Christmas Eve



Candlelight Worship with Holy Communion

Holy Counselor Lutheran Church 68 Sand Hill Road in Vernon, NJ Rev. Peggy Ludlow, Pastor www.hc-lutheranchurch.org

Welcome Visitors:

Welcome to Holy Counselor. May you experience the joy of God's presence in our worship together. If this is your first time worshiping at Holy Counselor, please be sure to fill out the 'Guest Book' in the narthex and take a welcome bag. Also please feel free to ask our ushers any questions regarding worship.

Gathering Time

The worshiping congregation gathers to prepare for worship by offering welcome, confessing its sin, and singing praise to God.

GATHERING

PRELUDE Hark! The Harold Angels Sing Michaela Neiper & Zachary Neiper flute players

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

The congregation stands if able. 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. Trusting in God's steadfast love and faithfulness, let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

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. God's grace upon grace flows over you.

Christ's presence redeems the whole creation. Your sins are forgiven. Let the earth rejoice and be glad

Amen.

Congregation stands





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.

Thank you to our
musicians enhancing
our worship this
evening during hymns

and choir anthems. We give God thanks for your shared gifts!

Introduction: In winter's deepest night, we welcome the light of the Christ child. Isaiah declares that the light

of the long-promised

one 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,

GREETING

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.

Lutheran's believe that Christ is present with us in the Word of God (Holy Scripture) and the administration of the sacraments (Baptism and Holy Communion). Two distinct parts make up the main portion of our worship: the word and the meal.

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

P. 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. **Amen.**

Congregation is seated

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH (read responsively)

Dupont Family

Because injustice and despair threaten to overwhelm us, we pray for hope... (*The first candle is lit*).

Because so many swords have not yet been remade into ploughshares, we pray for peace... (*The second candle is lit*).

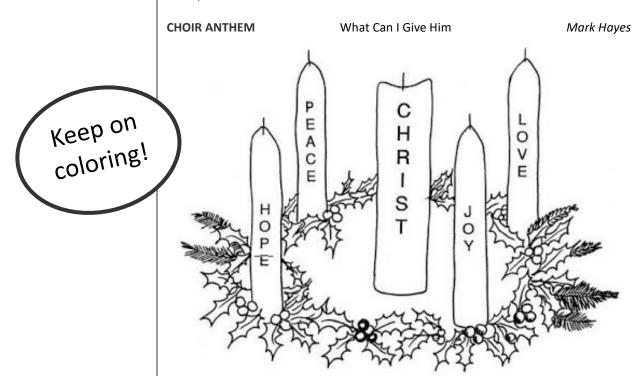
Because grief and loss weigh so heavily, we pray for joy... (The third pink candle is lit).

Because hatred is still so strong, and because people all over the world are suffering, we pray for love. (*The fourth candle is lit*).

God has come to us as a child, to dwell with us, and to walk with us. (*The Christ Candle is lit*).

May the light and the fire from these candles burn away whatever would prevent the God of hope and peace and joy and love from being born among us.

Friends, be not afraid, even now — even now — the light of Christ is illuminating the world, on earth as it is in heaven!



WORD

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 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 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. 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.

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!

A. Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church. **C. Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING: Titus 2:11-14

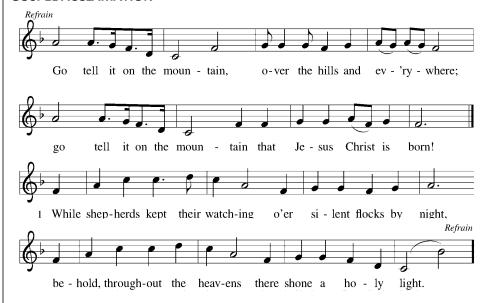
¹¹For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, ¹²training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, ¹³while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior,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

A. Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church. C. Thanks be to God.

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.

Congregation stands

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



GOSPEL: *Luke 2:1-20*

P. The holy gospel according to Luke. C. Glory to you, O Lord.

In those days a decree went out from Emperor 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. ⁷And 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. 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. 10 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: 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,

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.

> 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; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But 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, as it had been told them.

P. The Gospel of the Lord. C. Praise to You, O Christ.

Congregation is seated. Children & Youth are invited to come forward.

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FOR ALL AGES



NICENE CREED

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.



PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

A. Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need. A brief silence.

A. Gathering God, you bring your people from every corner of the earth together before the manger that you have made a throne. Unite the church in love as we rejoice in the news of your coming. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A. Creating God, you brought forth the earth and all that is in it. Join our voices with the roaring seas, the exulting fields, and the trees of the forest singing for joy on this holy night. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A. Transforming God, the world trembles amid violence and war. Empower our hands, feet, and hearts with your Spirit to shatter the rod of the oppressor and turn swords into plowshares, especially in Palestine, the Sudan and other war zones. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A. Shepherding God, you lead us to your love in the face of our neighbor. Send us into the world to find your Word made flesh in one another, especially those who are sick or struggling, especially for those we name aloud now... and those we hold in our hearts... Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.

A. Nurturing God, you dwell with us in humble places. Sustain housing and clothing ministries in this community, that all find shelter and warmth. We pray especially for youth seeking safety and care. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A. Abiding God, you remain at the side of all the departed. Grant all who mourn, hope in the resurrection and peace in Christ Jesus. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

P. With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

SHARING OF THE PEACE

P. Peace of the Lord be with you.

C. And also with you.

P. Let us share with each other a sign of God's peace. *Congregation is seated*

The Prayers of the Church are an ancient way in which the assembled people of God lift their combined voices in prayer to God. During the prayers you will have an opportunity to add your own petitions for those who are suffering in mind, body or spirit at this time. You may either name those persons aloud or hold their names in your heart knowing that God is fully aware of your needs, both spoken and unspoken – in prayer.

The congregation may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace, saying "Peace be with you." Or similar words as we shake hands. wave, or exchange a hug; as each feels comfortable. Please respect the comfort of those around you, knowing that we all come to Christ's peace as broken people needing to be made whole.



Angels we have heard on high!

MEAL

OFFERTORY INVITATION

via Venmo ↓

Scan to give

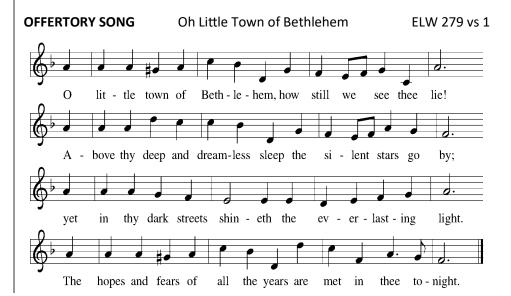
Offering can be given by putting it in the offering plate when it is passed, online directly via the QR codes for Tithely or Venmo, or by requesting your bank to send a check to the church. Find more details on our website.



Thank you for your generous gifts!

An offering is gathered for the mission of the church as the Lord's Table is prepared. Our offerings go to assist those in need throughout Vernon, the state of New Jersey, the United States and the world wherever they are found.

Congregation stands



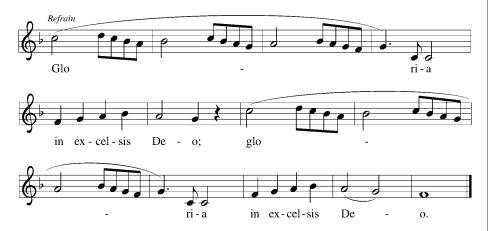
OFFERTORY PRAYER

A. Let us pray. God of glory, great are your wonders among us and many are the blessings you bestow. Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world, that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace, through Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

DIALOGUE & PREFACE OF THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

- P. The Lord be with you.
- C. And also 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 our thanks and praise.

P. It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory, that beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see. And so with all the choirs of angels, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

P. Holy God, Creator of all and Source of life, at the birth of time your word brought light into the world.

In the fullness of time, you sent your Word, born of Mary, to shine in our darkness and to make us your children.

In this second portion of this evening's liturgy, the saving and lifegiving presence of Christ is made real in bread and wine. A sacrament is the physical sign of an unseen promise, commanded by Christ.

Believing in the real presence of Christ, we practice Eucharistic hospitality. All baptized persons are welcome to Communion this morning. Children may come forward for a blessing.

Please come forward, guided by the Ushers. to receive the bread and wine. Gluten free wafers are available, please note this to Pastor Peggy when you come forward. Grape juice is available in the second communion plate. As you return to your seat via the side aisles you can place your empty cup in the baskets on either side

Upon receiving the bread:
P. The body of Christ given for you
C. Amen.

