



INTRODUCTION FOR THE DAY

As we celebrate the Twelve Days of Christmas, our gospel today confronts us with the death of innocent children at the hands of Herod. The birth of Christ does not remove the power of evil from our world, but its light gives us hope as we walk with all the “holy innocents” of past generations and today who have suffered unjustly. In our gathering around word and meal, God continues to redeem us, lift us up, and carry us as in days of old.

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

SPECIAL MUSIC: "NOEL NOUVELET" (CHRISTMAS COMES ANEW) BARB REGENT

RINGING OF THE CHIMES

GATHERING

Please rise as you are able in body or spirit.

CONFESS AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

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.

Gathering Hymn: ELW # 270 "Hark the Herald Angels Sing"

Apostolic Greeting

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

O Lord God, you know that we cannot place our trust in our own powers. As you protected the infant Jesus, so defend us and all the needy from harm and adversity, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Please be seated while the children come forward.

Children's Time

The Word – Readings

First Reading: Isaiah 63:7-9

God does not delegate divine intervention to a messenger or angel. God's own presence brings salvation. The prophet and all who read these words join in celebrating God's gracious deeds. God trusts that God's people will not act falsely.

⁷I will recount the gracious deeds of the Lord,
the praiseworthy acts of the Lord,
because of all that the Lord has done for us
and the great favor to the house of Israel
that he has shown them according to his mercy,
according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

⁸For he said, "Surely they are my people,
children who will not act deceitfully,"
and he became their savior
⁹in all their distress.
It was no messenger or angel
but his presence that saved them;
in his love and pity it was he who redeemed them;
he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

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

Psalm: Psalm 148 (Read Responsively)

The splendor of the Lord is over earth and heaven. (Ps. 148:13)

¹ Hallelujah! Praise the Lord from the heavens;
 praise God in the heights.

² **Praise the Lord, all you angels;**
sing praise, all you hosts of heaven.

³ Praise the Lord, sun and moon;
 sing praise, all you shining stars.

⁴ **Praise the Lord, heaven of heavens,**
and you waters above the heavens.

⁵ Let them praise the name of the Lord,
 who commanded, and they were created,

⁶ **who made them stand fast forever and ever,**
giving them a law that shall not pass away.

⁷ Praise the Lord from the earth,
 you sea monsters and all deeps;

⁸ **fire and hail, snow and fog,**
tempestuous wind, doing God's will;

⁹ mountains and all hills,
 fruit trees and all cedars;

¹⁰ **wild beasts and all cattle,**
creeping things and flying birds;

¹¹ sovereigns of the earth and all peoples,
 princes and all rulers of the world;

¹² **young men and maidens,**
old and young together.

¹³ Let them praise the name of the Lord,
 whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over earth and heaven.

¹⁴ **The Lord has raised up strength for the people and praise for all faithful servants,**
the children of Israel, a people who are near the Lord. Hallelujah!



Second Reading: Hebrews 2:10-18

Through Jesus' suffering and death, the trail to eternal salvation has been blazed for us. We do not fear death, because he has conquered the power of death. Thus Christ, our merciful and faithful high priest, has the final say over the destiny of our lives.

¹⁰ It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹ For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, ¹² saying,

“I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters;
 in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.”

¹³ And again,
 “I will put my trust in him.”

And again,
 “Here am I and the children whom God has given me.”

¹⁴ Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. ¹⁶ For it is clear that he did not come to help angels but the descendants of Abraham. ¹⁷ Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

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

Please rise as you are able in body or spirit.

Gospel Acclamation – ELW # 172 “Halle, Halle, Hallelujah”

Halle, Halle, Hallelujah



Music: Caribbean traditional



Gospel: Matthew 2:13-23

The Gospel according to St. Matthew the 2nd Chapter, beginning at the 13th Verse. **Glory to You, O Lord.**

In a dream, Joseph is warned to flee to Egypt to protect the infant Jesus from the jealousy of Herod.

¹³ Now after [the magi] 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.” ¹⁴ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt ¹⁵ 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.”

¹⁶ When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, 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 magi. ¹⁷ Then what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

¹⁸ “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.”

¹⁹ When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰ “Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child’s life are dead.” ²¹ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. ²³ There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, “He will be called a Nazarene.”

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

Please be seated.

Sermon

Pastor Steven Kuhl

Please rise as you are able in body or spirit.

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.

God of grace, you show us mercy not according to our worthiness, but according to the abundance of your steadfast love. Grant us the courage to go into the world and do likewise. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of abundance, the sun and moon praise you and the shining stars sing of your love. Where we have desecrated your creation, make us into a healing balm for what we have broken. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of righteousness, when leaders fail to fulfill their calls to enact justice, you suffer alongside us. Propel those in power to see you reflected in the faces of all they serve. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of life, you claim us as your own and care for us as Christ’s siblings. Pour out your compassion in every place your people suffer, and protect them in the palm of your hand. *We pray especially for those we name aloud or in our hearts.* (*A brief silence.*) Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of compassion, you nurture children as the apple of your eye. As you sheltered your son Jesus from Herod’s grasp, shelter all children in danger. As you comforted Rachel, comfort all who have lost children to violence. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of love, you console those who weep for lost beloved ones (*especially*). Even as we mourn, we offer thanks for those who have gone before us, trusting in your comfort and protection. 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. *Music only during collection (ELW # 295 "Of the Father's Love Begotten")*

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.



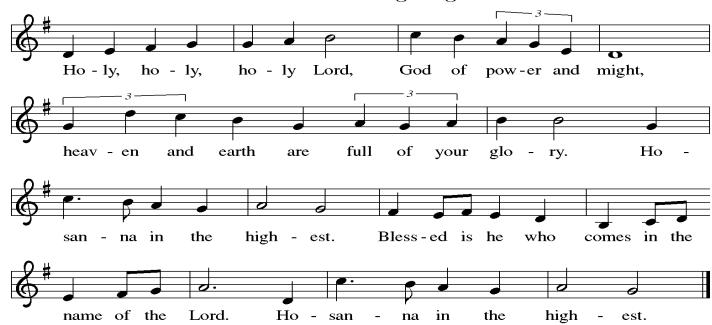
PROPER PREFACE

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.**



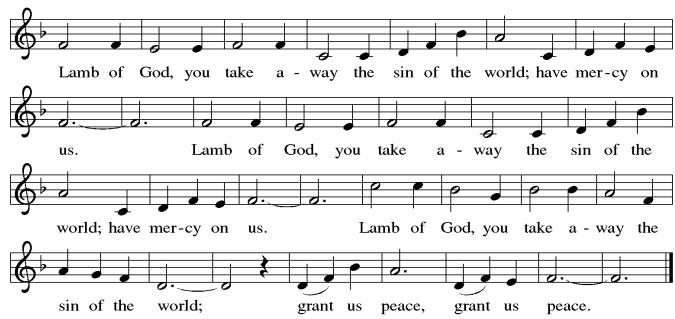
Invitation to Communion

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



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

Music: *Bread of Life*, Jeremy Young, b. 1948
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Hymn During Communion: WOV # 646 “We Three Kings of Orient Are” (Blue Hymnal)

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.

Sending Blessing

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



Sending Song: ELW # 288 “Good Christian Friends, Rejoice”

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

Lector: Sandy Young

Ushers: Craig & Tania Beyler

Communion Assistant: Sandy Ringwall

Altar Guild: Deanna Posig

Music & Worship Coordinator: Barb Regent

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