spirit of His resurrection, we might have eternal life in Him.
And so, with Your Church on earth and the whole company of heaven,
we praise Your Name and join their unending hymn:

Sung to the tune of "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing":

***Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of pow'r and might adored,
Heav'n and earth cannot contain all the glory of Your Name!
Hail, hosanna, God Most High! Blest is He who now draws nigh
In the Name of God our King! Let our high hosannas ring
And with earth and sky and sea praise His Name eternally!***

In the night in which He was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread and gave thanks;
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 of them to drink,
saying, "This cup 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."

And so, remembering His life given for us, rejoicing in His rising from the grave,
we await His final appearing when all things will be restored in Him.
Now pour out Your Holy Spirit upon us, that held and nourished by You,
we who share the Lord's body and blood may live as His body in the world,
ambassadors of His healing love, until all things are made whole in Him.
All this we pray with joy through our Lord Jesus Christ, who's taught us to pray:

Sung to the tune of "Away in a Manger" ELW 277:

***Our Father in heaven, all praise to Your Name!
Your Reign be among us; Your will done the same
By mortals and angels. Come, Lord, reign alone!
Oh, hear us and bless us from heaven's high throne.***

***The bread that we yearn for, provide us each day;
As we forgive others, our sins take away;
In times of temptation, to lead us be near;
From evil deliver Your children most dear.***

***For Yours is the Kingdom— o'er all things You reign!
And Yours is the power— all things You maintain!
To You be the glory, resounding again,
From all of creation forever! Amen.***

The Word became flesh and lived among us, and we've seen His glory!

***Make Yourself known to us, Christ Jesus,
in the breaking of bread and the sharing of the cup!***

ELW 279

***How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heav'n.
No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him, still the dear Christ enters in.***

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Now we share God's consecrated gifts among God's consecrated people, knowing that our living Lord Jesus is fully present with us in His Supper, giving Himself to us in bread and wine and forgiving love. Today, we'll share the Lord's Supper by receiving the body and blood of Christ by **"tables"** and the cup by **intinction**: When the usher bids you, come forward via the left side aisle, take a glass already filled with grape juice if necessary, and kneel or stand at the altar rail. Receive **"the body of Christ, given for you"** from the Pastor; receive **"the blood of Christ, shed for you"** from our communion assistant by dipping the wafer in the wine (or drink the grape juice you already have in hand). Pr Dave will dismiss each "table" with a blessing, at which point the next "table" will form. Once we've all communed, our service continues with thanksgiving...

"May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen us and keep us in His grace."

If you're joining us from your home, we invite you to share the bread and cup with one another. When giving the bread to your neighbor, say **"The body of Christ, given for you."** When giving the wine/grape juice say, **"The blood of Christ, shed for you."** Whatever's left over may be reverently eaten and drunk by everyone after our worship is over. Once we've all shared in the body and blood of Christ, we continue in blessing and prayer:

SENDING

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING AND PRAYER:

Sung to the tune of "Angels, From the Realms of Glory":

***Thank the Lord, His praises voicing for His promised faithfulness!
All who seek the Lord, rejoicing tell His love, His Name confess,
For He leads us, with thanksgiving, in the paths of righteousness.***

***At Your Word, Lord, let Your servants go in peace, for with our eyes
We have seen Your bright salvation, Israel's Light, begin to rise
As the glory of the nations, leading us to paradise!***

We thank You, wondrous God, for Christ Jesus, Immanuel, in these gifts of bread and wine.
As we've shared this feast of love, strengthen us to share Your love with all the world
through Christ Jesus our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

CANDLELIGHTING RITE:

Jesus, Lord, at Your birth, love's pure light beams radiant from Your holy face.

The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

By Your birth in Bethlehem, You brought to light the glory of heaven.

Open our lives to the brightness of Your hope.

By Your birth in Bethlehem, You brought to light the Father's love.

Guide our lives with the light of Your truth.

By Your birth in Bethlehem, You brought to light God's saving grace.

Kindle in our hearts the brightness of Your joy.

By Your birth in Bethlehem, You brought to light the way of peace.

Fill our lives with Light from on high.

You're invited to light a candle where you're gathered and pass the lit candle to one another, saying to your neighbor, "Christ, the Light of the World, is come!" When all have received and passed the candle, the pastor leads us in prayer:

Gracious God, You gave Your only Son that we may know You and love You
with body, heart, and mind.

