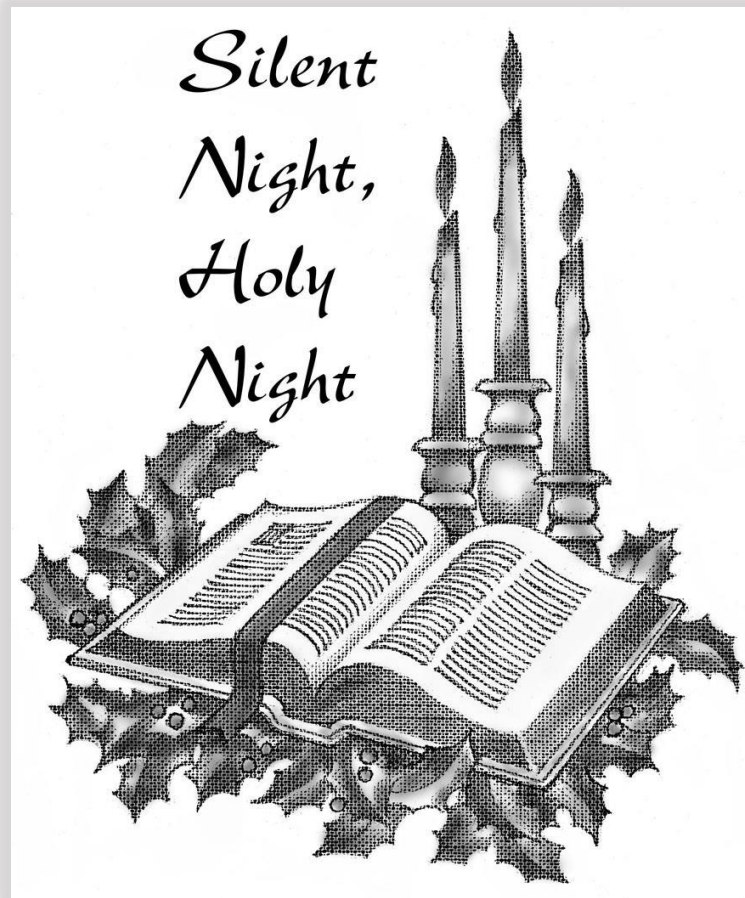


CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

December 24, 2024



LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE CROSS-LCMS

*Welcoming all to walk together
toward abundant life in Christ.*

2024 THEME: JOY COMES IN THE MORNING

*For his anger is but for a moment, and his favor is for a lifetime.
Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning. Psalm 30:5 (ESV)*

T CANDLELIGHT SERVICE T

AS WE GATHER

Christmas is a celebration of love. Loving thoughts and deeds certainly are part of this holy season as goodwill among people seems more pronounced than at other times of the year. What is the source of that love? It is the love of God that is fully expressed in Christ Jesus, the babe in the manger. For centuries, hymn writers and poets have found meaningful ways of describing that love of God. A poem by English writer Christina Rossetti simply but beautifully shares the Gospel truth that blesses this season.

Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, Love divine;
Love was born at Christmas,
Star and angels gave the sign. (*LW 46:1*)

Through the words of gifted hymn writers and poets and the evangelists Luke and Matthew, we hear the angels and we see the star. Once again, the message of God's love echoes in our world!

A REMINDER: Please turn your cell phone to mute or to vibrate during the worship service. Thank you.

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

THE TOLLING OF THE BELLS



T CALL TO WORSHIP T

P The Advent Season is now ended, the time of waiting and anxiously praying for our Lord to COME, has arrived. Jesus the Savior is born! Therefore, the Advent wreath glows brilliantly as the Christ candle in the middle stands shining.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

Oh, Come All Ye Faithful

LSB 379

1. 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

REFRAIN O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him
Christ the Lord!



2. Highest, most holy, light of light eternal,
Born of a virgin, a mortal He comes!
Son of the Father
Now in flesh appearing!

