

Order for Worship  
December 24, 2021  
Christmas Eve – Traditional Service 7 PM  
Communion

+ GATHERING +

PRELUDE            The Coventry Carol – Traditional

c. 1984 Warner Bros. Inc.  
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I Saw Three Ships – setting by Dale Wood

c. 1998 The Sacred Music Press  
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Joy to the World – Lowell Mason, arr. Richard A. Nichols  
Sadie Hanish, cello

c. 2008 SoundForth  
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WELCOME

CAROL            ELW 283 O Come, All Ye Faithful  
Dave Lewis, trumpet; Evan Bolton, trombone

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!

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!

Text and music attrib. John Francis Wade  
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CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, who sends the word with angels, who is made flesh among  
all peoples, and who breathes peace on all the earth.

**Amen.**

In Christ, we are bold to name our sin and cry out for peace.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Holy God,

**we confess our sin before you. We replace compassion with competition. We seek what is mighty while ignoring the meek. We are quick to anger but slow to forgive. We have not put on love in harmony with you. Wrap us in the grace of your powerful Word. Swaddle our hearts with your peace, that all we do, in word or deed, may reflect your love born among us. Amen.**

I bring you good news of great joy for all people: God has come among us in the child born of Mary, Christ the Lord. In Christ your sins are forgiven and you are clothed in peace.

**Amen.**

CAROL        ELW 289 Angels We Have Heard on High

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.

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?  
What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heav'nly song?  
Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.

French carol, text tr. H.F. Hemy, music arr. Edward S. Barnes

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GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, born as a baby this night,  
the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

OPENING PRAYER

We have waited for a long time for your hope, your joy, your love to shine in the darkness of this world, Almighty God. Even now, in our gathering here, we await you. In our hearts, we still hope that your light will blaze forth, banishing the shadows of this world and guiding all the people back to you.

**Yet you did not come into this world in a show of power and glory. You did not shine forth for all of creation to behold. A tiny spark –a newborn baby, visible to parents and curious animals. A host of angels –away from the populated areas, singing to migrant workers.**

Open our hearts, merciful God, to the sparks of your presence still in this world. Open our eyes, that we might behold your presence in the least likely of places, and among the least likely of people.

**God with us, kindle your spark within us, that together we may shine forth your light, we might banish the shadows of this world, we might be the continuation of the Christmas miracle: Emmanuel is in this world, God is with us, now and evermore. Amen**

*Please be seated.*

SOLO

Royal Day that chasest gloom – German 14<sup>th</sup> cent.

Meghan Carlin, soprano

c. 1953 McLaughlin & Reilly Co.

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+ WORD +

FIRST READING: Isaiah 9:2-7

*This poem promises deliverance from Assyrian oppression, a hope based on the birth of a royal child with a name full of promise. While Judah's king will practice justice and righteousness, the real basis for faith lies in God's passion for the people: The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this!*

<sup>2</sup>The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—  
on them light has shined.

<sup>3</sup>You have multiplied the nation,  
you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you  
as with joy at the harvest,  
as people exult when dividing plunder.

<sup>4</sup>For the yoke of their burden,  
and the bar across their shoulders,  
the rod of their oppressor,  
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

<sup>5</sup>For all the boots of the tramping warriors  
and all the garments rolled in blood  
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

<sup>6</sup>For a child has been born for us,  
a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders;  
and he is named

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

<sup>7</sup>His authority shall grow continually,  
and there shall be endless peace  
for the throne of David and his kingdom.  
He will establish and uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time onward and forevermore.  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

CAROL ELW 296 What Child is this

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.

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GOSPEL: Luke 2:1-20

*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.**

<sup>1</sup>In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup>Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. <sup>5</sup>He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup>While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup>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.

<sup>8</sup>In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup>But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: <sup>11</sup>to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup>This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup>"Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

<sup>15</sup>When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." <sup>16</sup>So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup>When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; <sup>18</sup>and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup>The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

CAROL ELW 292 Love Has Come

Love has come—a light in the darkness!  
Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.  
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it;  
hear how their song of joy arises:  
Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior!  
Love! Love! Glory to God on high.

Love has come and never will leave us!  
Love is life everlasting and free.  
Love is Jesus within and among us.  
Love is the peace our hearts are seeking.  
Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas;  
Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

#### STATEMENT OF FAITH

We believe that God has come to us as a little child,

**making our weakness his strength,  
securing our salvation by becoming one of us,  
blessing us with a steadfast savior,  
filling our hearts with joy to be shared with one another.**

We believe that God has birthed righteousness and justice into the world,

**giving us a law that will be written upon our hearts,  
making the cause of the oppressed the highest priority  
declaring an everlasting reign of peace,  
defeating the power of pain and suffering.**

We believe that God calls us to participate in this reality of love,

**inviting us to proclaim Christ's resurrection at the Table,  
transforming us as disciples to go out into the world,  
sending us forth to announce his kingdom of peace and comfort,  
challenging us to see everyone as nothing less than beloved children.**

This we believe.

