Service of Lessons & Carols 1st Sunday after Christmas December 28, 2025



GATHERING

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

The congregation stands. All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

- P. Blessed be the holy Trinity, \pm one God, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty Savior, Prince of Peace. **Amen.**
- P. Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and one another, trusting in God's steadfast love and faithfulness.

The congregation sits or kneels. Silence is kept for reflection.

Reconciling God, we yearn for your presence to transform our grief, pain and despair. We confess that we have not always prepared room in our hearts for your love; we have not always recognized your presence among us; we have not always embraced your message of peace. We cry out, weary with the burden of violence, oppression, and fear. We confess our failure to make room for those seeking refuge; our participation in violent systems that harm your innocent ones; our reluctance to embody your good news. Be born in us today and teach us to sing the joyful song of your salvation. Amen.

P. Hear the good news and rejoice! God's grace upon grace flows over you. \oplus Christ's presence redeems the whole creation. Your sins are forgiven. Let the earth rejoice and be glad! **Amen.**



GREETING

0

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.**

dore

him.

Christ

the Lord!

CHRISTMAS DIALOGUE

come, let

us a

- A. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.
- C. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.
- A. Those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness, on them light has shined.
- C. We have beheld Christ's glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.
- A. To us a child is born, to us a Son is given.
- C. In the Word was life, and the life was the light of all people.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P. O Lord God, you know that we cannot place our trust in our own powers. As you protected the infant Jesus, so defend us and all the needy from harm and adversity, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Congregation is seated

WORD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 9:2-7

² 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. ³You 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. ⁴For the voke 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. ⁷His 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.

A. Word of God, word of life. **C. Thanks be to God.**



ELW 289

- we have heard on high, sweet ly sing - ing An - gels o'er the plains,
- Shep-herds, why this ju bi-lee? Why your joy ous strains Come to Beth le hem and see him whose birth the an pro - long?
- 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.







SECOND READING: Micah 5:2-5a

²But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,

who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old,

from ancient days.

³Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth;

then the rest of his kindred shall return

to the people of Israel.

⁴And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD,

in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.

And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great

to the ends of the earth;

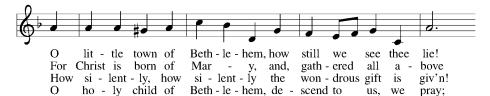
⁵and he shall be the one of peace.

A. Word of God, word of life. C. Thanks be to God.

tell:

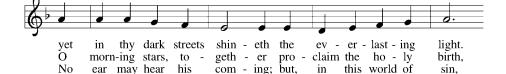
We

oh.





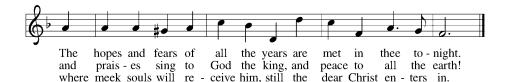
A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go an - gels keep their watch of while mor-tals sleep, the won-d'ring love. bless - ings God im-parts to hu - man hearts the of out our sin, and en - ter in, be born in us to - day.



an - gels the

great glad tid - ings

Lord Im - man - u - el!



a - bide with us, our

THIRD READING: Luke 1:26-35, 38

come to

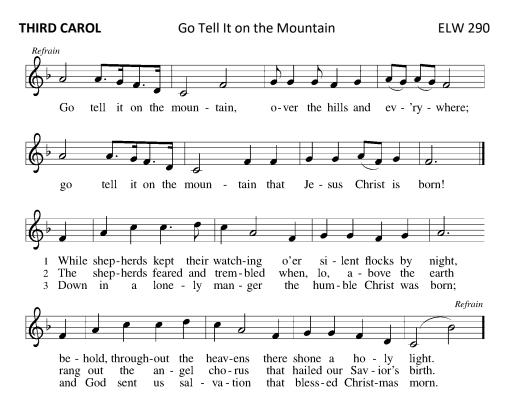
hear the Christ-mas

us,

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he

will be called Son of God. ³⁸Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

A. Word of God, word of life. **C. Thanks be to God.**



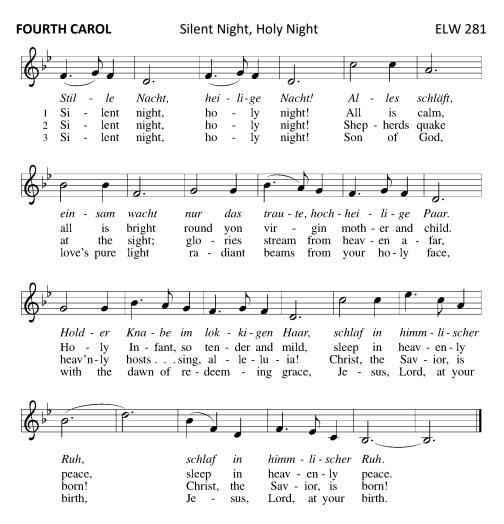
FOURTH READING: Matthew 1:18-25

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²²All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
 and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us."
 When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded

him; he took her as his wife, ²⁵but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

