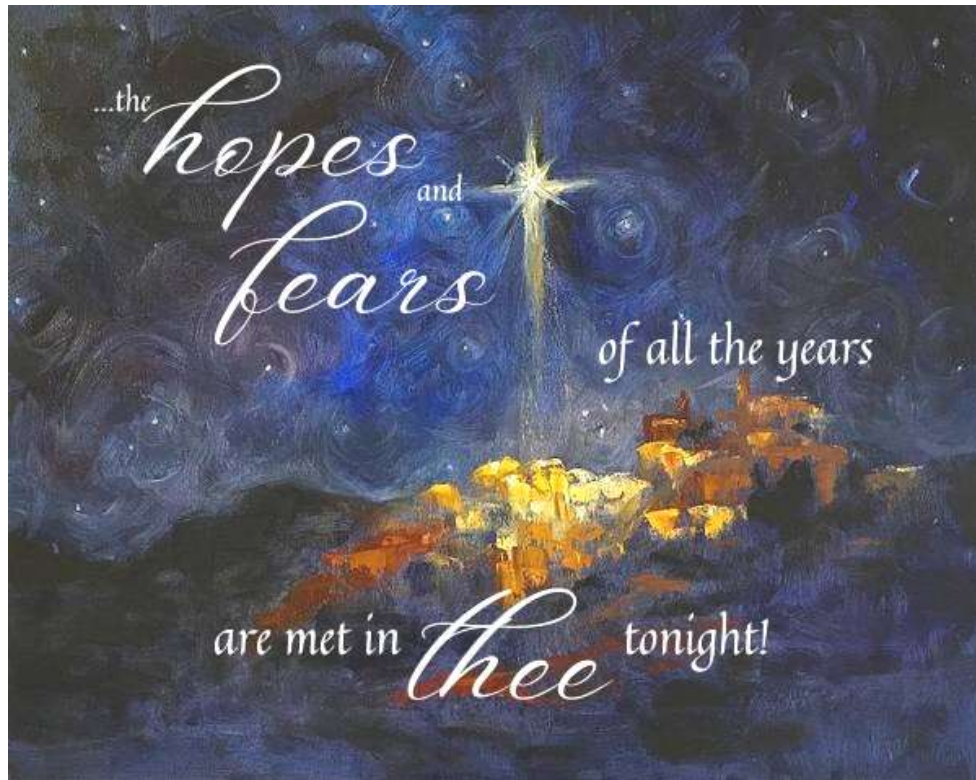


Welcome to
Luther Memorial Church
of the Erie Lutheran Parish



24 DECEMBER 2023
The Nativity of Our Lord, Christmas Eve
6:00 pm & 10:30 pm

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.

CHRISTMAS EVE CONCERT

Christmas Eve – 5:30 & 10:00 pm



| | |
|---|---------------------|
| "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" | John Purifoy |
| "Of the Father's Love Begotten" | John Purifoy |
| "Angels We Have Heard on High" | Jan Sanborn |
| "Sing We Now of Christmas" | Carol Tornquist |
| "What Child Is This?" | Jan Sanborn |
| "Lo How a Rose E'er Blooming / Away in a Manger" | Bill Wolaver |
| "Silent Night" | Bill Wolaver |
| "Manger Medley" <i>(Once in Royal David's City; Infant Holy, Infant Lowly; Cradle Song)</i> | Lee Dengler |
| "A Christmas Medley" <i>(In dulci jubilo; Three Kings of Orient; Away in a Manger; The First Noel)</i> | Charity Book Putnam |
| "We Three Kings" | Bill Wolaver |
| "Angels from the Realms / Hark the Herald Angels Sing" | Bill Wolaver |

INTRUMENTALISTS

Bob Banks, *soprano saxophone*
Jonathan Gaber, *cello*
Walt Gaber, *piano*
Linda Melaragno, *violin*
Barb Moore, *flute*
Kara Partusch, *baritone horn*



This performance is provided by the Luther Memorial Concert Series

LUTHER MEMORIAL CHURCH
LUTHER MEMORIAL ACADEMY
225 West Tenth Street • Erie, PA 16501 • 814-454-0106
REV. JAY C. MITCHELL, *Pastor*

WALT GABER
Cantor

RON KING
Pastoral Asst. ~ Holy Trinity

THE REV. BRIAN MORAN
THE REV. KAREN LUNDWALL
THE REV. KAREN PARSH
THE REV. GAIL ZACKRISON
Pastors in Residence

LINDA GRAFFIUS, RN
Director of Care & Health Ministries

JAN MACINNES
Care Ministry
BETH KELLER
SARAH PRYLINSKI
Youth and Family Ministry
MICHELLE THOM
Academy Administrator



24 DECEMBER 2023
THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD, CHRISTMAS EVE
Holy Communion • 6:00 pm and 10:30 pm



GATHERING – “The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.”

HANDBELL VOLUNTARY (6:00pm) – “Christmas Carol Celebration”

Douglas E. Wagner

INTROIT – (10:30pm) “Psallite Unigenito”

Michael Praetorius

Psallite, unigenito Christo Dei Filio
Sing praise to the only-begotten Son of God
Redemptori Domino, puerulo, iacenti in praesepio.
Their Redeemer, the Lord, little boy, as he lay in a manger.

Lo, in a manger bed there lies an infant small.
Angel hosts their homage pay before the Lord of all, low before him fall.

“Glory to the God on high” the choirs of angels sing;
“Peace on earth, goodwill to men” their voices echoing, praise the newborn King.

Please stand and face the procession at the doors.

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE NATIVITY OF THE CHRIST

- Ⓟ This twenty-fourth day of December,
after ages beyond number had run their course from the creation of the world,
when God in the beginning created the heavens and the earth
and formed humankind in the divine image;
long after the great flood,
when God made the rainbow shine forth as a sign of the covenant;
twenty-one centuries from the time the promise was given
to Abraham and Sarah our forebears;
thirteen centuries after Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt
and through the Sea dry shod
and the prophet Miriam danced with tambourine
in freedom on the safe side of the sea;



eleven hundred years from the time of Ruth and Naomi, Deborah and the judges;
 one thousand five hundred ten years from the anointing of David as king,
 in the fulfilment of the times and years and months and days
 discerned by the prophets;
 in the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad;
 the seven hundred and fifty second year from the foundation of the city of Rome;
 the forty second year of the reign of Octavian Augustus, the Caesar;
 while the whole world enjoyed a span of peace,
 in the sixth age of world,
 Jesus Christ,
 Eternal God and Child of the Eternal Creator,
 desiring to sanctify the world by most graciously and mercifully coming,
 being conceived by the Holy Spirit
 and nine months of growth having past in the womb of his mother
 the Blessed Virgin Mary,
 was born in Bethlehem of Judea as was prophesied of old.
 Now in our own time is the nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 Eternal Word Incarnate, God made Flesh.
 Come, now, let us adore him!

