

# CHRISTMAS EVE

Carol Festival December 24, 2017 4:00 & 6:00



## AS WE GATHER

“Glory to God in the highest!” The expression of praise by the heavenly host on the night when Jesus was born into our world has echoed through the ages. As we gather for this most special day, we find joy in repeating the words of God’s heavenly messengers. The angels proclaimed a message of peace and good will, a word from God that was appearing in the Word made flesh—the baby Jesus born to bring the light of redemption to a people on earth lost in darkness. “Gloria in excelsis Deo!” Whether we are singing in English or Latin or some other language, the message of the words is what matters. We worship our Lord and rejoice in the glory of Christmas!

## PRELUDE

### RINGING OF THE BELLS



WELCOME

*(Please Stand)*

PROCESSIONAL HYMN "O Come, All Ye Faithful" LSB 379

**O come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant!  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;  
Come and behold Him Born the king of angels:  
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,  
O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!**

**Highest, most holy, Light of Light eternal,  
Born of a virgin, a mortal He comes;  
Son of the Father Now in flesh appearing!  
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,  
O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!**

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

**Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, Born this happy morning;  
Jesus, to Thee be glory giv'n!  
Word of the Father Now in flesh appearing!  
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,  
O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!**

## INVOCATION and OPENING PRAYER

Pastor: Christ is born in Bethlehem. Alleluia!  
People: **O come, let us adore Him.**

Pastor: We sing with the angels.  
**People: We rejoice with the shepherds.**

Pastor: We marvel with Mary.  
**People: We glorify and praise God with the whole Christian Church.**

Pastor: Christ has shined His wondrous light into our darkness.  
**People: We gather to worship the Word Incarnate.**

Pastor: Christ is born in Bethlehem. Alleluia!  
**People: O come, let us adore Him.**



**CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION** *LSB 151*

Pastor: In peace let us pray to our heavenly Father, confident of His forgiveness for Jesus' sake.

Pastor: Almighty Father,  
**People: we confess that we are sinners by nature and by thought, word, and deed. We cannot and do not merit any forgiveness. But with repentant hearts, we turn to You for mercy, seeking Your grace. In Your loving kindness, forgive, restore, and lead us so that we may be renewed and may live to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.**

Pastor: With joy I announce God's good news to You. Our gracious God in His mercy has given His Son to be born, to live and then to die for you, and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Be at peace and rejoice in the Lord.

**People: Amen.**

**HYMN OF PRAISE** "Angels We Have Heard on High" *LSB 368, v. 1 & 3*

**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.**

*(Please Be Seated)*



**OLD TESTAMENT READING** *Isaiah 7:10-14*  
(Immanuel will be born to a virgin mother.)

<sup>10</sup> Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz: <sup>11</sup> "Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." <sup>12</sup> But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test." <sup>13</sup> And he said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? <sup>14</sup> Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.  
**People: Thanks be to God.**

**ANTHEM 4:00 PM** From our Congolese Friends, Erik Mukindi & Flora Muvara



**EPISTLE** 1 John 4:7–16 (God sent His Son into the world as the Redeemer.)

<sup>7</sup> Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. <sup>9</sup> In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. <sup>13</sup> By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup> And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. <sup>15</sup> Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. <sup>16</sup> So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

**Lector:** This is the Word of the Lord.

**People:** **Thanks be to God.**

**ANTHEM 4:00 PM** “On Christian Night All Christians Sing” *Ascension Choir*

**LITANY**

**Pastor:** Jesus, Son of the living God, splendor of the Father, Light eternal, King of glory, Sun of Justice, Son of Mary:

**People:** **glory to God in the highest!**

**Pastor:** Jesus, wonderful, counselor, mighty Lord, everlasting God, the Prince of Peace:

**People:** **glory to God in the highest!**

**Pastor:** Jesus, most powerful, most gracious, most patient, most gentle, most loving, the pure in heart:

**People:** **glory to God in the highest!**

**Pastor:** Jesus, the God of peace, the source of all life, the pattern of holiness, friend and refuge for all who trust in Him:

