

Wednesday, December 24, 2025
Candlelight Service of Christmas Eve
Liturgy from Sundays and Season 2025



INTRODUCTION FOR THE DAY

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

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

RINGING OF THE CHIMES

GATHERING

Please rise as you are able in body or spirit.

GATHERING HYMN: ELW # 283 "O, Come, All Ye Faithful"

APOSTOLIC GREETING

Blessed be God: Father, Son (+), and Holy Spirit.
and blessed be his name now and forever. Amen.



LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

The night is dark. Let our fears of the shadows of the world and of our lives rest in you.
Emmanuel, God with us, is the Light of the World.

There is no evil, no sadness, no fear, no grief, no illness, no loneliness, no violence, no word of unkindness, no act of war, that will extinguish the Light of the World.
Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

We light the candle of hope,
In Christ, there is no place hopelessness can hide.

We light the candle of peace,
Jesus exposes hatred as fear turned inside out.

We light the candle of joy,
The Christ child births delight into a world of pain.

We light the candle of love.
The Spirit unites us as we join in proclaiming good news of great joy.

We light the Christ candle. Let us pray.

Holy God, your light illuminates your loving presence with us. It shines amid smiles and despite tears. It shines and we hear angels. It shines and we see a manger. It shines and we remember the story. This light cannot be extinguished.

You, Emmanuel, are the light, shining now and always, and you call us to bear that light, now and forevermore. **Amen.**

LIGHTING OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE

God our Creator, we praise you for this Christmas tree. It is a sign of your everlasting, evergreen presence. It is a sign of the reign of heaven, sheltering the creatures of the earth under its open arms. It is a sign of the cross, shining with the light of your grace and mercy.

Gracious God, let your blessing come upon us as we illumine this tree. Send us your Son, the tender shoot of Jesse, who brings us light and life.

As the tree is lit, all the lights come on in the church

May all who stand in its light eagerly welcome the true light which never fades. We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

HYMN OF PRAISE: ELW # 289 “Angles We have Heard on High”

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.

THE WORD – READINGS

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!

² 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.

³ 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.

⁴ 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.
⁵ For all the boots of the tramping warriors
and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.
⁶ 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.
⁷ 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.**

Psalm: Psalm 96 (Read Responsively)

Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad. (Ps. 96:11)

- ¹ Sing to the Lord a new song;
sing to the Lord, all the earth.
- ² **Sing to the Lord, bless the name of the Lord;
proclaim God's salvation from day to day.**
- ³ Declare God's glory among the nations
and God's wonders among all peoples.
- ⁴ **For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised,
more to be feared than all gods.**
- ⁵ As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols;
but you, O Lord, have made the heavens.
- ⁶ **Majesty and magnificence are in your presence;
power and splendor are in your sanctuary.**
- ⁷ Ascribe to the Lord, you families of the peoples,
ascribe to the Lord honor and power.
- ⁸ **Ascribe to the Lord the honor due the holy name;
bring offerings and enter the courts of the Lord.**
- ⁹ Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness;
tremble before the Lord, all the earth.
- ¹⁰ **Tell it out among the nations: "The Lord is king!
The one who made the world so firm that it cannot be
moved will judge the peoples with equity."**
- ¹¹ Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;
let the sea thunder and all that is in it; let the field be joyful and all that is therein.
- ¹² **Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy at your coming, O Lord,
for you come to judge the earth.**



¹³ You will judge the world with righteousness
and the peoples with your truth.



Special Music: “Mary Did You Know”

Ted Lazaris and Sandy Young

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.

¹¹ The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, ¹² training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, ¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. ¹⁴ 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.**

Please rise as you are able in body or spirit.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: ELW # 282 “It Came Upon a Midnight Clear” vs. 1 & 2

Gospel: Luke 2:1-20

The Gospel according to St. Luke the 2nd Chapter, beginning at the 1st Verse. **Glory to You, O Lord.**

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.

¹ In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴ 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. ⁵ He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷ 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.

⁸ Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ 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: ¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

¹⁵ 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.” ¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the

manger. ¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them, ¹⁹ and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: ELW # 282 “It Came Upon a Midnight Clear” vs. 3 & 4

Please be seated, as the children come forward.