GATHERING CAROL

O Come, All Ye Faithful

ELW 283

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

- P** Glory to God in the highest!
- C** **And peace to God's people on earth!**
- P** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
- C** **And also with you.**



Nataliya Jones
Grade 8

Angels We Have Heard on High



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. "Crown of Jesus," 1862
 Music: GLORIA, French carol

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Let us pray.

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.

C Amen.

Please be seated.

*The Christ Candle will be lighted by Tessa, Ben, Penelope, Christian, Elizabeth & Veronica Wolf.
 (6:00pm)*

The Christ Candle will be lighted by Sharon Burke and Ranko Vidakovic. (10:30pm)

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

☒ “And [Mary] 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.” (Luke 2:7)

Let us pray.

Emmanuel, God-with-us, the time is now. You are here!

We light every candle on our wreath
because your presence glows among us.

However this night finds us—
filled with joy or touched by grief,
alone or in the company of our loved ones—
you are with us, and you will never leave.

And so we sing with the angels:

☑ **Glory to God in the highest! Amen!**

A MESSAGE FOR THE YOUNG AND YOUNG-AT-HEART (6:00pm)

WORD – “God speaks to us in Scripture reading, preaching and song.”

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!

FIRST READING: Isaiah 9:2-7

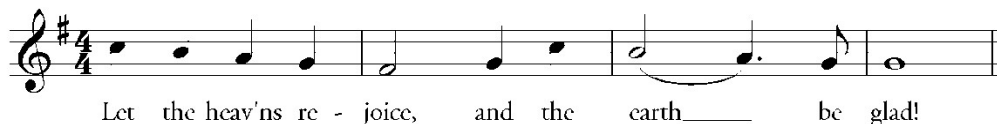
²The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined. ³You have multiplied exultation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. ⁴For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. ⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶For 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. ⁷Great will be his authority, and there shall be endless peace for the throne and dominion of David. 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.

☒ The Word is made flesh.

☑ **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 96

Refrain: (Sung once by the choir, then repeated by the congregation and sung where indicated by R.)



Sing to the LORD a new song;

sing to the LORD, all the whole earth.

²Sing to the LORD and bless his name;
proclaim the good news of his salvation from day to day.

³Declare his glory among the nations
and his wonders among all peoples.

⁴For great is the LORD and greatly to be praised,
He is more to be feared than all gods. **R**



⁵As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols;
 but it is the LORD who made the heavens.
⁶Oh the majesty and magnificence of his presence;
 Oh the power and splendor of his sanctuary.
⁷Ascribe to the LORD, you families of the peoples,
 ascribe to the LORD honor and power.
⁸Ascribe to the LORD the honor due his name;
 bring offerings and come into his courts.
⁹Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness;
 let the whole earth tremble before him.
¹⁰Tell it out among the nations: "The LORD is king!
 He has made the world so firm that it cannot be moved;
 He will judge the peoples with equity." **R**

¹¹Let 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.
¹²Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy before the LORD when he comes,
 for he comes to judge the earth.
¹³He will judge the world with righteousness
 and the peoples with his truth. **R**

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.

SECOND READING: Titus 2:11-14

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

L The Word is made flesh.

G Thanks be to God.

Please stand as you are able to greet the Gospel.

CAROL

ELW 290

Go Tell It on the Mountain

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,



Refrain

be - hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.

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

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.

☐ The Holy Gospel according to Luke.

☑ **Glory to you, O Lord.**

GOSPEL: Luke 2:1-20

¹In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph 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. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While 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 for them in the inn. ⁸Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³And 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 God favors!" ¹⁵When 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." ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them, ¹⁹and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The 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**

CAROL

ELW 290

Go Tell It on the Mountain

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!



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;

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.

Refrain

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

Please be seated.

HOMILY

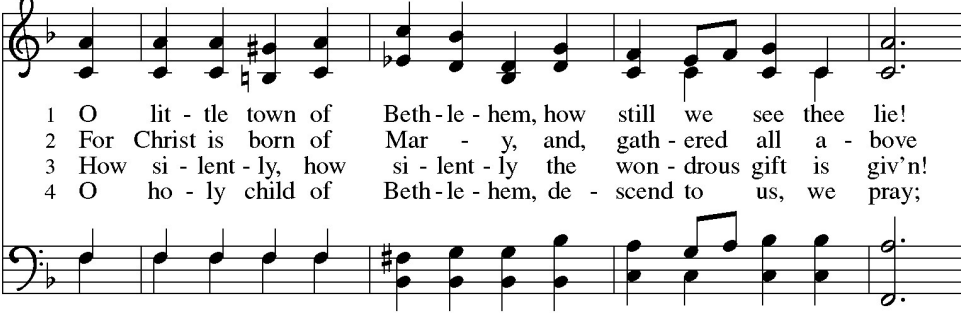
Pastor Jay

Please stand as you are able to proclaim the Word of God in Song.




*Nyla James
 Grade 5*

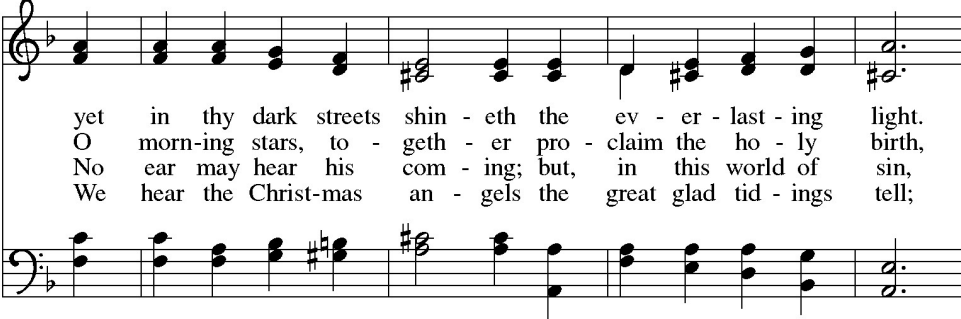
O Little Town of Bethlehem



1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!
 2 For Christ is born of Mar - y, and, gath - ered all a - bove
 3 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is giv' n!
 4 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

NICENE CREED

A Siblings in Christ, as we contemplate the Sacred Mysteries of this night, let us confess the faith of the Church:

C We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation

he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;

he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

THE PRAYERS

A With shepherds and angels, we lift our voices to God for the Church, those in need, and all of God's good creation:

A brief silence.