A. Word of God, word of life. **C. Thanks be to God.**



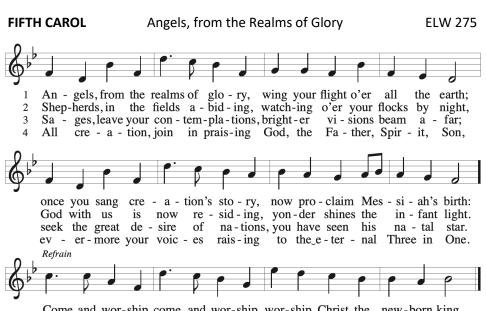
FIFTH READING: Luke 2:8-18

⁸In that 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 he 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; ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them.

A. Word of God, word of life. C. Thanks be to God.



Come and wor-ship, come and wor-ship, wor-ship Christ, the new-born king.

SIXTH READING: Matthew 2:1-11

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ²asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." ³When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

⁶And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel."

⁷Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." ⁹When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they

A. Word of God, word of life. **C. Thanks be to God.**

offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

SIXTH CAROL What Child Is This ELW 296



- 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;



the

babe,

the son

of

Mar - y!

SEVENTH READING: John 1:1-14

for

joy,

joy,

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come

Christ is born,

into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

A. Word of God, word of life. C. Thanks be to God.

SEVENTH CAROL

It Came upon the Midnight Clear

ELW 282



- It came up-on the mid-night clear, that glo-rious song of old, Still through the clo-ven skies they come with peace-ful wings un-furled,
- And you, be - neath life's crush-ing load, whose forms are bend-ing low,
- The days are has-t'ning on, by proph-ets seen of old, lo!



from an - gels bend - ing near the earth to touch their harps of still their heav'n-ly mu - sic floats o'er all the wea - ry a - long the climb-ing way with pain - ful steps and slow: when with the ev - er - cir - cling years shall come the time fore - told,



the earth, good will to all, from heav'n's all - gra - cious king." and low - ly plains they bend on hov - 'ring wing, A - bove its sad and gold-en hours come swift - ly on look now, for glad when peace shall o - ver all the earth its an - cient splen-dors fling,



The world in sol - emn still-ness lay to hear the an - gels sing. its ba - bel sounds the bless-ed an - gels ev - er o'er sing. oh, rest be - side the wea-ry road and hear the an - gels sing! the world give back the song which now the an - gels and all sing.

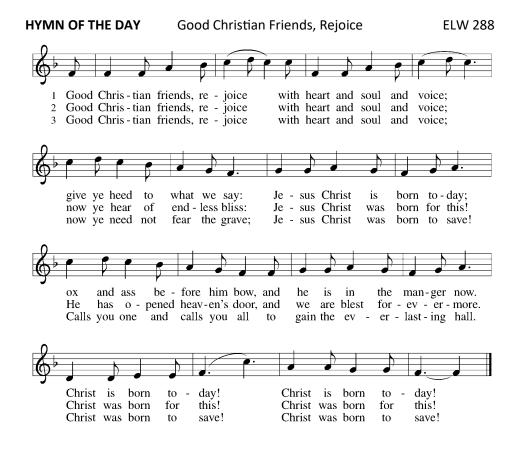
RESPONSIVE PRAYER

- A. Glory to God in the highest,
- C. and peace to God's people on earth.
- A. Blessed are you, Prince of peace. You rule the earth with truth and justice.
- C. Send your gift of peace to all nations of the world.
- A. Blessed are you, Son of Mary. You share our humanity.
- C. Have mercy on the sick, the dying, and all who suffer this day.
- A. Blessed are you, Son of God. You dwell among us as the Word made flesh.
- C. Reveal yourself to us in word and sacrament that we may bear your light to all the world.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

- P. The Peace of Christ be with you always.
- C. And also with you.
- P. Let us share with each other a sign of Christ's peace.

Congregation sits



OFFERTORY INVITATION



Offering can be given by putting it in the offering plate when it is passed, online directly via the QR codes for Tithely or Venmo, or by requesting your bank to send a check to the church. Find more details on our website.



Thank you for your generous gifts!

Congregation stands



OFFERTORY PRAYER

A. Let us pray... God of heaven and earth, from the beginning, you have called forth life, in which you take delight. The trees, the fields, and the seas sing for joy. Bless now these gifts, received from your bounty, that we may join the chorus of creation to tell of your salvation from day to day. **Amen.**

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.

SENDING

BENEDICTION

P. Grace from God's own heart, peace from the \pm Child in the manger, and strength from the Spirit of life be blessings for you today and forever. **Amen.**



DISMISSAL

- A. Glory to God in the highest!
- C. And Peace to God's people on earth!
- A. Christ is born! Go tell it on the mountain and everywhere.
- C. Thanks be to God.