United in the body of Christ, may we glorify and praise You in our lives
for all we've seen and heard in the wonder of the Word made flesh, Christ Jesus our Lord! **Amen.**

BENEDICTION:

Sung to "O Little Town of Bethlehem":

The Lord now bless and keep you all, and make His face to shine;
Lift up His face with shining grace and grant you peace divine.

***To Father, ☩ Son, and Spirit, Eternal One-in-Three,
Be thanks and praise through all our days and to eternity!***

SENDING HYMN AND DISMISSAL:

ELW 281

***Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child. Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heav'nly peace; sleep in heav'nly peace.***



*Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight;
Glories stream from heaven afar; heav'nly hosts sing, Alleluia!
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!*

*Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from Your holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Your birth, Jesus, Lord, at Your birth.*

*Silent night, holy night! Wondrous star, lend thy light;
With the angels let us sing alleluias to our King;
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!*

Go in peace, live in joy, and serve the Lord!

Thanks be to God!

Tonight's bulletins are sponsored by Tina Young in loving memory of Mom, Dad, and Sharon.

Thank you to all our **worship assistants** this evening:

Reader:	Pr Dave Heckler
Usher:	Gordon Bryan
Communion Assistant:	Linda Hertzog
Acolyte:	Linda Hertzog
Bulletin Collator:	Aly Brown
Altar Guild:	Marie Shaw
Counters:	Karen Roehner & Patty Schumacher



REMEMBER IN PRAYER THIS WEEK:

- The Armed Forces, President Trump and his cabinet, Crossroads Pregnancy Care, David Johnson Sr., Morgan, Ally, & Dontay Hassler, Andrew Edmonds, Don & Karen Ludovici, Derek & Anna Ludovici, Connie Slotter, Norm Diehl Sr., Amy Miller, Chrissy Cousins, Robert & Cheryl Ball, Gary Hertzog, Keith, Joe, Annabelle Weller, Brenda Oelschlager, Roy Weidner, Michael Ludovici, Pr Robert Lescalette, Sable Wilcox, Laura Ulrich, Dave & Karen Hammerschmidt, Barry & Judy, Bob Knapp, Dr. Ken & Family, Bella & Friora, Sheila Simpson, Norman Hottensen, Rita Feikel, Pr Mary Owens, Ted, Heidi Beason, Aaron Hamlin, Kristin Umstead, Sue Weidner, Doris Diehl, Colin Aherne, Joanne Locke, Maurice Aubry, Pat Stever, Melissa Manhart, Pr Rachel Scheible, Karen, Mike, Ted, John Hunsberger, Violet Bradley, Sherry Salinas, Brett Shaw, Sharon Bachman Kresge.
- The war-torn people of Ukraine, Yemen, Israel, Gaza, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Libya, Ethiopia, the DRC, Sudan, Haiti, Colombia, Myanmar, Mozambique, Thailand, Cambodia, and violence-ravaged homes and communities in our own land.
- Families and friends of Kelsey Shaak, Kenny Fly, Mary Johnson, Joan Bilger, Kevin Scholl, Pr Andrew Carlsson, Benita Ukstins, Bob Shaak, Pr Chuck Maxfield, Dale Weiss, James Qualls.

A Christmas Prayer

Almighty and Eternal God, infinite and holy,
whose being genius cannot fathom, whose works galaxies cannot contain,

Before You we gratefully come, celebrating the day
when You, the Almighty, did not count omnipotence a thing to be grasped,
when Eternity played by the calendar, when Infinity was checked by gravity,
when Holiness mixed it up with sinners,
when the Creator of intergalactic space became a body and moved into our neighborhood.

Today we revel in the revelation that we who were light-years distant
have been drawn to You as breath into lungs,
that we who had lost touch can now feel the wounds in Your hands and feet,
brushing up against the holy body that bore the sins of the world,
and the cold flesh that, soon enough, turned warm and whole,
and soon enough, made all things new.

We, like the shepherds in the field, like the woman at the tomb,
are astonished, trembling in wonder and in fear.

If all this is true, if a love like this is the blood that courses through all reality,
behold, all things are new!

On our better days, Lord, we long to be transformed by the wonder.
But most days, it scares us to death to be changed, even by love.

But it's not to the bold that You've come, only to the trembling,
and not to the wise, but only to the foolish.

Give us ears to hear the glad tidings of great joy, and lungs to sing with exuberant praise,
and legs to dance spritely around the strawy trough
that cradled the Love who redeems the cosmos.

-- Mark Galli

For more information on our ministries, please contact:

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