A Eternal God who was born to save your people, we pray for your Church. Strengthen our leaders, especially Michael, Elizabeth and Michael--our bishops; Jean--our dean; Jay--our pastor; and all who serve your people. Give us all confidence to sing your praise, tell of your glory, and ponder your dwelling among us. Make us faithful witnesses of your presence among us: come, Lord Jesus,

C be born in us anew.

A Eternal God who was born to rule the nations in peace, we pray for all who rule, govern or lead: give them hearts full of compassion, justice, and peace. Grant lasting peace to all lands where bombs and guns sound a lullaby especially for Ukraine and Russia, Palestine and Israel. Make us your peacemakers in our time: come Lord Jesus,

C be born in us anew. ▶

A Eternal God who was born amid animals and straw, we pray for your creation. Accompany us in darker nights and colder days, comfort all who seek shelter from the weather, and empower those who work for clean water and abundant food for all. Make us grateful and generous stewards of your whole earth: come, Lord Jesus,

C **be born in us anew.**

A Eternal God who was born with healing in your wings, we pray for the sick and suffering. Grant your wholeness to those in need of healing whom we name now, _____ and all who need healing. Uphold those who care for others, grant wisdom and understanding to those who share your gifts of science and medicine, and accompany those who will die this night. Make us signs of your wholeness and grace: come, Lord Jesus,

C **be born in us anew.**

A Eternal God who was born among the destitute and forgotten, we pray for the lonely, the forgotten, and those who have no one to pray for them. Shine your holy light into the lives of those who do not find joy in this season and those who cannot look with hope to your coming. Encourage those who wonder, watch, and wait. Make us signs of your love: come, Lord Jesus,

C **be born in us anew.**

A Eternal God who was born to die, we give you thanks for all who have gone before us in lives of faith and holy living. Sustain us with your promises until we come with Mary, Joseph, Shepherds, and Angels to worship the Prince of Peace. Make us one in the promises of baptism: come, Lord Jesus,

C **be born in us anew.**

A Into your wounded hands of Love, Eternal God, we place all our prayers trusting in the mercy and grace of the One who was born this night, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

P The peace of the Christ Child be with you always.

C **And also with you.**

You are invited to greet those around you in your pew with a word or a sign of Christ's peace.

Please be seated.

MEAL – “God feeds us with Jesus Christ.”

OFFERING IS RECEIVED

ANTHEM – “Wake, Shepherds, Awake”

Carl F. Schalk

(Barb Moore, flute)

*Wake, shepherds, awake, your sadness forsake.
Bright angels are swinging from heaven and singing:
“Your joy is now near, the Savior is here!”*

*Come, shepherds, in haste to Someone so chaste:
With flutes fill his heart full of songs gay and artful;
Come, find in a stall the Savior of all.*

*They came, they heard the wonderful word,
Then told one another of Jesus, their Brother,
And everyone found a King to be crowned.*

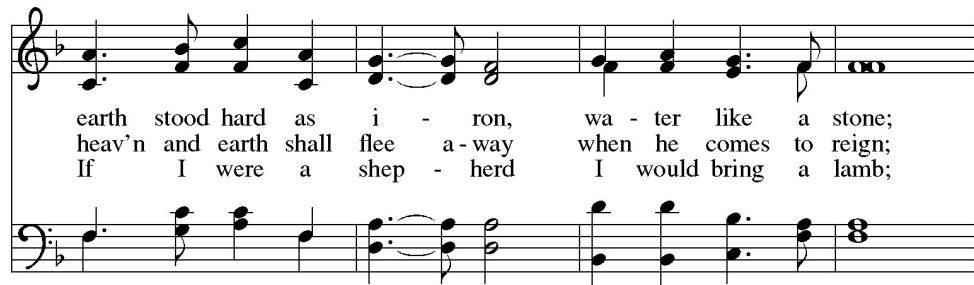
*They greeted with joy this heavenly Boy,
In wonder amazing, in carols and praising.
Their pipes echo still at night on the hill.*

Please stand as you are able.

In the Bleak Midwinter



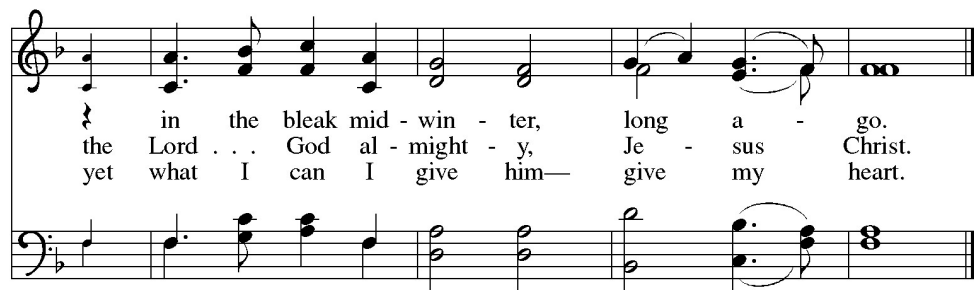
1 In the bleak mid - win - ter, frost - y wind made moan,
 2 Heav - en can - not hold him, nor . . . earth sus - tain;
 3 What . . . can I give him, poor . . . as I am?



earth stood hard as i - ron, wa - ter like a stone;
 heav'n and earth shall flee a - way when he comes to reign;
 If I were a shep - herd I would bring a lamb;



snow had fall - en, snow on snow, snow on snow,
 in the bleak mid - win - ter a sta - ble place suf - ficed
 if I were a wise . . . man I would do my part;



in the bleak mid - win - ter, long a - go.
 the Lord . . . God al - might - y, Je - sus Christ.
 yet what I can I give him— give my heart.