Refrain

3. Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God
All glory in the highest

Refrain

INVOCATION

P In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen

OPENING SENTENCES

John 1:14; Psalm 96:3; Psalm 98:1

P And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,

C **and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.**

P Declare His glory among the nations,

C **His marvelous works among all the peoples!**

P Oh sing to the LORD a new song, for He has done marvelous things!

C **His right hand and His holy arm have worked salvation for Him.**

(Silence to confess our sins to God)

P Most merciful God,

C we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

P Tonight we celebrate “the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession who are zealous for good works.” Because of this Savior born for us, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God to all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

FESTIVE GLORIA [3PM & 7PM] Angels We Have Heard on High *LSB 368 sts. 1, 3*

1. Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o’er the plains,
And the mountains in reply,
Echoing their joyous strains.



REFRAIN Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

3. Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.

Text: Public domain

Refrain

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Let us pray.

O God, You make this most holy night to shine with the brightness of the true light, Jesus Christ. Grant that as we have known the mysteries of that light on earth we may also come to the fullness of His joys in heaven; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Isaiah 40:1–9

(The Lord promises comfort and restoration for the Babylonian exiles. These promises, fulfilled through John the Baptist’s ministry, have personal consequences for you and for all people. Just as the Lord doubled the comfort and forgiveness for the exiles, He has doubled comfort and forgiveness for you in the person of His Son.)

¹Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

²Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that her warfare is ended,
that her iniquity is pardoned,
that she has received from the LORD’s hand
double for all her sins.

³A voice cries:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD;
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

⁴Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.

⁵And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

⁶A voice says, “Cry!”

And I said, “What shall I cry?”

All flesh is grass,
and all its beauty is like the flower of the field.

⁷The grass withers, the flower fades
when the breath of the LORD blows on it;
surely the people are grass.

⁸The grass withers, the flower fades,
but the word of our God will stand forever.

⁹Get you up to a high mountain,
O Zion, herald of good news;
lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good news;
lift it up, fear not;
say to the cities of Judah,
“Behold your God!”



“Then the
glory of the LORD
shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together.”

Isaiah 40:5, NRSV

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

SPECIAL MUSIC [5:00 PM] The Best Christmas Medley Ever -Joyful Ringers

EPISTLE

Titus 2:11–14

(Jesus Christ is the living manifestation of God’s grace. God stepped into this world to create the crucial turning point of salvation for all of humanity. salvation for all. God’s plan of salvation is available for all people, regardless of age, gender, social status, or nationality (Gal 3:28; Col 3:11).)

¹¹For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ¹²training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, ¹³waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

HYMN OF PROMISE [3:00PM] It Came Upon the Midnight Clear LSB 366



1 It came up-on the mid-night clear, That glo-rious song of old,
4 For lo, the days have come to pass By proph-ets seen of old,



From an-gels bend-ing near the earth To touch their harps of gold:
When down in-to the cir-cling years Came Christ as was fore-told.



“Peace on the earth, good-will to all, From heav’n’s all-gra-cious king.”
His word of peace shall to the earth God’s an-cient prom-ise bring,



The world in sol-emn still-ness lay To hear the an-gels sing.
And all who take this gift will hear The song the an-gels sing.

SPECIAL MUSIC [5PM & 7PM]

See Amid The Winters Snow -Vocal Choir

HOLY GOSPEL

Luke 2:1–20

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

C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

¹In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴And 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, ⁵to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. ⁶And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷And 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.

⁸And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. ¹⁰And 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. ¹¹For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths 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,
and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

¹⁵When 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.” ¹⁶And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to You, O Christ.**





1 Of the Fa - ther's love be - got - ten Ere the worlds be -
 2 Oh, that birth for - ev - er bless - ed, When the vir - gin,
 3 This is He whom seers in old time Chant - ed of with



gan to be, He is Al - pha and O - me - ga,
 full of grace, By the Ho - ly Ghost con - ceiv - ing,
 one ac - cord, Whom the voic - es of the proph - ets



He the source, the end - ing He, Of the things that are, that
 Bore the Sav - ior of our race, And the babe, the world's Re -
 Prom - ised in their faith - ful word. Now He shines, the long - ex -



have been, And that fu - ture years shall see
 deem - er, First re - vealed His sa - cred face
 pect - ed; Let cre - a - tion praise its Lord



Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
 Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
 Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.