**People:** **glory to God in the highest!**

**Pastor:** Jesus, lover of the poor, gift of God, Good Shepherd, Light of Light, Wisdom from on high, the way, the truth, and the life:

**People:** **glory to God in the highest!**

**Pastor:** Jesus, joy of the angels, King of the patriarchs, leader of the apostles, teacher of the disciples, strength of the martyrs, Light eternal shining in testimony to the truth, the crowning glory of the saints, and our blessed Redeemer:

**People:** **glory to God in the highest! Amen.**

*(Please Be Seated)*



## CHRISTMAS EVE HYMN CELEBRATION *Luke 2*

Pastor: We hear again the Good News from the Gospel according to St. Luke, chapter 2. Following each section of the reading, we sing songs of Christmas joy, echoing the sounds of the angels on that first Christmas night.

Lector: *In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.*

Pastor: A Christmas visit to the little town of Bethlehem by Rev. Phillips Brooks of Pennsylvania in 1865 led to his writing one of the most beloved of all Christmas hymns. We reflect on the importance of that special place.

HYMN “O Little Town of Bethlehem” *LSB 361, v. 1-2*

**O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep The silent stars go by;  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth The everlasting light.  
The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee tonight.**

**For Christ is born of Mary, And, gathered all above  
While mortals sleep, the angels keep Their watch of wond’ring love.  
O morning stars, together Proclaim the holy birth,  
And praises sing to God the king And peace to all the earth!**

Lector: *And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths and laid Him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.*

Pastor: Although “Away in a Manger” has been called “Luther’s Cradle Hymn” by some people, its actual Lutheran connection comes from the fact that it was first published in a Lutheran Sunday School hymnal in Philadelphia in 1885. It was not translated into German until 1934, but since then has become as well-loved by Christian people in the “Old World” as it is here in the “New World.”

HYMN “Away in a Manger” *LSB 364*

**Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,  
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.  
The stars in the sky looked down where He lay,  
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**

**The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,  
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.  
I love Thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,  
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.**

**Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay  
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,  
And take us to heaven to live with Thee there.**

*Lector: And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."*

*Pastor: There are many Christmas songs and carols that include references to angels and the angelic hosts. Now more than two centuries old, "Angels from the Realms of Glory" was written by English poet James Montgomery, who is the author of a number of hymns we sing throughout the year. We invite the angels to join our worship of the Christ Child as we sing.*

**HYMN** "Angels from the Realms of Glory" *LSB 367, v. 1-2, 5*

**Angels from the realms of glory, Wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
Ye who sang creation's story, Now proclaim Messiah's birth.  
Come and worship, come and worship; Worship Christ, the newborn King.**

**Shepherd's in the field abiding, Watching o'er your flocks by night,  
God with us is now residing Yonder shines the Infant Light.  
Come and worship, come and worship; Worship Christ, the newborn King.  
All creation, join in praising God the Father, Spirit, Son,  
Evermore your voices raising To the eternal Three in One.  
Come and worship, come and worship; Worship Christ, the newborn King.**

*Lector: And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!"*

*Pastor: Some of the Christmas songs we cherish have deep historical roots. "Now Sing We, Now Rejoice" dates back to the thirteenth century so would have been known by Martin Luther and his family in Wittenberg. Originally, the lines of the song alternated between Latin and German. Together we raise our voices to heaven as we join the "multitude of the heavenly host" in holy song.*

**HYMN** "Now Sing We, Now Rejoice" *LSB 386, v. 1 & 4*

**Now sing we, now rejoice, Now raise to heav'n our voice;  
He from whom joy streameth Poor in a manger lies;  
Not so brightly beameth The sun in yonder skies.  
Thou my Savior art! Thou my Savior art!**

**Oh, where shall joy be found? Where but on heav'nly ground?  
Where the angels singing With all His saints unite,  
Sweetest praises bringing In heav'nly joy and light.  
Oh, that we were there! Oh, that we were there!**