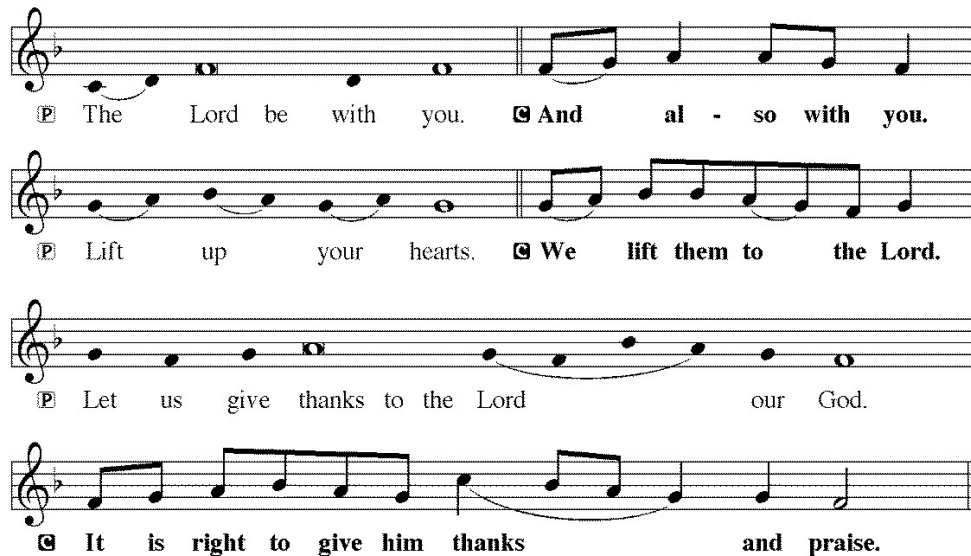
Text: Christina Georgina Rossetti, 1830–1894
 Music: CRANHAM, Gustav Holst, 1874–1934

OFFERTORY PRAYER

A God of abundance, receive and bless these gifts we have offered. Join our hearts with the song of the angels, and gather us at your table of celebration. Strengthen us to share with all the world the abundance of your grace upon grace, poured out in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.

C Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING DIALOG



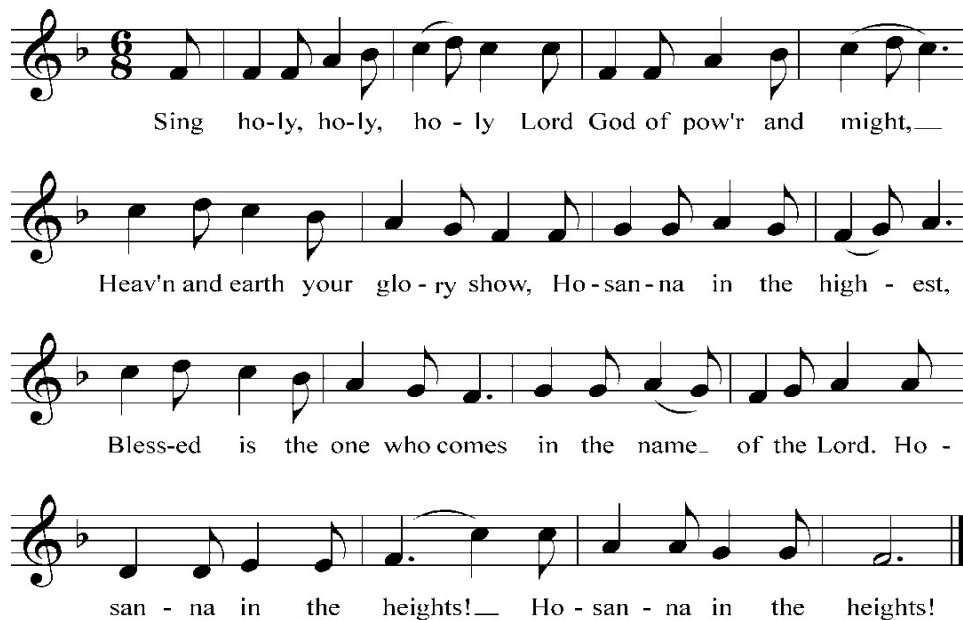
P The Lord be with you. **C** And al - so with you.

P Lift up your hearts. **C** We lift them to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C It is right to give him thanks and praise.

P It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, ...we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Sing ho-ly, ho-ly, ho - ly Lord God of pow'r and might, —

Heav'n and earth your glo - ry show, Ho - san - na in the high - est,

Bless-ed is the one who comes in the name_ of the Lord. Ho -

san - na in the heights! — Ho - san - na in the heights!

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

P We sing a new song to you, O God of our salvation, for you have done marvelous things. Since the beginning of time, you have spoken your Word, and your light shines in our darkness. Glory to you, O God:

C **Glory in the highest!**

P The seas are thundering with praise, the rivers are clapping their hands. The hills ring out with gladness, and the trees are shouting their joy. Glory to you, O God:

C **Glory in the highest!**

P Your Son rules in truth and justice, victorious and merciful is he! We praise your majesty lying in a manger, Jesus Christ, born of Mary and lauded by angels. Glory to you, O God:

C **Glory in the highest!**



*On the night before he died, 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.*

P Send your Spirit on us and on this meal of wonder. In this bread, give us the body of Christ. With this cup, reveal the grace of your risen Son. Make known to the whole earth your steadfast love Glory to you, O God:

C **Glory in the highest!**

P In these dark days, bring the dawn of your righteousness to birth. Hold the living and the dead in your hands. In your good time, awaken the sleeping animals, and revive the dormant plants with your life-giving Spirit. Glory to you, O God:

C **Glory in the highest!**

P With trumpets and horns and harps, with the faithful on earth and the hosts of heaven, we sing to your splendor, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, God Most High, Light of the earth, and Judge of the world, today and forever.

C **Amen.**

P Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

C **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;

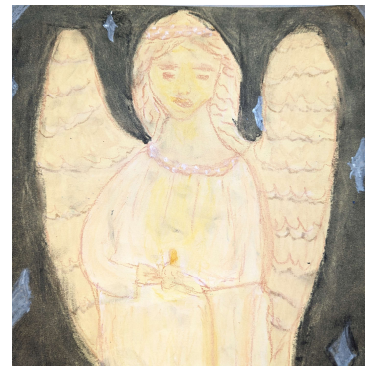
and lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,

and the power, and the glory,

forever and ever. Amen.