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Announcements for December 28th, 2025

Welcome to Holy Counselor Lutheran Church. May you experience the joy of God's presence in our worship!

If today is your **first time** worshiping at Holy Counselor, please be sure to fill out the "Guest Book" on the table in the narthex and take a welcome baa.

Please ask our ushers any questions you may have regarding worship this morning. Large print bulletins are available.

Worship is live streamed to our church Facebook page, but the camera is pointed away during Communion and is not on the children when they come forward during A Time for the Child in Us All.

Thank you, Claire Speroni for this morning's refreshments!

Volunteers for Today's Worship

Lay Asst. Volunteer needed Ushers Volunteer needed

Tech John Heeren

Tellers Volunteer needed
Refreshments Claire Speroni

Volunteers for Next Sunday, Jan. 4th

All roles open

***** Join us for refreshments after worship*****

THIS WEEK AT HOLY COUNSELOR

Sunday, Dec 28: No Sunday School

Worship w/Lessons & Carols, 9:30am Choir Practice following worship

Wednesday, Dec 31: New Year's Eve, office closed Thursday, Jan 1: Happy New Year! Office closed

Sunday, Jan 4: No Sunday School

Worship w/Communion, 9:30am

Choir Practice following worship White Elephant Gift Exchange, 11am

<u>Boiler Replacement</u>: Due to a recent leak, damage and old age of the boiler at the parsonage immediate replacement was needed. A generous family of the church has put the cost on their credit card. Please **help support the boiler replacement fundraiser** in the Narthex to cover these costs, about \$12,000.

White Elephant Gift Exchange: NEXT Sunday, January 4th we will be hosting a white elephant gift exchange following worship! This is purposefully held after Christmas so you can bring a gift you received that you'd like to pass on! Bring what you have and no longer want (no shopping needed!) and we will have fun celebrating the end of the Christmas season together!

<u>Devotional Reflection:</u> Following worship today, Pam Kucks is leading a brief devotional study from her Auction of the Gifts donation 'Fill Your Cup Up'. You are welcome to stay and hear from Pam and the gifts she brings to devotions.

2026 Calendars for Sale: The calendars are here! They are **\$20 each.** They make great gifts in addition to beautifying your own home! All calendar sales go directly to support the church.

<u>Annual Congregational Meeting:</u> Our annual meeting is Sunday, January 25th following worship with a makeup weather date of February 8th. Please plan to attend to celebrate the 2025 year, hear updates about the church, and approve the 2026 spending plan. A potluck luncheon will follow, please bring a dish to pass.

<u>Women's Lenten Retreat</u>: We are hosting our 2nd Annual Woman's Retreat at HCLC on Saturday, March 7th from 9 am-3 pm. All women are invited to come explore a Lenten journey this winter about self-care. The day includes Pastor Peggy as our keynote speaker, worship, music, workshops and meditation. Continental breakfast and lunch will be provided. There is a recommended donation of \$15 for building use. Please RSVP to the office (office@hc-lutheranchurch.org) by Monday, February 9th. See Kathy Heeren or Pam Kucks with any questions.

<u>Paper Drive:</u> We are running low on toilet paper and paper towels. <u>Please contribute</u> to our "Paper Drive" in the months of December and January. All **donations can be** <u>placed</u> in the fellowship room against the left wall by the chairs.

<u>Food Pantry:</u> Thank you for the recent generous food drives, we are still in need of: canned chicken noodle soup, canned stew, instant pudding, jello, children's juice boxes or pouches, 4-pack toilet paper & toothpaste.



Church Office (973) 827-5251 www.hc-lutheranchurch.org

The Reverend Peggy Ludlow: pastorpeggy@hc-lutheranchurch.org
Director of Music: June Tarantino: music@hc-lutheranchurch.org
Office Administrator: Cathy Nemecek: office@hc-lutheranchurch.org
Bookkeeper: Wynn White: accounts@hc-lutheranchurch.org

MISSION STATEMENT

As Children of God, we are called to share and serve Christ's love and bring God's word to all.

CHURCH COUNCIL

Pastor Rev. Peggy Ludlow
President Nancy Knecht
Vice President Frank Urbaniak
Treasurer Claire Speroni
Recording Secretary Dawn McCormick
Financial Secretary John Heeren
Outreach Coordinator Francine Vince
Nurture Coordinator Fred Schoenagel
Administration Coordinator Diane Rossi
Youth Representative Kevin Drache

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Kristina Heeren Pam Kucks Matt Moller Aileen Donovan

Holy Counselor is located on the original and ancestral homelands of the Munsee people, and we give thanks for their presence here since time immemorial. We also wish to recognize and honor our Indigenous siblings who have and continue to call this land their home.