Upon receiving the wine:
P. The blood of Christ shed for you.
C. Amen.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord 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.

Remembering, therefore, his birth and life among us, his death and resurrection, we await his coming again when all things will be restored in him.

By your Spirit bless us and this bread and cup, that, held and nourished by you, we may live as your children, shining with the light of your Son.

Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty God, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever. **Amen.**

THE 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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P. God is now in flesh appearing. Come to the feast of joy!

Congregation is seated



COMMUNION SONG

The First Noel ELW 300 vs. 1





HYMN DURING THE DISTRIBUTION

Angels We Have Heard on High

ELW 289

Congregation stands

TABLE BLESSING

P. The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A. Let us pray. Incarnate God, you are among us at this table. May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts the mystery of your presence. Move us to discover the wonders of your love in the everyday moments of our lives, through Christ born in us. **Amen.**

PASSING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST & HYMN

The sanctuary lights are extinguished and the light of Christ is passed. On the last verse of Silent Night all are invited to raise their candles.

Silent Night, Holy Night ELW 281

(printed on next page)
Kathy Heeren, guitar

All candles are lit from the Christ candle, symbolizing the light of Christ going out into the world.

Ushers come forward to light their candles from Pastor's, and then light the first candle in each pew. Light is spread down the rest of the pew.

Battery operated candles are available for unsteady or easily excited hands

Please tip the unlit candle into the lit one and be cautious of dripping wax.



The benediction is a farewell word from one person to another in God's name. It is a declaration and assurance that God will be with the congregation and the congregation will be with God.

SENDING

BENEDICTION

- P. The triune God, glorious Mystery, holy Incarnate One, abiding Comforter,
- + bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy. Amen.

Worship ends as the assisting minister sends the newly fed and

forgiven congregation

world on behalf of the

proclaimed Gospel of

into mission in the

Jesus Christ.



DISMISSAL

A. Glory to God in the highest!

C. And peace to God's people on earth!

A. Go in joy. Embody God's redeeming grace.

C. Thanks be to God!

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Poinsettias Adorning the Sanctuary Donated by:

Sandy Wardell In Memory of Mr. & Mrs. Myles

Coleman and Mr. & Mrs. Harold Anderson

Baumann Family In Memory of Katherine Baumann

& prayers for Claire Kranz

Rossi Family To the Glory of God

Christy Jackson To the Glory of God

Gale and Phyllis MacPeek In Memory of our parents

Reba & Harold MacPeek

Dupont Family In Memory of Ron & Phyllis Dupont &

John & MaryLou Jeanneney

Elaine Kuntz To the Glory of God

Rosemarie McCormick In memory of Mac

McCormick

Heeren Family To the Glory of God

Potzer Family In Memory of Herta Zickgraf

Emmerich Family In Memory of Roy Wherry

Lori Schoenagel To the Glory of God

Diane Diovisalvo To the Glory of God

Ludlow Family In Memory of Gary Ludlow and the

Fasola, Ludlow, and Kelly Grandparents, & Dedicated

to Sadie Claire for her 3rd birthday!

Angels on the Tree

Michael Lennon Robert & Romana Rossi William & Elsie Haller Kenny Haller Matthew Haller Christian Guerreiro Pete Ray Auntie Em Grandmom & Grandpop John & Marylou

Phyllis & Ron Dupont, Sr. Oma Aimee L. Nilsen Aimee K. Nilsen Heather Nilsen Angel & Jack Kobvlinski Alberta & Gilbert Drew Mildred & Allan MacPeek Joan & Charles MacPeek Jim

Katherine Steve H. Charlie Margaret K. Ross Judy Kucks Ron Kucks Kathryn Murphy Micky Shaw Ken Dowell Helen Murphy Andrea Monahan Paul Dentz

Fred & Emiko Schoenagel Bob & Joan Walter Ed Standring Verleigh Hindle Carole del Villar Manuel del Villar Ginger Contillo Sadie Sawyer Gary



Jeanneney



Thank you for worshipping with us for Christmas Eve! Join us for Sunday morning worship at 9:30 am each week.

We hope you will stay for holiday treats following worship. On your way out take a family photo with our Christmas backdrop & tag the church on social

@holycounselor vernon #holycounselorvernon