*Maddie Wertz
Grade 5*

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence



1 Let all mor - tal flesh keep si - lence, and with fear and trem - bling stand;
 2 King of kings, yet born of Mar - y, as of old on earth he stood,
 3 Rank on rank the host of heav - en spreads its van-guard on the way;
 4 At his feet the six - winged ser - aph, cher - u - bim with sleep - less eye,



pon - der noth - ing earth - ly - mind - ed, for with bless - ing in his hand
 Lord of lords in hu - man ves - ture, in the bod - y and the blood,
 as the Light of light, de - scend - ing from the realms of end - less day,
 veil their fac - es to the pres - ence, as with cease - less voice they cry:



Christ our God to earth de - scend - ing comes full hom - age to de - mand.
 he will give to all the faith - ful his own self for heav' n - ly food.
 comes, the pow'rs of hell to van - quish, as the dark - ness clears a - way.
 "Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia, Lord Most High!"

Text: Liturgy of St. James; tr. Gerard Moultrie, 1829–1885, alt.
 Music: PICARDY, French folk tune, 17th cent.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P Here is Christ, the Prince of Peace. Come, taste and see!

C Amen.

P For those communing at home: take, eat, drink: the Body and Blood of Christ for you.

The congregation is seated.

*This is Christ's Table and all Christians are welcome to the feast!
 We believe that this is the Body and Blood of Christ for you.*

Please come forward from both sides by the center aisle.

Take a small empty cup from the trays at the head of the center aisle.

White grape juice is in pre-filled cups for those who cannot have alcoholized wine.

Gluten-free wafers are available for those who need them; please let the pastor know.

Receive the bread in your open palm, then hold your cup steady for the assisting minister to fill.

As you return by the side aisles, please place your empty cup in the silver bowl.

*All are invited to the meal. If you would like to participate but not to receive the bread and wine,
 please cross your arms in front of you for a blessing from the pastor.*

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

HANDBELL VOLUNTARY – (6:00pm) "We Three Kings"

arr. Cynthia Dobrinski

CAROLS DURING DISTRIBUTION

ELW 272

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

1 Lo, how a rose e'er bloom - ing from ten - der stem hath
 2 I - sai - ah had fore - told it, the rose I have in
 3 This flow'r, whose fra - grance ten - der with sweet-ness fills the
 4 O Sav - ior, child of Mar - y, who felt our hu - man

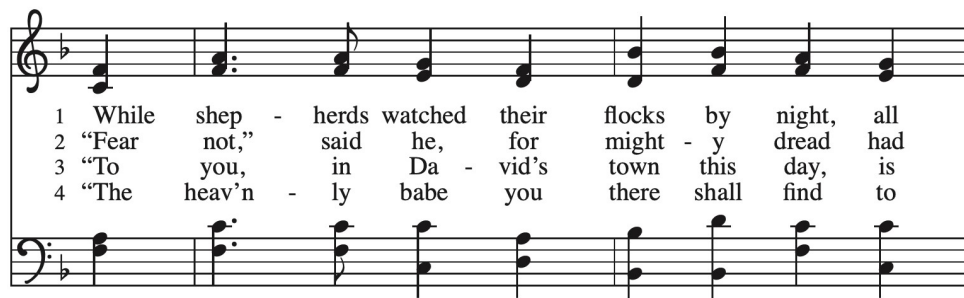
sprung! Of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing as
 mind; with Mar - y we be - hold it, the
 air, dis - pels with glo - rious splen - dor the
 woe; O Sav - ior, king of glo - ry, who

seers of old have sung, it came, a flow'r so bright, a -
 vir - gin moth - er kind. To show God's love a - right, she
 dark-ness ev - 'ry - where. True man, yet ver - y God, from
 dost our weak - ness know: bring us at length, we pray, to

mid the cold of win - ter, when half - spent was the night.
 bore to us a Sav - ior, when half - spent was the night.
 sin and death he saves us and light - ens ev - 'ry load.
 the bright courts of heav - en and in - to end - less day.

Text: German carol, 15th cent.; tr. Theodore Baker, 1851–1934, sts. 1-2; Harriet R. Krauth, 1845–1925, st. 3; John C. Mattes, 1876–1948, st. 4
 Music: ES IST EIN ROS, *Alte catholische geistliche Kirchengesänge*, Köln, 1599; arr. Michael Praetorius, 1571–1621


While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks



1 While shep - herds watched their flocks by night, all
 2 "Fear not," said he, for might - y dread had
 3 "To you, in Da - vid's town this day, is
 4 "The heav'n - ly babe you there shall find to



seat - ed on the ground, the an - gel of the
 seized their trou - bled mind: "Glad tid - ings of great
 born of Da - vid's line the Sav - ior, who is
 hu - man view dis - played, all hum - bly wrapped in



Lord came down, and glo - ry shone a - round.
 joy I bring to you and hu - man - kind.
 Christ the Lord, and this shall be the sign:
 swath - ing bands, and in a man - ger laid."

- 5 Thus spoke the seraph, and forthwith
 appeared a shining throng
 of angels praising God, who thus
 addressed their joyful song:
- 6 "All glory be to God on high,
 and to the earth be peace;
 good will to all from highest heav'n
 begin and never cease!"