*Lector: When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger.*

*Pastor: Almost a century old now, the text of "Gentle Mary Laid Her Child" was written by Joseph S. Cook for a carol-writing competition in 1919. It won the competition and was printed in the Christian Guardian magazine the following year and then, about ten years later, it appeared in a Canadian hymnal. The words, which have been set to a melody from the sixteenth century, create for us a vision of that marvelous birth, complete with the shepherds and the angels.*

**Gentle Mary laid her child Lowly in a manger;  
There He lay, the Undefined, To the world a stranger.  
Such a babe in such a place, Can He be the Savior?  
Ask the saved of all the race Who have found His favor.**

**Angels sang about His birth, Wise Men sought and found Him;  
Heaven’s star shone brightly forth Glory all around Him.  
Shepherds saw the wondrous sight, Heard the angels singing;  
All the plains were lit that night, All the hills were ringing.**

**Gentle Mary laid her child Lowly in a manger;  
He is still the Undefined But no more a stranger.  
Son of God of humble birth, Beautiful the story;  
Praise His name in all the earth; Hail the King of glory!**

*Lector: And when they [the shepherds] saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.*

*Pastor: Each generation adds to the list of favorite Christmas songs as different nations and cultures enrich the repertoire. The spiritual “Go Tell It on the Mountain,” for many years limited to African American songbooks, has become a treasured addition to hymnals not only in the United States but worldwide. The shepherds glorified and praised God as they returned to their fields and their lives. We shape our worship and our lives with praise to God for the gift of the Savior, the baby Jesus born in Bethlehem.*

*(Please Stand)*



**APOSTLES’ CREED**

LSB 159

*Pastor: Let us confess our faith together:*

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

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

*(Please Be Seated)*

**SERMON HYMN “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”**

LSB 380

**Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King;  
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!”  
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, Join the triumph of the skies;  
With the angelic host proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”  
Hark! The herald angels sing. “Glory to the new-born King!”**

**Christ, by highest heav'n adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
Late in time behold Him come, Offspring of a virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, Hail the incarnate Deity!  
Pleased as Man with man to dwell, Jesus, our Immanuel!  
Hark! The herald angels sing. "Glory to the new-born King!"**

**Hail, the heav'n-born 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 man no more may die,  
Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them second birth.  
Hark! The herald angels sing. "Glory to the new-born King!"**



## **SERMON**



## **GATHERING OF OFFERINGS**

**4:00 PM** "Once in Royal David's City"

*Ascension Choir*

**6:00 PM** "Christian Friends Rejoice and Sing"

*Ascension Bell Choir*

*(Please Stand)*



## **PRAYERS**

**Pastor:** In peace, O come let us adore Him

**People:** **Christ the Lord!**

**Pastor:** For the holy Christian Church, here and scattered throughout the world, and for the proclamation of the Gospel and the calling of all to faith in the Son of God, O come let us adore Him

**People:** **Christ the Lord!**

**Pastor:** For this nation, for our cities and communities, for those who govern in this and every place, and for the common welfare of us all, O come let us adore Him

**People:** **Christ the Lord!**

**Pastor:** For those who labor, for those whose work is difficult or dangerous, and for all who travel, O come let us adore Him

**People:** **Christ the Lord!**

**Pastor:** For all those in need, for the hungry and homeless, for the widowed and orphaned, and for all those in prison, O come let us adore Him

**People:** **Christ the Lord!**

**Pastor:** For the sick and dying, for the aged and alone, for those distressed in mind and spirit and for all those who care for them, O come let us adore Him

**People:** **Christ the Lord!**

**Pastor:** For guidance along the twists and turns of this mortal life, for grace to remain steadfast in time of trouble, and for our homecoming in heaven, O come let us adore Him

**People:** **Christ the Lord!**

**Pastor:** For all these and for all other needs of body and soul that we would ask of the Lord, O come let us adore Him

**People:** **Christ the Lord! Amen.**

Pastor: Bidden by our Lord, let us pray as He has 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.**



