

Order for Worship
December 26, 2021
First Sunday of Christmas
Theme: Chosen Home

PRELUDE The Shepherds' Farewell to the Holy Family –
Hector Berlioz, arr. David M. Cherwien

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WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

Jesus said,

“This is my Father’s house.”

So come into this space

just as you are.

Come into this space

speaking your truth.

Come into this space

with your authentic self.

This is God’s home.

This is our home, where we worship God, born among us as a child in Bethlehem.

CAROL ELW 269 Once in Royal David’s City

Once in royal Davids city stood a lowly cattle shed,
where a mother laid her baby in a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ, her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven who is God and Lord of all,
and his shelter was a stable, and his cradle was a stall;
with the poor and meek and lowly, lived on earth our Savior holy.

And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own redeeming love;
for that child so dear and gentle is our Lord in heav’n above;
and he leads his children on to the place where he is gone.

Text: Cecil Frances Alexander

Music: Henry J. Gauntlett

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CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Research shows that on average, humans make about 35,000 choices in a day. In the prayer of confession, we acknowledge the moments when our choices do not reflect God’s love and we ask for grace. So let us pray together, trusting that God is with us in each of those 35,000 moments, cheering us on, and guiding us home.

Let us pray:

We could offer welcome,

but we often choose judgment.

We could choose action,
but we often choose silence.
We could choose advocacy,
but we often choose comfort.
We could choose truth,
but we often choose ignorance.
We could choose God,
but we often choose ourselves.
Forgive us, gracious God, for the moments when we chose poorly.
Open our hearts to choose you, to choose community, to choose love.
Gratefully we pray. Amen.

Family of faith, no matter how we choose, we cannot lose God's love.
It is undeserved, overwhelming, ever-present, and always with us.
So may we accept God's grace, and use it as fuel for better days.
Hear and believe the good news of the Gospel:
No matter how many times we walk away,
God always welcomes us home.
We are loved. We are forgiven. We are invited.
Thanks be to God.

CAROL OF PRAISE 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.

Text: French carol, tr. H.F. Hemy
Music: French carol; arr. Edward S. Barnes
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OPENING PRAYER

Holy God, Scripture tells us that when Jesus taught in the temple, all who heard were amazed. We want to be amazed too. We want to hear your word with new ears. We want to be unraveled and transformed by the truth tucked between those sentences. We want to be opened up by the hope in these holy pages. We want to be amazed. So as we read today, transport us to those early days in the temple. Open our hearts so we can hear your word like never before. We are listening. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

MUSICAL OFFERING Gloria for the Flutes – Alice Jordan

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FIRST READING: Colossians 3:12-17

Just as newly baptized Christians in the early church were clothed with new garments upon arising from the baptismal waters, so all who have received God's gift of life in Jesus Christ are covered with the character of Christ.

¹²As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. ¹³Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. ¹⁷And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

CAROL ELW 275 Angels, from the Realms of Glory

Angels, from the realms of glory, wing your flight o'er all the earth;
once you sang creation's story, now proclaim Messiah's birth:
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.

Text: James Montgomery

Music: Henry T. Smart

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GOSPEL READING: Luke 2:41-52

The holy Gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

⁴¹Now every year [Jesus'] parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. ⁴²And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. ⁴³When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. ⁴⁴Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. ⁴⁶After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety." ⁴⁹He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" ⁵⁰But they did not understand what he said to them. ⁵¹Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His

mother treasured all these things in her heart.

⁵²And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

REFLECTION

Erin Eisenhart

CAROL Chosen Home

(sung to the tune of O Come, All Ye Faithful ELW 283)

As Jesus' family traveled back to Nazareth
he stayed and claimed a space inside temple walls,
seeking a place where he could show his true self.
A place that truly sees us, a place that loves and frees us,
like tables set by Jesus is our chosen home.

We may not find home where it is expected,
sometimes we have to leave to be who we are:
wholly created in God's holy image.
A place that truly sees us, a place that loves and frees us,
like tables set by Jesus is our chosen home.

May this be a brave space for all people
where all are seen and loved among family;
space to grow and follow in our callings.
A place that truly sees us, a place that loves and frees us,
like tables set by Jesus is our chosen home.

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

MUSICAL OFFERING

I Wonder as I Wander
Appalachian Carol, setting by John Jacob Niles
Meghan Carlin, soprano

c. 1934, (renewed) by G. Schirmer, Inc.

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PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great

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.

CAROL ELW 276 Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

Infant holy, infant lowly, for his bed a cattle stall;
oxen lowing, little knowing Christ the child is Lord of all.
Swiftly winging, angels singing, bells are ringing, tidings bringing:
Christ the child is Lord of all! Christ the child is Lord of all!

Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping vigil till the morning new
saw the glory, heard the story, tidings of a gospel true.
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow, praises voicing, greet the morrow:
Christ the child was born for You! Christ the child was born for you!

Text: Polish carol, tr. Edith M. G. Reed

Music: Polish carol

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+ SENDING +

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING

As you leave *this* service, *your* service begins:

Comfort the homesick.

Open your doors to others.

Seek sanctuary.

Be brave enough to go home by another way.

And remember that here in God's house, all are welcomed—so come back soon.

In the name of our Foundation—God, Spirit, and Son.

Amen

CAROL ELW 290 Go Tell It On The Mountain

Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and ev'rywhere;
go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!

While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens there shone a holy light.

Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and ev'rywhere;
go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!

Down in a lonely manger the humble Christ was born;
and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn.

Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and ev'rywhere;
go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!

Text: African American spiritual, refrain; John W. Work Jr.

Music: African American spiritual

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DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is born!

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE Postlude for Christmas (Czech Carol) – Carl Simone

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PRAYER LIST

Please continue to keep the following people connected to our congregation in your prayers:
Alex Kunkel, Bob Moran, Brian Allebach, Charles Krupp, Kenny Nace, Ann Brown Hager, David Mounts, Melissa Snyder, Sandy Umstead, David and Linda Kratzer, Leah Crater, Leanne Kratzer, Steve Keyser, Jim McNally, Sydney Crossin, Bob Kemmerer, Kathy Reese, Jon Baxter, Carol Mesaros, Paige Seasock, Peyton Seasock, Kathy Lasso, Theresa Hasson, Tal Umstead, Deb Romig, Jared Jadick, Heidi Slook, Bob Duke, Dorothy Rudolph, Mary Clayton, Michelle Baxter, Ruthie Jadick Donna Derstine and Brian Derstine.

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

Help Requested with Luminaries: Everyone is welcome to join the Youth Group members and families as we clean up the luminaries. Your help is greatly appreciated after the service today.

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>

POINSETTIAS

We have poinsettias that are available for sponsor or purchase at \$12/each. They are available for pick up after today's service.

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 9th.

Worship Attendance		
12/19/2021 – In Person– 68 Zoom - 21 households		
Giving Amounts	Total received between 11/28-12/13/2021	Amount Needed between 11/28-12/13/2021
General Fund	\$13,272.07	\$11,216
Building Fund	\$369.14	
<i>Weekly average is based on the 2021 budget. A weekly building fund amount needed is no longer reported as the building fund has been used for the mortgage, which has been paid off. All other building expenses are included in General Fund budget and giving. The above numbers include electronic giving. Mint duty is being done every other week for the time being.</i>		
Capital Campaign Activity Update		
Capital Campaign Contributions Pledged		\$ 260,000.00
Capital Campaign Contributions received between 11/28-12/13/2021		\$450
Capital Campaign Contributions received to date		\$ 253,789.65
A gift was made to the memorial fund in memory of Leroy B. Long, son Robert and all loved ones by Hope Long.		