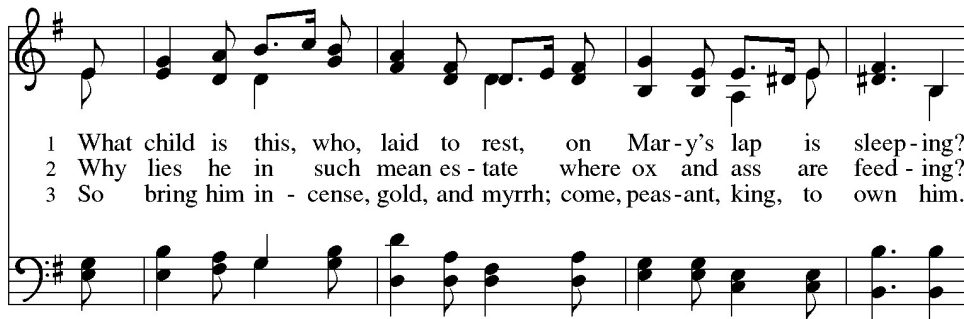
Text: Nahum Tate, 1652–1715

Music: WINCHESTER OLD, Este's *Psalms*, 1592; arr. George Kirbye, 1560–1634

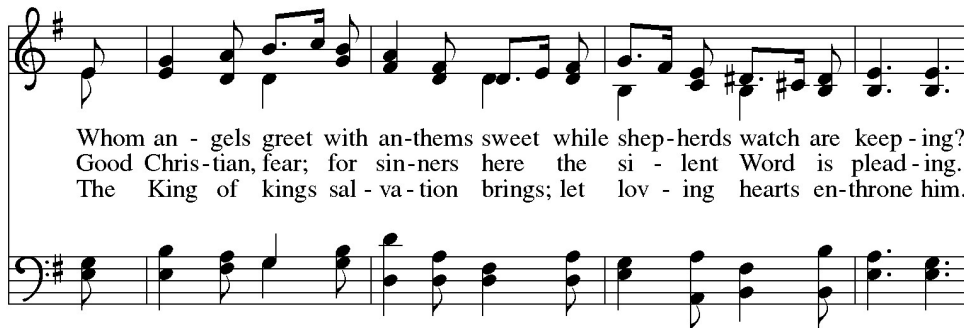


Rilan Wiczorek
 Grade 5

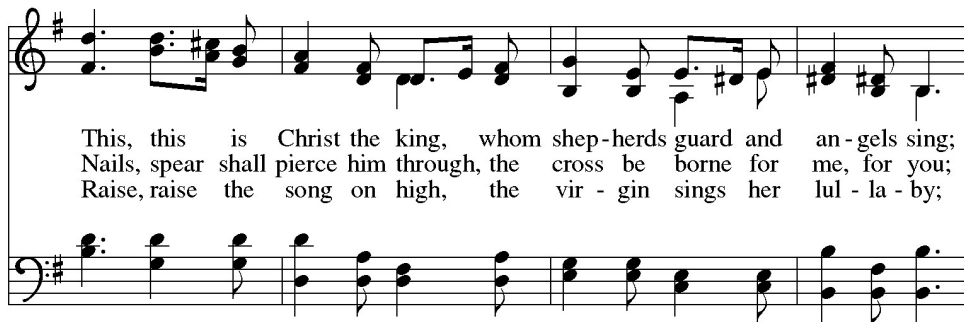
What Child Is This



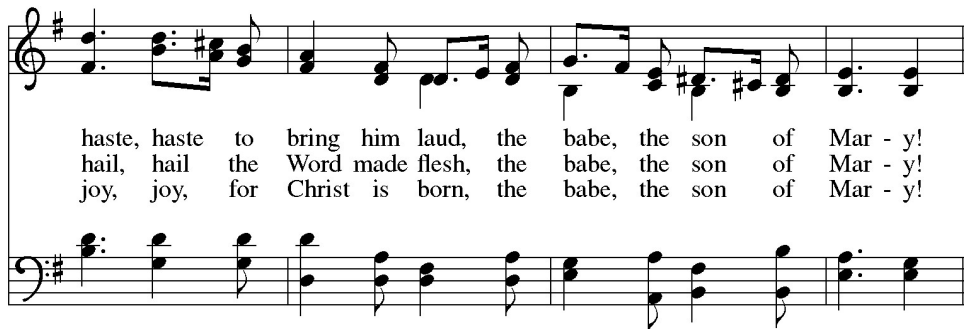
1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar-y's lap is sleep-ing?
 2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - ing?
 3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas-ant, king, to own him.



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.

Please stand as you are able.

TABLE BLESSING

☞ And now, may the body and blood of Christ, the Savior held in Mary's arms and which you have received in your hands, bless you, keep you in all goodness and health, and bring you to everlasting life.

☞ Amen.

CANDLE LIGHTING and ADORATION AT THE CRÈCHE

The usher will light the candle of the first person on each aisle in each pew.
Each person, in turn, will pass the Light to their neighbor. Never tip a lighted candle!
When all the candles are lighted, we will join in the singing of "Silent Night."

CANDLE LIGHTING ANTHEM – "Peace, Peace"

Rick & Sylvia Powell

*Peace, peace, peace on earth and good will to all.
This is a time for joy, this is a time for love.
Now let us all sing together of peace, peace, peace on earth.*

CAROL

Silent Night, Holy Night! *Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht!*

ELW 281

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,

Hol - der 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

Ruh, schlaf in himm - li - scher Ruh.
peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!
birth, Je - sus, Lord, at your birth.

THE PROLOGUE OF JOHN

P In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.
The Word was in the beginning with God.
All things came into being through the Word,
and without the Word not one thing came into being.
What has come into being in the Word was life,
and the life was the light of all people.
The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness did not overtake it.

C **The Word has become flesh and lives among us.**
We have seen his glory:
the glory as of a parent's only child,
full of grace and truth!

BLESSING OF THE CRÈCHE

P Let us pray.
God of Mary and Joseph, of shepherds and animals, bless us whenever we gaze on this manger scene. Through all the days of Christmas may these figures tell the story of how humans, angels, and animals found the Christ in this poor place. Fill our hearts and homes with hospitality, joy, gentleness, and thanksgiving and guide our steps in the way of peace. Grant this through Christ our Lord.

C Amen.

You may extinguish your candle as the lights rise or you may choose to keep you candle lighted as you carry the Light of the Christ Child into your heart and home. The candle itself is yours to keep.

CAROL

ELW 277

Away in a Manger

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

SENDING – “God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.”

BLESSING

- 📖 ...and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit be yours this Christmas and always.
- 🔊 Amen.

SENDING CAROL

ELW 270

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

1 Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, “Glo - ry to the new - born king;
 2 Christ, by high - est heav’n a - dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord,
 3 Hail the heav’n - born Prince of peace! Hail the Sun of righ - teous - ness!

peace on earth, and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled.”
 late in time be - hold him come, off - spring of a vir - gin’s womb.
 Light and life to all he brings, ris’n with heal - ing in his wings.