This we preach.

**This we seek to embody in word and deed.**

**Amen**

#### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

To you, O Christ, we pray,

**sweet child of Bethlehem, hear our prayer.**

MUSICAL OFFERING     Now Sing We, Now Rejoice (In dulci jubilo)

setting by Harald Rohlig

David Lewis, trumpet

Meghan Carlin, soprano

#### OFFERING PRAYER

Gracious God, your Word-made-flesh brings harmony to the earth. As we offer ourselves and these your gifts, prepare us to receive the grace and truth you offer at this table and renew in us the song of your salvation, in Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

+ MEAL +

#### THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

May the God of silent nights be with you!

**May the God of herald angels be with you!**

Open your hearts to the One born in the little town of Bethlehem.

**May Emmanuel come to abide in our hearts.**

Join all believers in singing of our joy this night.

**May our voices blend with those of the angels and shepherds.**

#### WORDS OF INSTITUTION

#### LORD'S PRAYER

**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.**

#### SHARING OF COMMUNION

#### PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We thank you, wondrous God, for Jesus, God with us, in these gifts of bread and wine. As we have shared this feast of love, strengthen us to share your love with all the world. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

#### CANDLELIGHTING

*The pastor lights a large candle from an altar candle, which symbolizes Christ, the Light of the world of whom John's gospel speaks. The ushers light their candles from the pastor's candle, then light the candle of each worshiper nearest the aisle. The lighted candle is never tilted, but is always held upright when giving light to another.*

#### MUSIC DURING CANDLELIGHTING

O Holy Night – Adolphe C. Adam  
Meghan Carlin, soprano

#### CAROL – ELW 281 Silent Night

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

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 your holy face,  
with the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at your birth, Jesus, Lord, at your birth.

Text: Joseph Mohr, tr. John F. Young

Music: Franz Gruber

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### BLESSING

The God of hope  
fill us with all joy and peace in believing,  
so that we may abound in hope  
by the power of the Holy Spirit,  
through Christ Jesus, the Word made flesh.

**Amen.**

CAROL        ELW 267 Joy to the World

Dave Lewis, trumpet; Evan Bolton, trombone

Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king;  
let ev'ry heart prepare him room and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n and nature sing,  
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ,  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the nations prove  
the glories of his righteousness and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love,  
and wonders, wonders of his love.

Text: Isaac Watts

Music: Lowell Mason

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### DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is born! Alleluia!

**Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE    Christmas Voluntary – William Billings, arr. Jon Spong

c. 1968 Abingdon Press

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*Merry Christmas*  
*From the staff at St. John's: Pastor Becky, Ben, Bob,*  
*Jamie, Missy and Vikki*



A poinsettia is given in memory of Richard Walp by his wife, Ruth.

Two poinsettias are given in honor and memory of all loved ones by Jim and Kathy Fitser.

A poinsettia is given in memory of John Dzurenda and all loved ones by Mary Jane Dzurenda.

A poinsettia is given in honor of Diane Appold's special birthday by the SE gang.

A poinsettia is given in honor of all military personnel who are not able to home with their families by Chris and Diane Appold.

The Church office will be closed Monday & Tuesday, December 27 & 28.

**POINSETTIAS** We have several 7" poinsettias that are available for purchase at \$12/each. They will be available for pick up after the this service.

**Help Requested to clean up Luminaries:** Everyone is welcome to join the Youth Group members and families as we clean up the luminaries after the service on Sunday, December 26th.

### **New Member Small Group**

Interested in becoming a member of St. John's Lutheran Church? A new member small group will be offered in the beginning of 2022. The small group will meet after the 9:30 AM Sunday worship service on January 16, 30 and February 13. New members will then be formally received into the community during the 9:30 AM worship service on Sunday, February 20.

If you are interested in being part of the new members small group, please let Pastor Becky know by January 9<sup>th</sup>.

### **Help us feed our neighbors!**

St. John's will host the First Monday Community Dinner at Pennsburg UCC on January 3rd. Volunteers are needed to help prepare and serve the food, as well as donate items for the meal. To see the list of items needed and to volunteer click here:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0f4eaeac23a1f9c16-first>