**BENEDICTION**

LSB 377:4

Pastor: All out of darkness we have light,

**People: Which made the angels sing this night:**

Pastor: “Glory to God and peace to men

**People: Now and forevermore. Amen.”**

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace. *Numbers 6:24–26*

**People: Amen.**

**RECESSIONAL HYMN 4:00 PM “Silent Night, Holy Night”**

LSB 363

**6:00 PM “Silent Night”**

*Ascension Bell Choir*

**Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright  
Round you virgin mother and child.  
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,  
Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly 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 Thy holy face  
With the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth, Jesus, Lord at Thy birth.**

**POSTLUDE “Joy to the World”**

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## WORSHIP NOTES

**LITUGIST:** 4:00 pm Jeff Jenkins

**MINISTRY OF MUSIC:** 4:00 & 6:00 Gabe Maichel, organist; 4:00 Ascension Choir;  
6:00 Ascension Bell Choir

**ACOLYTES:** 4:00 volunteers; 6:00 volunteers

**READERS:** 4:00 Lisa Holderle; 6:00 Richard Seifert

**USHERS:** 4:00 Keith Marsh, Walt Simpson;  
6:00 Ed Holderle, Karl Hofmann, Robert Hofmann



### **POINSETTIAS AND CHRISTMAS GREENS ARE GIVEN BY:**

*Randy & Sharon Agne with praise to God from whom all blessings flow and for health & healing  
Carl Anderson in loving memory of Linda Anderson, R.N., wife, mother and grandmother  
Donna Arrigo to my mom for leading me to Jesus and to Christ Jesus for saving me  
Joe & Bonita Benda to the glory of God and gifts received  
Diane Broughton & Ed Shimamoto a blessed Christmas to our families  
Jim & Cheryl Chambers to the glory of God!  
Betty Clark in loving memory of my husband, Dennis  
Pastor Clark and family in thankfulness to God for the staff of Ascension Lutheran Church  
and for the faculty of Word of Life Lutheran School  
Don & Eileen Cognata for blessing received  
John & Charlene Cook we give thanks for family, friends and Ascension  
Kathleen Driskill to our risen Savior and Ralph and Audrey Simon  
The Fox Family for blessings received!  
Evelyn Gibbs in loving memory of my parents, John & Ruth Good  
Clarence & Carol Goetsch to the glory of God  
The Hartung Family to the glory of God and the blessings received through Christ our Lord  
The Jaenke Family for a healthy, prosperous 2018 for all  
Jerry & Arleen Kassing in memory of our son, John and our parents  
Roberta Kern & Tyler Kern in memory of Joseph J. Dietrich Sr., In Jesus' loving arms  
Robert & Lawanda Kieffer in memory of our parents Oscar & Esther Kieffer  
and Henry & Anna Ruegge  
James & Kathy Komorech with thanksgiving for blessings received  
Carlos & Marla Lopez with thanksgiving for His many blessings  
Donna Marohn in memory of mother, Edna Rushing, mother-in-law, Clara Marohn  
and sister, Dorothy Hartmann  
Roy & Kathy Migneco with thankfulness for God's many blessings  
The Moffat family in memory of Barbara Halliburton  
Jean Mueller in memory of all my loved ones who are now celebrating Christmas with Jesus  
Terry & Nancy Nickolotsky in loving memory of Craig, parents and grandparents  
Jack & Jan Pendleton thankful for God's greatest gift, Jesus  
The Pfaff family to the glory of God  
Pat Pfitzinger with thanks for many blessings and for my family  
Doug & Ruth Pritchard in memory of loved ones  
Vernon & Debbie Schmidt for the blessing of Calvin and in memory of our parents in heaven  
Carolyn Schwaninger with thanks and praise to God for 95 years of blessings  
The Thies family to the glory of God!  
Peggy Triska for the blessing of the gift of our Lord Jesus Christ, family, and friends  
Darleen Wiederhold in loving memory of Gene Wiederhold  
Jack & Cindy Winter in memory of Harold Todd who loved Christmas and his Savio*





For  
unto  
you is  
born this  
day in the  
city of David  
a saviour, which  
is christ the Lord.

Luke  
2:11

Blessings to All!

Your Ascension Staff

Pastor Clark

Jerry Kesson

Dabe Maichel

Sherry Elliott

Pam Fox

Barbara Hartung

Kathy  
Shies

Trevor A. Freudenberg