Joy - ful, all you na - tions, rise; join the tri - umph of the skies;
 Veiled in flesh the God - head see! Hail, in - car - nate de - i - ty!
 Mild he lays his glo - ry by, born that we no more may die,



with an - gel - ic hosts pro - claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"
 Pleased as man with us to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el!
 born to raise each child of earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.

Refrain

Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new - born king!"

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, alt.
 Music: MENDELSSOHN, Felix Mendelssohn, 1809-1847; arr. William H. Cummings, 1831-1915

DISMISSAL INTO THE WORLD FOR SERVICE

- A Glory to God in the highest!
- C And peace to God's people on earth!
- A Go in peace. Tell the Good News!
- C Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE – "Two Offertories on French Noels"

Alexandre Guilmant (1837 - 1911)

Chantons je vous prie Noël hautement
 Let's sing noels, I pray you loudly
Le Messie vient de naître
 The Messiah has just been born
Joseph est bien marié
 Joseph is well-married

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— **SERVING THIS EVENING** —

GREETERS – Ann & Gary Flick (10:30pm)
ACOLYTES – Cecilia & Noah Montroy (6:00pm)
 Jessica Copfer (10:30pm)
CRUCIFER – Matthew Snider (6:00pm)
BOOKBEARER – Mason Snider (6:00pm)
ASSISTING MINISTER – Michael Snider (6:00pm)
 Kate Martin (10:30pm)
COMMUNION ASSISTANT – Tom Klomp (6:00pm)
 Linda Graffius (10:30pm)
LECTOR – Lois Smith (6:00pm)
 Bill Lasher (10:30pm)
BREAD BAKER – Cathie Dugan
ALTAR GUILD – Cathie Dugan (6:00pm)
 Loretta Deeds (10:30pm)
USHERS – Mary Daniels, Jane & Dave Kinzig, Carl Moore (6:00pm)
 Diana Alvaro, Sharon Burke, Ann Flick, Bill Lasher (10:30pm)
LUTHER MEMORIAL CHOIR & HANDBELL CHOIR



Altar flowers are given to the Glory of God and in memory of loved ones by Carol Schaal.

Columbarium flowers are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of my husband, Bill, by Carol Schaal.

Bulletins are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of C. Richard and Dorothy Overberg by their family.

The Nativity Star is given to the Glory of God and in honor of Joe Burwell, Jane & Dave Kinzig, Martha & Tom Klomp, Kathy Kraut, and Cathy & Skip Meyn, for their help in preparing the LMA Thanksgiving Feast from Sally & Phil McAfee.

The Lord is with us at all times; in our joys and our sadness we turn to Him for strength and comfort. As you look upon the star shining in our church tonight know that He is always with you. We thank our Luther Memorial family for their gift of this star for Christmas Eve.

Thank You to our choir members for their leadership in our worship services throughout the past year.

Choir

Emma Chaffee
Jonathan Gaber
Ken Kraut
Otto ‘Skip’ Meyn
Rose-Marie Rose
Pat Young

Barb Dennison
Molly Gaber
Mary Laver
Barb Moore
Kathy Sahlmann

Handbells

Christy Adams
Patricia Boyd
Cathie Dugan
Jeanne Gaber
Mary Laver
Barb Moore
Kathy Sahlmann
Tessa Wolf

Pat Bellingham
Barb Dennison
Les Fobes
Lynnette Gustafson
Lena Martin
Kara Partusch
Penelope Wolf
Veronica Wolf

Instrumentalists

Bob Banks
Jeanne Gaber
Bill Lasher
Barb Moore

Ro Braine
Jonathan Gaber
Linda Melaragno
Kara Partusch

Mercyhurst Liturgical Dance Ensemble

C. Noelle Partusch, director

Church Offices will be open limited hours December 26 – December 29. Please call the office if you would like to stop in.

Learning Academy students and staff return to school on Wednesday, January 3, 2024.

Members who have donated poinsettias may take their flowers following the 10:30pm service this evening.

Volunteers to assist with delivery of poinsettias to our homebound are appreciated.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2023
CHRISTMAS DAY

Pajama worship will be held at 10:30am. Wear your comfiest and most festive jammies.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2023
THE NAME OF JESUS

Worship will be held at 8:15am in Faith Chapel and 10:30am in the main church.

NOTES ON WORSHIP TEXTS THIS EVENING

The Proclamation of the Nativity of the Christ—or Christmas Proclamation—comes from the Roman Martyrology, the official listing in the early church of the commemorations, feasts, fasts, and festivals of the Church. In it, dates and places and people are named from the beginning of creation to the birth of Jesus. It should be noted that this is a proclamation of *kairos* (God’s time) and not *chronos* (clock time), meaning that much of the history noted is not about particular days and years but about the continued work of God in the world through the Beloved of God until the birth of Jesus. The Proclamation situates the birth of Jesus in sacred history—creation, the Flood, the prophets, the kings. It also situates the birth of Jesus in secular history—noting the date of the founding of Rome, the Greek Olympiads, and the ruler of the Empire at the time. In this way, much like Luke’s birth narrative that we will hear again tonight, the coming of God in the person of Jesus is seen as the summit of both sacred and secular history. The Incarnation of God in the Flesh is for us today as much as it was for the shepherds outside Bethlehem and the magi from unknown regions of the Gentile world. It is just as important today, and our proclamation just as needed, as it was the very first time the armies of heaven sang in the Bethlehem skies. We also need to be mindful in the 21st century that there is much missing from world history in the Proclamation. Besides just the historical events of the Bible and the Mediterranean, we can also note that when Jesus was born it was the dawn of the Kushan Empire in India, and during the Han Dynasty of China. It was at the twilight of the Kingdom of Da’Amat in Ethiopia and southern Arabia, and when the Mande people thrived in and around the city of Djenné in the Inner Niger Delta region of Mali. It was while the Nazca people flourished in Peru, and the time when the Haudenosaunee, Mississauga, and Erie people—people of the Six Nations Treaty—thrived on the sacred ground of what we now call Erie, our home. Jesus was born in an occupied country 140 years after the Maccabean revolt that established a Jewish state free from Greek rule, and about 40 years after that free Jewish state fell to Rome. What we note as the “forty-second year of the reign of Roman Emperor Octavian Augustus” was for the Judean people the period of the Second Temple in Jerusalem. We should remember that in Jesus’ lifetime, the “span of peace” that the Proclamation describes was actually Rome’s imperial control over Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and all of Israel. Nevertheless, into this small town that still knows strife and war, Jesus comes. Come! Let us adore him!