Text: Aurelius Prudentius Clemens, 348-c. 413; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-66, alt.

Tune: Plainsong, 13th cent., mode V

Text and tune: Public domain

OFFERING

(Please indicate your attendance and any requests on the Pew Card and hand them to the center aisle. They will be picked up by the ushers after they deliver our gifts to the Altar. Thank you.)

OFFERING HYMN [3:00PM] On Christmas Night All Christians Sing LSB 377



1 On Christ-mas night all Chris - tians sing To hear the news the
2 Then why should men on earth be so sad, Since our Re - deem - er



an - gels bring, On Christ - mas night all Chris - tians sing To
made us glad, Then why should men on earth be so sad, Since



hear the news the an - gels bring, News of great joy, news of great
our Re - deem - er made us glad, When from our sin He set us



mirth, News of our mer - ci - ful King's birth.
free, All for to gain our lib - er - ty?

SPECIAL MUSIC [5:00PM & 7:00 PM] Infant Holy Vocal Choir

PRAYERS

P Let us pray for the whole Church throughout the world and for all people of the world . . . Mighty and loving God our Father, hear our prayer for the whole Church gathered this night around the manger of our Savior, Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Give us true unity of faith and singleness of love. To all Your people, give ears of faith to hear that their lives reflect Your saving Word. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P May the good news of the Savior descend upon all people of the entire world, granting the miracle of repentance and faith in the hearts and minds of all. Bring true peace among nations and people. Guide leaders to promote justice and peace. Bless all who work even through this night to defend and protect us. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Gather each of our families into that love which tonight we view in the Holy Family. Give tender courage to all fathers, loving endurance to all mothers, and trusting obedience to all children. Grant to all who are single or all who are lonely an awareness of Your great love for each of them. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Visit with Your mercy all who are afflicted with illness, all who suffer injury, and all who fear death. Give calmness in their silent suffering, and give faith to know and look to Your love that gives healing and life. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P In the silence of this night, we remember all who have gone before us with the sign of faith. Bring us with them into Your nearer presence in paradise. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy, through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord,

C **Amen.**

T FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT T

P God's people of old looked forward to this night. As the psalmist wrote, "Some sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, prisoners in affliction and in irons, for they had rebelled against the words of God, and spurned the counsel of the Most high. . . .

P Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and burst their bonds apart. Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of men!"

HYMN OF HOPE

The People That in Darkness Sat

LSB 412



1 The peo - ple that in dark - ness sat A glo - rious
3 To us a Child of hope is born, To us a



light have seen; The light has shined on them who long In
Son is giv'n, And on His shoul-der ev - er rests All



shades of death have been, In shades of death have been.
pow'r in earth and heav'n, All pow'r in earth and heav'n.

P St. Matthew records in chapter 2 "When Herod had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written: "

P 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.'" The Savior of the world was not born in the capital city of Jerusalem, but Bethlehem as God had promised.

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.

*5PM and 7 PM Choir Only:
 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!*

How silently, how silently The wondrous gift is giv'n!
 So God imparts To human hearts
 The blessings of his heav'n. No ear may hear his coming;
 But in this world of sin, Where meek souls will
 Receive him, still The dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, Descend to us, we pray;
 Cast out our sin, And enter in,
 Be born in us today. We hear the Christmas angels
 The great glad tidings tell; Oh, come to us,
 Abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!

P St. Matthew records the angel's words to Joseph about the child to be born of Mary, his betrothed. "She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:

P "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"--which means, "God with us." No ordinary child was born this day. One day, He would accomplish the salvation of the whole human race.