CHILDREN’S TIME

Blessing of the Nativity Scene -- *The children of the congregation gather around the scene for the blessing and a message.*

Let us pray... Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe. With Mary and Joseph, with angels and shepherds, and with the animals in the stable, we gather around your Son, born for us. Bless us, and fill us with joy and wonder as we look upon this manger scene. May Jesus be born in our lives, that we might share his love with all the world, for he is our light and our salvation. Blessed be God forever and ever. **C: Amen.**

HYMN OF THE DAY: ELW # 277 “Away in a Manger”

SERMON **Pastor Steven Kuhl**

HYMN OF THE DAY: ELW # 296 “What Child is This”

THE APOSTLES’ CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.*
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**



**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Pastor: 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 those we name aloud or in our hearts.* (*A brief silence.*) 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.

Pastor: 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.**

Sharing of the Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace and may say, "Peace be with you" or similar words. The assembly is seated.

Offering – Collection of our offerings.

SPECIAL MUSIC: "Christmas Hallelujah"

Ted Lazaris



Please rise as you are able in body or spirit.

Offering Prayer

Let us pray.

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.**

THE MEAL

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.



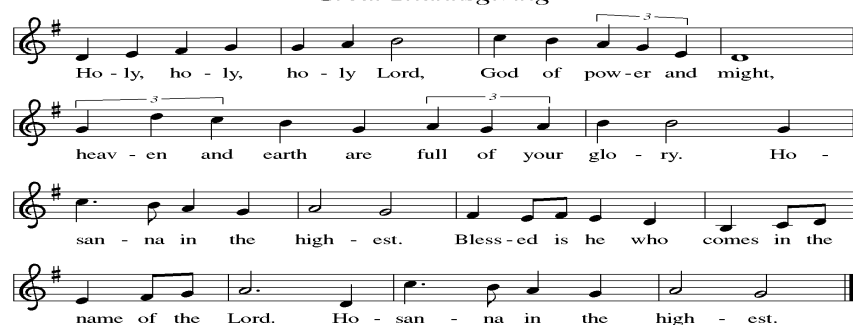
PROPER PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ;
who on this day overcame death and the grave,
and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life.
And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Sanctus: Holy, Holy, Holy – ELW # 189 “Holy, Holy, Holy”

Holy, Holy, Holy *Great Thanksgiving*



Music: Paul D. Weber, b. 1949
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The Words of Institution

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 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.

The Lord's Prayer

Let us 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.**



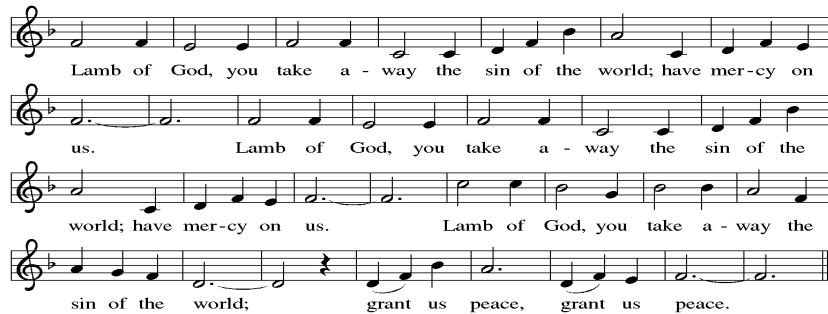
Invitation to Communion

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

Please be seated and wait to come forward for Holy Communion after the singing of The Lamb of God song.

Lamb of God – ELW # 195 “Lamb of God”

Lamb of God



Music: *Bread of Life*, Jeremy Young, b. 1948
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HYMNS DURING COMMUNION:

ELW # 279 “O Little Town of Bethlehem”

ELW # 300 “The First Noel”

BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION

*After all have returned to their places, the assembly stands. The presiding minister may say a table blessing; the assembly responds **Amen**.*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray, together.

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.

LIGHTING OF THE HAND-HELD CANDLES

Worshippers' candles are lit with the assistance of the ushers. Lights are turned low.

CANDLE LIGHTING HYMN: ELW # 281 “Silent Night”

- 1 Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace,
sleep in heavenly peace.
- 2 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!
- 3 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.



Text: Joseph Mohr, 1792-1849; tr. John F. Young, 1820-1885

Candles are extinguished, lights come up....

SENDING BLESSING

The triune God,
glorious Mystery,
holy Incarnate One,
abiding Comforter,
✠ bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy.
Amen.

SENDING SONG: ELW # 267 “Joy to the World”

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.

POSTLUDE



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Today's Lay Leaders

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Ushers: Bill & Kathy Wakefield

Communion Assistant: Jeanette Nowakowski

Altar Guild: Deanna Posig

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Have a very blessed Merry Christmas!