The Eucharistic Prayer is another composition of Dr. Gail Ramshaw, liturgical scholar. This eucharistic prayer echoes Luke 2, John 1, and the psalms appointed for Christmas: 96, 97, and 98. Given the proximity of Christmas to the Northern Hemisphere’s winter solstice, it also prays for the coming of spring.

READINGS AND COMMEMORATIONS FOR THE 12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

December 25 – The Nativity of Our Lord, Christmas Day – Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalm 98; Hebrews 1:1-12; John 1:1-14 – *As on the first day of creation, on this Christmas Day the Word illumines the world, shining forth to bring all things into being. Today we celebrate the incarnate Word, God becoming flesh to live among us in the person of Jesus Christ then and now. Emboldened by the good news of Christ’s birth, along with the shepherds, Mary and Joseph, and all witnesses to the light of Christ, we declare to the world that we have indeed seen and been transformed by the arrival of “the salvation of our God.” O come, let us adore!*

A Note from Pastor Jay: The three days that follow our celebrations of Jesus’ birth are the feasts of the three “Christmas martyrs.” As we celebrate Jesus present on earth and what it means to be called to be disciples and witnesses (martyrion in Greek) of what he means in our lives, we contemplate the three kinds of martyrdom:

Stephen was a martyr of will and deed: He witnessed to Jesus and knew it could get him killed. He witnessed anyway. And he was killed for his witness.

John the Divine was a martyr of will but not of deed: He is believed to be the only one of the original 12 disciples to die of natural causes (though there are stories of his being spared of martyrdom on several occasions). This fulfills the Gospel of John when Jesus says, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?”. He witnessed to Jesus knowing he could be killed. He witnessed anyway. He died of natural causes, though by tradition in exile on the isle of Patmos.

The Holy Innocents were martyrs of deed but not of will: Killed by order of King Herod who feared the birth of the “King of the Judeans” in Bethlehem, they did not witness to Jesus but were killed for his sake nevertheless.

December 26 – Stephen, Deacon and Protomartyr – II Chronicles 24:17-22; Psalm 17:1-9, 15; Acts 6:8-7:2a, 51-60; Matthew 23:34-39 – *Stephen was a deacon and the first martyr (protomartyr) of the church. He was one of those seven upon whom the apostles laid hands after they had been chosen to serve widows and others in need. Later, Stephen’s preaching angered the temple authorities, and they ordered him to be put to death by stoning.*

December 27 – John the Divine, Evangelist – Genesis 1:1-5, 26-31; Psalm 116:12-19; I John 1:1-2:2; John 21:20-25 – *The son of Zebedee and brother of James, John was one of the twelve disciples and witness to the transfiguration. Tradition has named him also the writer of the Gospel of John, the three New Testament letters bearing his name, as well as Revelation.*

December 28 – The Holy Innocents of Bethlehem, martyrs – Jeremiah 31:15-17; Psalm 124; I Peter 4:12-19; Matthew 2:13-18 – *This day commemorates the young children killed by Herod in Bethlehem in his jealous attempt to murder the baby Jesus, a sobering reminder of the evil that led Christ to be born for our salvation.*

December 29 – Psalm 148; Isaiah 49:5-15; Matthew 12:46-50

December 30 – Psalm 148; Proverbs 9:1-12; II Peter 3:8-13

December 31 – Psalm 148; I Kings 3:5-14; John 8:12-19

January 1 – The Holy Name of Jesus – Number 6:22-27; Psalm 8; Galatians 4:4-7; Philippians 2:5-11; Luke 2:15-21 – *By Jewish law, every baby boy was circumcised and named on the eighth day of life, so on the eighth day of Christmas the church celebrates this event in Jesus’ life. The keeping of the covenant as well as Jesus’ name are signs of God’s salvation given to us through him.*

January 2 – Psalm 110; Proverbs 1:1-7; James 3:13-18

January 3 – Psalm 110; Proverbs 1:20-33; James 4:1-10

January 4 – Psalm 110; Proverbs 3:1-12; James 4:11-7

January 5 – Psalm 110; Proverbs 22:1-9; Luke 6:27-31

January 6 – The Epiphany of Jesus – Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14; Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12 – *The feast of Epiphany (“manifestation”) concludes the Christmas season with a celebration of God’s glory revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. In Isaiah and Ephesians, that glory is proclaimed for all nations and people. Like the light of the star that guided the magi to Jesus, the light of Christ reveals who we are: children of God who are claimed and washed in the waters of baptism. We are sent out to be beacons of the light of Christ, sharing the good news of God’s love to all people.*

**MY COMMITMENT TO GOD THROUGH THE MINISTRY
OF LUTHER MEMORIAL CHURCH - YEAR 2024**

I/we commit my/our entire life in service to Jesus Christ, and therefore will offer a portion my/our annual income. I promise, with God helping me, to give to Luther Memorial's ministry during the coming year, as follows:

\$ _____ () Weekly () Monthly

Name _____

Address _____
(Please detach from bulletin and add to offering plate)

- PRAYER LIST -

| | | | |
|--|------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS: | | | |
| Our Members: | | | |
| Lois Fobes | Dave Parsh | Ann Flick | Rose-Marie Rose |
| Pat Gilbert | Phil McAfee | Cyndi Treiber | |
| Friends and Family: | | | |
| Mitchell & family | Jean C. | Jeannette Bowers | Ian Minner |
| Carol E. | John Semonis | Jeff Granger & family | Nick |
| Paul Gustafson | Melissa | Jim Berger | Jane Rose |
| Allison, Audree & family | Melissa Pierce | Scot & Robin | Mark Hadzega |
| Cindy B. | Scott Coleman | Suzie Hosterman | Dick Braendel |
| Doug & Jenine | Doug Blum | Bella Poof | Lorraine Melms |
| Melanie Benn | Jonah Allgeier | Nancy Varner | |
| Grief: | | | |
| Bob Michel family | | | |
| Our Military Service Men & Women: | | | |
| Lt. Col. Matt Anderson | Michael Stickner | Andrew Watson | Alli Brown |
| Ben Dixon | | | |