The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel.
 Matthew 1:23



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

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

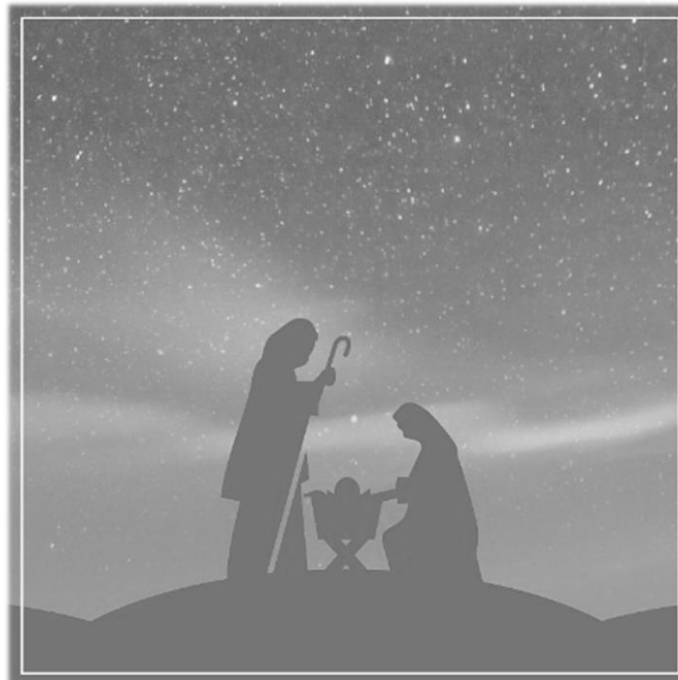


CANDLE LIGHTING *(Please light your candles)*

- P As the light of these candles lights-up our faces, it symbolizes the Light of Christ, a Child in the manger at Bethlehem, a Savior suffering our death on the cross, and soon to come from His throne on high as Judge of all. He is our Light here on earth and the eternal Light who enlightens heaven, where there is no need of candle or sun. Rejoice for the Light of the world has come, who transforms us with the brightness of His glory.
- P This is the message we have heard from Him and proclaimed to you: that God is Light and in Him is no darkness at all. [1John 1:5b] We are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and then cover its light. Instead they set the lamp on its stand, set up high, and it lights everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before all people, that they may see your good works and give praise to your Father in heaven.
 [Matthew 5:14-16]

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.

Text: Public domain





Stil - le Nacht, hei - lige Nacht! All - es schläft, ein - sam wacht Nur das
 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm, all is bright Round yon
 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep-herds quake at the sight; Glo - ries
 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God, love's pure light Ra - diant



traute hoch hei - lige Paar, Hol - der Knab - e im lock-i-gen Haar,
 vir - gin moth-er and child. Ho - ly In - fant, so ten-der and mild,
 stream from heav - en a - far, Heav'n -ly hosts sing, Al - le -lu -ia!
 beams from your ho - ly face With the dawn of re - deem - ing grace,



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

Text: MOHR, JOSEPH
Tune: GRUBER, FRANZ

BENEDICTION

P May Jesus, Immanuel, our Savior, the firstfruit of God’s new creation, bear the fruit of faithfulness and joy in your lives now and forever.

C **Amen.**

(Please extinguish your candles)



PARTING HYMN

Joy to the World

LSB 387 sts. 1, 3-4



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re - ceive her
3 No more let sins and sor - rows grow Nor thorns in - fest the
4 He rules the world with truth and grace And makes the na - tions



King; Let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare Him
ground; He comes to make His bless - ings
prove The glo - ries of His righ - teous -



room And heav'n and na - ture sing, And heav'n and na - ture
flow Far as the curse is found, Far as the curse is
ness And won - ders of His love, And won - ders of His



sing, And heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
found, Far as, far as the curse is found.
love, And won - ders, won - ders of His love.

PLEASE JOIN US again tomorrow, for Christmas Day Worship with Holy Communion, at 10:30AM. We will have a special Service of Remembrance at 7:30AM and 10:30AM on December 29, for all of those who fell died in the faith this past year.

Acknowledgments

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CHRISTMAS EVE

"Let us now go to Bethlehem
and see this thing that has come
to pass; which the Lord has
made known to us."

Luke 2:15; NKJV